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A Review of "Social Media for Creative Libraries"

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SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CREATIVE LIBRARIES. Bradley, Phil. London: Facet Publishing, 2015. 169pp. ISBN 978-1-85604-713-5.

This book is the second edition of the author's 2007 *How to Use Web 2.0 in Your Library*. Because social media has developed so quickly since then, Bradley updated the book under this new title. As he points out (xi), we "quickly dropped" the "Web 2.0" terminology. "Social media" has become the preferred term, although the author expresses doubt whether it has "helped or hindered the use of tools that are … an integral part of the phenomenon." (3).

Consisting of ten chapters and an appendix, Bradley discusses the wide range of tools that fall under the "social media" umbrella. Throughout, however, he stresses that he strives to "focus on the activities first, and then the tools will follow" (112). Chapter 1 ("An introduction to social media") asks "so what is 'social media'?", although he doesn't actually give a concise definition until near the end of the book, explaining that "'social media' is not exactly a strict term with clear definitions" (149). Chapter 2 ("Authority checking") deals with both the advantage and disadvantage of social media tools: that almost anyone can create online content. "Content cannot be trusted" (27), at least not like in the past when most published content was subject to peer review. Chapter 3 ("Guiding tools") focuses on providing access to good material; tools such as Google custom search engines and bookmarking services such as Delicious and Diigo are featured.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present tools to support current awareness, presentations, and training, respectively. In Chapter 7 ("Communication") the author discusses how libraries can effectively communicate with our users; Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and blogs are all highlighted. Marketing and promotion of our libraries are the subjects of chapters 8 and 9; I found chapter 9 especially interesting for its discussion of various image tools and services that can be used to create library promotional tools. For example, there is a site called Vizualize.me where one can connect to their LinkedIn.com profile, and the site will compose a "resumé" in infographic format. Chapter 10 ("Creating a social media policy") considers the things that must be taken into account by a library in crafting a social media policy. The Appendix ("Social media disasters") was perhaps the most entertaining section, as it relates some well-known examples where the use of social media has gone terribly wrong or where it led to major corporate embarrassments. Included are the "United Breaks Guitars" case of 2009, and the incident where two Domino's Pizza employees recorded themselves doing disgusting things to pizzas. Each chapter ends with a brief summary of the content, and also links to all the online tools mentioned.

I think the book's value lies largely with the wealth of online tools presented that support the various activities in which libraries engage to connect with their users. All too often libraries start and then stop with just a Facebook page or a Twitter account; this book opens up numerous possibilities for libraries to become creative with their outreach. Although public libraries may benefit the most, I think there is something in Phil Bradley's work for all library types.

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