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Review of Serials in Libraries: Issues and Practices

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SERIALS IN LIBRARIES: ISSUES AND PRACTICES

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SERIALS IN LIBRARIES: ISSUES AND PRACTICES. Steve Black. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2006, xiv, 193 pp., ISBN 1-59158-258-X, paperback, \$45.

Serials in Libraries: Issues and Practices is intended as a practical guide to serials management for library and information science students, new serials librarians, and other librarians. It builds upon two previous publications, *Managing Serials in Libraries* (JAI Press, 1996) and *Management of Serials in Libraries* (Libraries Unlimited, 1998).

The book includes similar topics as its predecessors, but it has its own merits and unique features. It offers breadth as well as depth in its introduction to important issues and practices since the 1990s, such as remote access to serials and new business models for providing online access. However, as the author states in the introduction, this book is “neither too academic nor too informal.” The selection of issues and practices is representative, relevant, and up-to-date, and t3-

he views presented in this book appear to be valid and current.

The book begins with describing the changing serials environment and the new situation with remote access serials. In chapter 2, “Remote Access Serials,” the author provides a useful overview and detailed information about this important issue. It discusses characteristics and types of remote access serials, costs to libraries and library consortia of providing patrons with access to remote access serials, costs to publishers of producing serials online and consolidation among publishers. All this is what libraries are facing in daily serials work. It does lead students, new serials librarians, and other librarians step-by-step through the work.

Then it goes on to discuss related budgeting, selection, and deselection issues. The chapter titled “Serial Workflow in Libraries” adopts a step-by-step approach and consists of

six sections, including ordering, cataloging, receiving, claiming, shelving and access, binding, and weeding of print and online serials. Next, it explores the principles for bibliographic control of serials and the ways to facilitate and measure library patrons' access to serials.

In addition, the author discusses broader issues that go beyond serials management in libraries (i.e., issues involved in changing economic aspects of serials and publishing in scholarly journals, such as peer review, rank and tenure, and consortia).

As a result, the reader is familiarized with ways of dealing with the challenges that serials pose in library management, including changes that have taken place and are taking place in terms of serials publishing, expectations of library users, technological advances, and budgetary pressures. At the same time, the book also provides the reader with a grand picture of the serials environment to facilitate a better understanding of these challenges. The author points out that the most significant challenge to serials management is the increasing tension among the vested interests of authors, publishers, vendors, and, of course, librarians. This book can help serials librarians who face these tremendous challenges of managing and organizing print and online serials make educated decisions on planning and implementing the transition to integrated serials management.

The book has two sections titled “Suggestions for Further Reading” and “References” at the end of each chapter. The information provided in those sections makes it easier for library students and scholars to do further research on related topics.

At the end of the book, there are also a glossary of relevant terms and an index of the terms used in various chapters, which create a web of cross referencing links to various chapters in the book. This makes the book more accessible to the intended readers, and thus

greatly assists them in reading and understanding the relevant terms involved in issues and practices of serials they investigate. However, the glossary and index are incomplete. For instance, Dublin Core Metadata is discussed in the text, but it appears neither in the glossary nor in the index. In addition, the book does not have in-text citations, direct quotations, or footnotes beyond the secondary source referencing. Nevertheless, thanks to the existing reference features, the book also qualifies as a reference book on serials management in libraries.

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