

large, intermediate, and small presses in the years 1980 through 1990, and posits various hypothesis to be borne out, or not, by the data. Once a section's conclusions are stated, Dr. Black commences another logical step in her argument in the following chapter.

After overcoming the odds, breaking the "first seal" and being published, these works by African American women have to be reviewed to find readers. Dr. Black abstracts the literature on the subject and analyzes the percentages of her sample that get reviewed. She also examines which journals are more likely to review such titles, and she demonstrates that some journals exert a stronger influence on acquisition librarians than others. She relates such variables as the size of the publisher to the number of reviews and compares the review ratios of books by African American women writers to other women writers. Particular journals, such as *Choice*, *Library Journal*, *Booklist*, and other more general ones, are examined in the process, and disturbing conclusions seem to suggest a bias in some. One must say "seem" for, despite her strong arguments, there is an uncharacteristic flaw in this particular chapter. No data are present on review *copies*: in other words, a vital question is neither posed nor answered: Do small publishers send review copies to these journals as uniformly as the larger publishers do?

This is one of the few slips in the book's marshalling of conclusions that otherwise are cogent and compelling. After discussing the types of literature produced by the various publishers and presenting her findings on the chances of being reviewed, Dr. Black introduces the subject of the canon and examines the holdings of "large, influential, academic libraries" on these titles, hypothesizing what variables may or may not impact the presence of these books on the shelves of ARL libraries. Among those factors she evaluates are the impact of reviews on purchasing, and to what degree do programs such as Women's Studies or

African-American Studies at universities have on library acquisitions of the titles in question, all topics of interest to those whose aim is to have one's library reflect as broad a spectrum of world culture and experience as possible.

While many of the conclusions the author draws are not necessarily surprising, they are nevertheless sobering. A bibliography, appendices, and an index flesh out particulars of the study. The text concludes with recommendations worthy of consideration by all of those charged with acquiring library materials, a subset of a larger group of information professionals who will profit from a reading of this book. It will be a welcome addition, as well, to colleges and universities with Library and Information Sciences, Women's Studies, African-American Studies, and other related programs. Although the author does not discuss the changes in publishing that have revolutionized the industry since the end of her core sample in 1990, one suspects that some of the problems she addresses may not have radically altered. Paying serious attention to Dr. Black's arguments may actually help to change all that.—*Harlan Greene, College of Charleston.*

**Robert Darnton.** *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future.* New York: PublicAffairs, 2009. 218p. alk. paper, \$23.95 (ISBN 9781586488260). LC2009-034693.

When Robert Darnton took the reins as director of Harvard's libraries in 2007, he quickly discovered that Harvard was involved "in secret talks with Google about a project" that, as he said, "took my breath away." The project was Google's massive effort to digitize millions of books, known as Google Book Search, and Darnton spent a good deal of time working to finalize the arrangements for this now well-known project. He was, suddenly, a major player in an effort that many felt might usurp the traditional roles of print book publishers and academic libraries.

Darnton is a noted historian of the book, having published several important

works on French publishing history. He has also served as a trustee of the New York Public library and, early in his career, as a reporter for *The New York Times*. As a scholar, author, and reporter, Darnton brought an impressive, well-rounded understanding of traditional print publishing to the negotiating table with Google.

Given this intimate personal and professional history with what he calls “e-books and old books,” Darnton brings interesting insights to this discussion of the role of print and electronic media in the present and future. “Far from deploring electronic modes of communication,” he states that his goal is to “explore the possibilities of aligning them with the power that Johannes Gutenberg unleashed more than five centuries ago. What common ground exists between old books and e-books? What mutual advantages link libraries with the Internet?” Darnton’s grappling with these questions is the subject of this lively and highly readable collection.

As the subtitle suggests, the book is divided into three sections: Past, Present, and Future, containing a total of eleven essays. It’s really a compact anthology of Darnton’s thoughts on the modern state of the codex, as all the essays were previously published between 1999 and 2009, mostly in the *New York Review of Books* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The content has been revised and edited for this volume.

Darnton covers a range of topics. He provides an overview of the “information landscape,” drawing on his background

as a journalist and researcher to place the creation and “stability” of information into historic context. He discusses the significant merits and shortcomings of Google’s book digitization project and discusses the role of the library in the electronic information age. He writes about other electronic publishing efforts, particularly the American Historical Association’s Gutenberg-e project and the role of the monograph in the tenure process.

In one essay, he takes on Nicholson Baker’s controversial *Double Fold*, addressing each of Baker’s main points, noting that Baker’s text “should be read as a journalistic jeremiad rather than a balanced account of library history over the last fifty years.” Other essays address the importance of descriptive bibliography and the “heretical” work of Donald F. McKenzie, the love of reading and the work of seventeenth century British bibliophile William Drake, as well as the book’s closing essay, the appropriately titled “What Is the History of Books?”

Through it all, Darnton holds true to his own love of books, be they electronic texts or eighteenth-century French tomes, and invites us to share his enthusiasm through a series of reasoned, thoughtful essays. Any librarian with a love of book history or concerns about the future of the profession will find much to agree with, and much to debate, in this well-written volume. — *Gene Hyde, Radford University.*

**Thomas A. Peters.** *Library Programs Online: Possibilities and Practicalities of Web Conferencing.* Santa Barbara, Calif.: Libraries Unlimited, 2009. 159p. alk. paper, \$40 (ISBN 9781591583493). LC2009-027036.

The ways we communicate have changed drastically in the last decade. The traditional in-person, written, and telephone communications are now complemented by a host of new technologies such as smartphones, computers, laptops and netBooks. Geographic boundaries and time itself are much less significant bar-

### Index to advertisers

Annual Reviews	399
Archival Products	466
CHOICE	400
EBSCO	cover 2
ISTE	434
Modern Language Assoc.	cover 4
Palgrave	cover 3
World Scientific Publishing	402-403