

with the organisation as a whole. I found the chapter on records management particularly useful. Smith recommends that electronic records be appraised at an early stage to avoid the risk of the information becoming incomplete or unreliable, or changes in IT systems causing the loss of degradation of records. A model action plan for records management is included.

Chapter 7 is a good summary of other legislation affecting information, with a useful table and flow chart outlining differences between legislation, and where access to information is guided by different legislation. The chapter on staffing and training has a useful competency framework for records management staff, as well as sample presentations to use in training, which can be downloaded from a website for the book. Chapter 9 pulls together information from the preceding chapters into an implementation plan, and has a sample plan of a typical project. Smith suggests setting up a tracking system with standard metadata to describe requests and standard fields to record outcomes. This could be networked for particular groups of the public sector; I would have appreciated more detail on this idea.

The Code of Practice under section 46 of the Act requires all public authorities to have a records manager. I would suggest that any public authority affected by the FOI legislation also needs a copy of this book. If they look at the signs of an organisation fully prepared to meet the requirements of FOI (p.140) and find signs lacking, this book will greatly assist. Anything not covered in great detail in the book is covered in the recommended websites.

It is a dense topic, but the book is clearly typeset with good use of headings and white space to make it readable. My only quibble is the rather basic index.

Claire Pillar
Web Coordinator
North Cumbria NHS

Building an Electronic Resource Collection: a practical guide. 2nd ed.

Stuart D Lee and Frances Boyle. Facet Publishing. London. 2004 ISBN 1-85604-531-5 176pp. £29.95

There are times when you might think that adding electronic resources to your library couldn't be more difficult. If it's not deciphering the licence agreement, or getting the online resource permissions set, it's getting the CD-ROM loaded onto the network, or worse still, finding the CD again after someone has borrowed it. Lee and Boyle's book, now in its second

edition, clearly meets a need among librarians.

It's full of clearly laid out checklists to the steps you need to take in implementing a digital resource. Those working in larger institutions will know much, or most, of this, but this doesn't detract from the value of the book as a concise, up-to-date introduction – in fact, if you want the quickest possible start, the whole book is helpfully summarised in bullet points in the last four pages.

There is a valuable glossary, explaining terms that help to mystify the subject, such as "e-TOC" (electronic table of contents), although I noticed the glossary doesn't include terms such as URL or Z39.50 – these might be well-known, but how about "persistent URL" (p.89)? It's full of sensible advice that represents best practice, such as keeping a list of desiderata for proposed additions to the collection. If you can involve your users in realising that the budget is finite, and that adding resources requires a competition for limited funds, then your users are more likely to respect sometimes difficult decisions.

Equally, there is very sensible advice (too little implemented to date in many collections) that the ideal gateway unites print and electronic resources, even if such an integrated gateway raises difficulties of interface design and federated searching: users will eventually want such a seamless resource guide, and this should include learning materials created by the department, including material held on a VLE. One (nameless) subject librarian, when asked about materials provided by lecturers such as extracts for course material, told me "I don't get involved in that kind of thing ... I leave that to the department to implement." One hopes he sees a copy of this book before long.

One of the problems faced by resource managers is multiple budgets. It is not unusual for the print and electronic budget to be managed separately, and Lee and Boyle are clear on the benefits of cataloguing and managing resources in a co-ordinated way wherever possible, to ensure common goals are met.

Very importantly, the authors stress the value of usage statistics. While it is not always easy to interpret online statistics, they nonetheless provide far more information than was possible with print, and yet many libraries fail to make use of the invaluable indicators available from online usage statistics on how much the material is used (or not used) – an invaluable tool for determining future collection strategy. Even turnaways, those who tried to access the resource but were refused access for whatever reason, may provide valuable information on levels of interest in the material.

Some criticisms, given in the hope of making a good resource better. The index doesn't include "consortia", although they are mentioned in the book. Consortia are valuable for libraries because they can provide better value deals, obviously, but they can also ensure better designed product design and delivery, because publishers are often more willing to listen to a consortium's suggestions than to those of an individual library. Free resources are excluded from the book, but that leaves out many freely available yet highly reputable websites with specialist information. The glossary has no mention for Resource Discovery Network, nor is it in the index. As an introductory guide, I was surprised to see the fairly lengthy treatment given to e-books, since much of what is discussed is not yet widely available and subject to change, and therefore less relevant to the resource manager today.

It may be nitpicking, but the detailed checklist for evaluation access asks the librarian to monitor error messages and to calculate how often they appear, for example to check how often the message "too many connections/users" appears. Few librarians will have the time to carry out detailed error analysis of this kind.

Overall, however, these are minor points, and the book deserves every success.

Michael Upshall

is a consultant advising publishers on electronic product development and dissemination

International Yearbook of Library and Information Management, 2003 – 2004 Metadata applications and management
G E Gorman (General Editor). Facet Publishing. London. 2003 ISBN 1-85604-474-2 384pp. £60

This year's volume is devoted to the broad subject of metadata, consisting of six parts:

Perspectives on metadata
Metadata in the humanities
Metadata in government
Metadata in education
Metadata and bibliographic organization
Metadata and other applications
There are fifteen chapters in this volume.

The aim of the volume is "to offer a broad overview of the current state of play with regard to metadata developments and applications both generally and in selected disciplines." The focus of this volume is primarily those activities being undertaken in the UK, America and Australia, with the welcome addition of a contribution from China, outlining the situation there.

Part one, Perspectives on Metadata, contains two overview papers which establish the context for both current issues and future challenges facing information professionals making use of, or creating, metadata.

Part two addresses metadata in the humanities, with one paper providing a detailed analysis of music metadata and the other examining the particular challenges facing those working with metadata within arts based organisations. In particular, that "access to structured metadata in the arts is a radical idea."; because "In the arts, it is a radical idea to federate cultural assets."

Part three examines metadata in government, the first paper outlining the integration of the components of a comprehensive information architecture, using the State of Minnesota portal as particular example. The second paper, Metadata and the UK Archives Network, discusses the range of international and national standards for content and data exchange, and the related issues facing archivists in the development of the online services making up the National Archives Network.

Part four looks at metadata in education by focussing on experiences in both the US and Australia. The American perspective focuses on metadata as it relates to those educational resources necessary to the teaching and learning enterprises; in particular those metadata for describing aspects of educational resources that make them different from metadata describing any other types of digitally available resources. The Australian experience is presented in two parts, firstly discussing the development and application of metadata standards as a feature of the evolving requirements of the education and training sector, and secondly, the notion of value creation in the development of metadata standards and knowledge-based economies is explored.

Part five discusses metadata and bibliographic organization, with three papers ranging over a broad sweep of metadata issues. First, by exploring the confluence of metadata systems which have evolved from electronic information communities and the bibliographic organization systems from the library community, the tensions between the two are examined. The second paper in this part looks at how metadata is taught in LIS courses, concluding that it remains a work in progress. The paper contains a useful overview of those metadata concepts, theoretical understandings and topics which metadata experts have indicated that all LIS students need to know. This section could also be a useful measure for practising information professionals to assess their own competency levels in this area. The third paper in this part is from