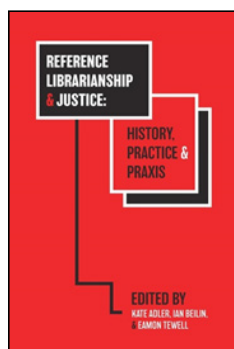


Book Reviews



Reference Librarianship & Justice: History, Practice & Praxis. Kate Adler, Ian Beilin, and Eamon Tewell, eds. Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2018. 322p. Paper, \$35.00 (ISBN: 978-1-63400-051-2).



Social justice and critical information literacy have become a recognized part of academic librarianship; so far, much of the scholarship has focused on instruction services. This text extends these same practices and pedagogies to reference services. The preface begins to look at how social justice factors into reference work and makes an argument for supporting our most vulnerable patrons through reference work. The author of the preface sees reference as being able to support vulnerable people through positive affirming experiences with librarians. In the introduction, the editors recognize reference as a valuable service and the role that it can play in social justice and critical practice while preparing the reader for the chapters that follow. The editors

of this text have collected chapters from a diverse group of librarians and academics that fit into three themes: history, practice, and praxis. Each section leads into the next with a short introduction from one of the editors, who links the chapters in the section together and explains what the reader should expect from the next section of the text.

The first section is centered on the history of social justice in reference librarianship both in the United States and overseas. The histories come from the U.S. as well as the Philippines and the Ukraine, and all demonstrate the role that libraries and librarians have had in assisting oppressed peoples and gathering the history of vulnerable populations or unbiased information to save for future generations. This section provides history and background on the value of social justice within libraries, which the next sections build upon to discuss practice and praxis.

The next section, on practice, describes the current work of librarians to assist oppressed and vulnerable people and focuses heavily on services for prisoners and other detained people such as children held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Librarians in this section, especially those working with prisoners, discuss reference and access to information as a basic component of life. Those working to provide information to prisoners describe how they provide reference services in many different ways, detailing the challenges they face in getting information to the prison population. Many of the challenges involve knowing what prisoner can and cannot receive or access and using highly regulated systems to get information to prisoners. This section on practice also includes chapters on how reference in archives and data reference aid critical information literacy and reference services in allowing people who might not know how to navigate an archive, access data, or how to use these types of information.

The final section, on praxis, focuses on theory and putting that theory into practice to build upon existing theory. Overall, this section is the most challenging to navigate and the most philosophical, but there is value here for those who are looking to implement some form of critical reference in their own work environment. The content in this section can also be applied to many different environments. The authors in this section are thinking about how to foster

reference that is empathetic, egalitarian, and feminist with empathy and vulnerability at the core. This section also considers the vulnerable role of minorities within librarianship and that of librarians, especially librarians with faculty status, who exist in a forgotten or marginalized space in comparison to other faculty members. Like critical information literacy, critical reference uses teaching philosophy to address the whole person in reference and consultations, acknowledges the privilege that exists for many librarians, and adopts social justice theories from education and social work.

Anyone who is curious about the role of social justice in reference or libraries should read this book; it does not focus solely on one type of library or archive, so it can be useful to all librarians. The authors and editors expose some practices and theories that can assist libraries and archives in social justice work, as well as some surprising areas where the library or the archive is the place where disenfranchised people find support. Personally, I could relate some part of each section of this text to my work within libraries and the type of service I hope to provide as a reference librarian. I was especially moved by the stories of human connection both in the preface by Maria T. Accardi and throughout the book: libraries playing a role in helping people feel whole by shining a light on struggles and the way they are supported.—
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Niels Brügger. *The Archived Web: Doing History in the Digital Age.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018. 200p. Hardcover, \$30.00 (ISBN: 978-0-26203-902-4).



Visit the Internet Archive’s “Wayback Machine,” and you will find an invitation at the top of the page to view hundreds of billions of archived web pages—384 billion at present. Impressive as that number is, more impressive still is the fact that the Internet Archive has been preserving web pages since 1996, or, in other words, since more or less the beginning of the web. This was a prescient act indeed. If the rush of historical change, whatever the matter may be, is liable to confuse us in the short term—to be characterized by, as Fernand Braudel once said in *On History* (Sarah Matthews, trans., University of Chicago Press, 1980, 28), “our illusions” and “our hasty awareness”—then the Internet Archive certainly managed to bring a measure of clarity and reflection to the early days

of the web. And now, more than 20 years later, it is no coincidence that the Internet Archive itself is touched on in the excellent book under review here, Niels Brügger’s *The Archived Web: Doing History in the Digital Age*. Brügger, Professor and Head of NetLab and of the Center for Internet Studies, Aarhus University, takes the measure of the web as a valid and independent repository of raw material for history—as “a historical source in its own right,” despite not yet being widely seen as such (12). He leverages the passage of time deftly and with numerous insights on the first quarter century of the web’s existence. He writes for an audience of historians and other scholars who would seek to use web archives in their research, but the result is a work that proves richly instructive and valuable for librarians and archivists too.

Brügger’s premise is that the already observable use of web archives for historical research will only continue to increase and that over time it will become difficult and even downright impossible to do history without consulting the past web in its intentionally preserved forms. “If,” he writes, “we acknowledge that historical research is now facing a major qualitative as well as quantitative shift in source material—the shift from nondigital to digital media, and