Book Reviews

No buses for years, and then…

Minčić-Obradović, Ksenija (2011) *E-books in Academic Libraries*

Oxford: Chandos. 203pp.

Reviewed by Chris Armstrong

Making an excellent companion to Facet's recent *e-Books in Libraries* (Price and Havergal, 2011), this volume narrows the focus to academic libraries, and is drawn from the author's own experiences at the University of Auckland Library. Offering a brief overview of the world of e-books and then covering the issues surrounding their use in an academic library, the author hopes that the recent experiences in Auckland will help "libraries and publishers develop a better understanding of e-books, and how this powerful medium can best be used in the academic environment."

Paralleling as it does the material in our UKeiG training workshops on e-books in libraries, the volume is almost exactly the book I would have written had I set out to do so! The book is written from the point of view of the practitioner and covers both the positive and negative aspects of e-books in libraries. There is also a very helpful comparison of usage studies (including the two UK JISC studies: SuperBook and the National e-Book

Observatory, NeBO) as an introduction to two studies undertaken in the University of Auckland, all of which make a helpful backdrop to the other chapters.

There is a section on e-book publishing (including free e-books and the Google Books project) which discusses digital rights management and its effect on libraries, and then a section on integrating e-books into the library collection followed by a chapter on collection management issues that offers discussion on, and some solutions to, many of the problems that e-books pose. Usefully, the section on integration highlights Springer's best practice for implementing an e-book strategy and the following chapter includes a checklist of points that librarians should consider before selecting a new e-book collection. In our training we always emphasise the need to promote, not simply offer access to, e-books, and Chapter 5 describes a range of initiatives that the author has used. It is also the chapter that looks at library users' opinions of, and reactions to, e-books.

Among the management issues covered in the various chapters are the huge variety of purchase models and licensing options, which are discussed in a couple of places emphasising that the variety is a significant problem for librarians; inter-library loans (ILL); and integrated library systems – where both Ex Libris Verde and Serials Solutions 360 Resource Manager are both noted as

increasingly popular, and the Kuali Open Library Environment is highlighted as a useful alternative. ILL is not normally allowed by e-book licences and our experience matches that of the author who notes that this is "an issue of concern for libraries." Of interest here is a recent article by Michael Levine-Clark (2011) that suggests short-term lease as an alternative.

In the final chapters the author looks at the ways in which e-books can help libraries "align closely with the priorities of their universities" and discusses future considerations such as barriers to adoption (lack of standards, lack of seamless access, etc.) and lack of relevant content, especially where textbooks are concerned. Chapter 6 looks at the new opportunities for teaching and learning offered by e-books and mentions the NeBO research as showing the e-books are most often used to locate specific information rather than for linear reading, stating that this "indicates that e-books are well suited for research purposes." While this is generally true, NeBO also noted shortcomings in the various interfaces that in some cases inhibited browsing and easy research. At the same time, academics were often uneasy with the students' lack of contiguous reading.

All things considered this is a very accessible book written in an easy style, and its coverage of the essential issues surrounding the use and management of e-books in libraries is excellent. It will – or at least, should – become necessary reading for any librarian contemplating or engaged in adding e-books to their collection.

The only mild criticism is that some of the graphics that include up to nine data series are very difficult to interpret without the benefit of colour! It is also unfortunate from the point of view of the text that one of the aggregators used as an example, NetLibrary, became 'e-books on EBSCOhost' during the publication stages of the book, and an addendum slip from the publisher would have been useful, as there is a new interface and purchase model.

References

Levine-Clark, Michael (2011) Whither ILL? The Changing Nature of Resource Sharing for E-Books. *Collaborative Librarianship* 3 (2): 71-72. Available at (PDF)
http://www.collaborativelibrarianship.org/index.php/jocl/article/view/146/92 (29/08/2011)

Price, Kate and Virginia Havergal (eds) (2011) *e-Books in Libraries: a practical guide*. London: Facet.

Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century: John B Thompson

Reviewed by Tracy Kent

As Information Professionals we all have an interest in the world of book publishing. There has been an enormous amount written, both online and in print, about the publishing industry in recent years – not all of which has been as well researched as what is presented here by Thompson. Clearly Thompson has had unprece-dented access to some of the major movers and players throughout the publishing process, making