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Book Review: Library Technology and User Services: Planning, Integration, and Usability Engineering

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LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY AND USER SERVICES: PLANNING, INTEGRATION, AND USABILITY ENGINEERING. Chow, Anthony and Bucknall, Tim. Oxford, UK: Chandos Publishing, 2012. 148pp. ISBN 978-1-84334-638-8.

"[G]iven the wide array of library technology options … identifying and providing the most appropriate and cost-effective library technologies can be a significant challenge." (xxi) Authors Anthony Chow and Tim Bucknall address that challenge in *Library Technology and User Services*. The authors further state that their goal is "to introduce library technology within the framework of systems design and systematic planning, in order to ensure that alignment is high between the technologies used and the users ultimately served." (xxii)

The book is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 looks at the development of libraries from ancient times and states that their function remains the same: to meet the information needs of users. The ADDIE model is also introduced, one of numerous incarnations of the general design process (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate). Chapter 2 focuses on strategic planning. Besides other useful information, the authors clearly point out the difference between a mission statement and a vision statement.

Chapter 3, the longest chapter, profiles the hardware and software needs of a typical public, academic, and school library. The authors use a number of bar and pie graphs to illustrate library website management distribution and student research preferences. Unfortunately, the multi-section pie graphs in shades of gray were somewhat difficult to interpret. I also failed to understand the reason for incorporating the three FAQ sections.

Technology budgeting, including zero-sum and line-item, is the topic of Chapter 4. Chapter 5 asks the question, "Is technology meeting the needs of the organization's users?", relating the logic model to strategic goals introduced in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6 examines emerging technology trends in libraries. The section on "pervasive web usability and usability testing" discusses another iteration of the design process, the EDDE model (Engage, Design, Develop, and Evaluate) of youth website design. The section "Virtual Worlds" includes author Chow's case study data on Second Life, noting the "mixed success" of one public library's venture into that particular virtual world. Limited support, lack of clear goals, and inadequate available staff time are all possible problems confronting a library in establishing and managing a presence on Second Life.

Despite some interesting information here and there, overall I found *Library Technology and User Services: Planning, Integration, and Usability Engineering* to be rather unremarkable in its presentation, writing, and graphics. The authors targeted the book to practitioners, faculty, and students (xxi), but I think the book would be most beneficial as a textbook in a library management course.

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