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Review of Pop Goes the Library: Using Pop Culture to Connect with Your Whole Community

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**POP GOES THE LIBRARY: USING POP CULTURE TO CONNECT WITH
YOUR WHOLE COMMUNITY**

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POP GOES THE LIBRARY: USING POP CULTURE TO CONNECT WITH YOUR WHOLE COMMUNITY. Sophie Brookover and Elizabeth Burns. *Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc., 2008, 298 pp., ISBN 978-1-57387-336-9, \$39.50.*

Pop Goes the Library is an excellent source covering pop culture and pop culture collections, programs, and services, primarily in public and school libraries. The authors are librarians with experience working with youth and teens. In this book, they expand on the ideas presented in their blog, “Pop Goes the Library,” which Sophie Brookover started in April 2004 and Elizabeth Burns joined a year later. They address various aspects of pop culture in libraries and, more importantly, how libraries can use pop culture to build and strengthen relationships with current and potential library users.

Practical ideas and strategies are presented in eight chapters that are fun and easy to read. These chapters discuss defining and using pop culture to connect with patrons, creating a pop niche for the library, building a pop culture collection, marketing and outreach, spotting trends, using information technology, and presenting programs that pop. In the first two chapters, the authors provide an introduction to pop culture, which they define as “whatever people in your community are talking, thinking, and reading about.” Pop culture includes television, movies, music, comic books, graphic novels, magazines, sports, gaming, and technology. The authors emphasize that a library’s pop culture collections and programs “must reflect *your community’s* wants and needs, not your own.” They encourage librarians and library staff to find out what is important to community members by asking and listening.

In chapter 3, the authors provide an overview of collection development strategies and tools for selection of materials, including print and online sources. Chapter 4 focuses on advocacy, marketing, public relations, and outreach to build and maintain support for pop culture in the library. This chapter is especially useful since it conveys tips and strategies that can be

applied by all types of libraries to their marketing and outreach efforts. In chapter 5, the authors discuss trendspotting, which means identifying pop culture trends. Then, in chapter 6, they describe how current technology “can be used in innovative ways to provide pop culture library services such as materials, programming, and outreach.” This chapter offers an overview of technologies that can be utilized in libraries, such as portable media players, blogs and wikis, social networking sites, social bookmarking, social catalogs, podcasting, video sharing, and instant messaging. The last two chapters describe programming with pop culture collections and provide ideas for library events for the entire year. The authors share interesting ways to promote collections and services through pop culture programs highlighting such events as the Super Bowl (sports) and the Academy Awards (movies). These ideas for pop culture programming can target different demographic groups. Pop culture is not just for children or teens.

Each chapter includes a “Voices from the Field” section that contains selected responses to questions posed in an online survey conducted by the authors in July 2007. They represent the best responses from over 700 librarians and library staff to questions on defining pop culture, tracking library patrons’ pop culture interests, incorporating patrons’ pop culture interests into collection development and program planning, marketing pop culture collections and services, and presenting pop culture programs.

From start to finish, this book contains a wealth of valuable information. There are four detailed appendices, including a list of core pop culture resources for library professionals in print and online; a pop programming year-round calendar; and a listing of Web sites in the order in which they appeared in every chapter. Lastly, there is an extensive list of resources and recommended reading associated with each chapter of the book. The authors update and

maintain links to these online sources related to pop culture on the book's companion blog, www.popgoesthelibrary.com/popbook.

I highly recommend this book. I think it is essential for librarians and library staff working in public and school libraries. However, the information contained in the book can be applied by librarians working in different types of libraries serving various users. Academic librarians such as myself can incorporate pop culture when teaching information literacy to college students, preparing library displays, and planning library events. I definitely will refer to this book often since it is filled with great programming ideas that can be put to use immediately. The references to print and online resources contained in the appendices certainly merit further exploration. After reading this wonderful book, I am excited about bringing pop culture into my library and connecting better with my library community!

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