

The Library of Texas is a virtual library providing statewide resource discovery, commercial databases, government documents and training. The resource discovery service has the features of a library portal, in having a large number of databases offering cross searching; including means to select appropriate resources; offering a variety of levels of searching; providing personalisation, and more. The paper discusses some of the usability issues involved.

Research for the UK Research Support Libraries Group during 2001 and 2002 into the information needs of academic researchers covered information resources, access to libraries, locating research collections, use of electronic resources, including training and future developments. Among the conclusions were that researchers lacked awareness of resources outside HE; Web use tended to be with generic tools rather than sources like subject gateways being developed for academic uses (as shown in a number of other studies); and the need for better training and guidance from academic libraries.

The European collaborative COINE project deals with cultural objects - so isn't just for libraries - and is developing software to allow people to create and publish their own stories and store and present objects and narrative. The paper was written at the early stages of the project so can only outline plans and is perhaps a little tentative for a permanent volume like this.

The paper on the DAEDALUS project at Glasgow University to archive locally research outputs, such as articles, preprints, theses and reports, doesn't say a great deal about the project, but does have a wider impact since it discusses the trends in scholarly communication that are prompting open archive and institutional repository activity. On the other hand developments in the last year, particularly the recent Select Committee report on scientific publishing, make this part a little dated.

Of wide interest is the paper from Andrew Cox and Anne Morris at Loughborough University on communities of practice, defined as groups of people with a shared interest in a subject who develop solutions, ideas, etc and share knowledge. (Perhaps similar to what were once called invisible colleges). A case study is presented of an unidentified UK IT support discussion list where textual analysis, questionnaires and interviews were used to analyse the working of the list. There is an emphasis on the theories of communities of practice. Reference to other studies of discussion groups and forums would have added to the value of the paper.

I could go on, but merely want to give a flavour of the content. There's probably something for everyone here, but the book lacks a coherence or any real overview for me. Maybe the LWW conferences have lost their distinctiveness as the focus has changed and many of the topics are familiar from other conferences and publications on electronic resources. The price is on the high side – for many people it may be enough to view the slides of (most of) the papers at <http://www.cerlim.ac.uk/conf/lww5/details.php>.

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**Project management: tools and techniques for today's ILS professional**

**Barbara Allen. Facet Publishing. London. 2004  
ISBN 1-85604-504-8 192pp. £29.95**

This book is designed for information professionals involved in any kind of project work. It explores tried and tested methods and techniques for managing projects and considers their use within the information and library field. The book is divided into three main sections: a broad introduction; project life cycle, systems and processes; and projects and people.

Although there is a great deal of information about project management available, this book has a number of strengths.

First, there are many examples taken from actual projects run in libraries. These include physical projects such as moving a library or merging two libraries; IT / web projects like creating a new intranet site or digitising a collection or developing a web-based information skills course; and service delivery projects for example developing a new marketing campaign or restructuring an information service or introducing an information literacy course. There is also the recognition that projects range in size from large complex projects to those involving only one or two staff. The techniques are illustrated by giving specific examples of how they are used in a library context. For example the need to keep close to a project and to double check that deliverables are actually delivered is illustrated by the case of a lab being reported as commissioned when in fact the computers had been delivered but not actually installed. "Chaos theory", whereby a relatively small change in one part of a project can result in unexpected and unwelcome changes elsewhere, is demonstrated by the case where timetable changes introduced elsewhere suddenly beset their information literacy programme. A quick

change of tack to move from allocating students to lectures and workshops to allowing them to sign up for sessions themselves actually improved the takeup of and satisfaction with the programme.

Secondly the book is a useful resource for anyone wanting to formalise their approach to project management. The stages of the project life cycle are clearly described and there are a range of useful tables, checklists and sample documentation which can readily be adapted to specific requirements. The chapter on using ICT to support the project gives a quick overview of some of the common tools available and demonstrates the advantages and disadvantages of their use.

The section on the people side of projects has an interesting discussion of the realities of life for the ILS project worker. It explores the experiences of project workers, differentiating between contract workers and those who work on projects alongside their mainstream ILS roles and identifies the particular difficulties inherent in both scenarios. The tensions between project and mainstream work for staff involved in both are captured in the example of

the end of a major move into a new building. After many months of very hard work organising and effecting this move suddenly the work was over and normal life returned. The impact of this was a general feeling of flatness and, over the next couple of months, increased sickness and staff absence. Anyone who has ever worked on a big project and experienced its completion, no matter how successful, can certainly relate to this.

**Helen Edwards**

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Cornish **copyright** 4th ed.

Feather **the information society** 4th ed.

Browne & Jerney **website indexing** 2nd ed.