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Review of Managing Your Internet & Intranet Services: The Information Professional's Guide to Strategy

David Lodwick
Cleveland State University, d.lodwick@csuohio.edu

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David Lodwick

**MANAGING YOUR INTERNET & INTRANET SERVICES: THE
INFORMATION PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO STRATEGY**

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MANAGING YOUR INTERNET & INTRANET SERVICES: THE INFORMATION PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO STRATEGY. 2nd edition. Peter Griffiths. *London: Facet Publishing, 2004, 243 pp., ISBN 1-85604-483-1.*

Library and bookstore shelves are loaded down with many thick books that offer detailed instructions on using ASP, CGI, HTML, XML, PHP, JavaScript, and a wide variety of other tools in constructing a website. This is not one of those. Peter Griffiths's book is a guide for the mid-level manager who supervises a team of web specialists in the creation and maintenance of an organization's internet and intranet sites. The existence of a guide like this one reflects the modern reality that fewer and fewer business entities allow their websites to be created and managed by a single webmaster working alone and apart from the usual management structures. The "web team" now consists of a growing number of designers, editors, content providers, programmers, technicians, and project managers.

In *Managing Your Internet & Intranet Services*, the author takes a broad view of the issues to be addressed by the supervisor of a web department, beginning with the initial decision to have a website at all and working through server hosting, contract negotiation, copyright, search engines, access for the visually impaired, quality control, marketing, archiving, statistics, acceptable use policies, blogging, etc. His perspective is that of a special librarian, but academic and public librarians will find that many of the items discussed are relevant in their contexts as well. A short glossary of technical terms and a useful appendix of resources for additional reading are included, but in the text itself Griffiths avoids technical language, preferring to present background, explanation, suggestions and warnings in plain English. (Note: This is a British book, with money measured in pounds and obligatory discussion of the necessity to provide content in

Gaelic and Welsh. American readers generally will have no problems with terms like “bespoke,” and may enjoy the suggestion that they “out-house the server.”)

Griffiths sees the mid-level web manager as an important link between, on the one hand, the artists and computer specialists who do the actual creation and maintenance of the website and, on the other hand, the senior managers who he says lack a thorough understanding of the internet. He proposes a more business-like and systematic approach to the management of web departments than frequently has been found in this growing and changing arena. Thus, he begins with the question “Why have a website?” and proceeds to the preparation of a “business case” in favor of a corporate web presence, complete with a detailed balance sheet of costs and benefits. Some readers will applaud this careful and traditional approach to an expensive undertaking, while others may consider it a grueling route to a foregone conclusion. Griffiths concedes that “[d]espite the relative maturity of the web, there has been little real progress in establishing benchmarks for sound business cases and business plans.”

In other areas, though, *Managing Your Internet & Intranet Services* enjoys more success. Griffiths understands the importance of marketing, including internal marketing, and he emphasizes the importance of reporting back to the organization on new developments and progress on long-term projects. He also recognizes the importance of the people who are supervised by a web manager, and devotes several pages to the travails of identifying, attracting, and retaining qualified staff. Primarily, though, the value of the book comes from its amalgamation of information on an array of important topics that a web manager – particularly one who is transferred to the job laterally rather than coming up through the ranks – needs to understand.

*David Lodwick
Systems librarian
Cleveland State University*