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Review of Jump-Start Your Career as a Digital Librarian: A Lita Guide by Jane Monson

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JUMP-START YOUR CAREER AS A DIGITAL LIBRARIAN: A LITA GUIDE. Jane Monson, Editor. *Chicago, IL: ALA TechSource, 2013, 248 pp., ISBN 978-1-55570-877-1, softcover, $47.00 (ALA members: $42.30).*

There is an increased need for digital librarian skills in traditional, as well as, new areas of library and information science. Because digital librarian skills are so varied and can reasonably fit into a variety of departments, it can be unclear where to start. Jane D. Monson, digital initiatives librarian at the University of Northern Colorado, has attempted to provide "21 mentors" in this compilation. It is full of valuable information and advice from experts in the field whether the reader is considering a career, transitioning a career, or beginning a career as a digital librarian.

Part 1: Planning Your Career contemplates what it means to be a digital librarian and what someone on this career path should accomplish during library school. It also includes excellent job search advice and descriptions of the hiring practices of different types of libraries and other institutions in need of digital librarians. The section on transferable skills is useful for library professionals with expanding job responsibilities and others making a career transition. Having just gone through a job search, I found myself agreeing with much of the advice in this section.

Chapter 5 focuses on ways to progress in your career at any size of institution through "demonstrated professional engagement." It encourages readers to understand their strengths and weaknesses and pursue professional activities that they can succeed at and enjoy. While this advice can be applicable to any area of the profession, there are specific examples relevant for digital librarians. This chapter leads nicely into "Part 2: Practicing Your Career."

Part 2 includes chapters on the fundamentals of many digital librarian positions from technology to metadata to digital preservation. It can be challenging to keep up with emerging

technologies and skills, but it can be even more difficult to know where to start. Chapters 6 and 7 focus on what digital librarians need to add to their repertoire from web design using HTML to utilizing a content management system to digital project management skills using the five phases of project management.

A key component of any digital project is metadata, and Chapter 8 defines what it is and differentiates between metadata standards, content standards, and metadata schemas. Chapter 9 elaborates on the topic by discussing metadata creation and management and how best practices fit in. Together, these chapters are an excellent primer for beginners.

While robust and sharable metadata is essential to build useful digital collections there are other things to consider. Digital librarians need to understand copyright, licensing, and data curation issues. Chapter 10 provides a history of scholarly publishing and describes some of the challenges faced when moving toward electronic publishing models and open access. As scholarly communication evolves, the authors point out several roles for digital librarians in the "new scholarly publishing landscape."

Because digital projects often involve a variety of people from several departments or organizations, it is important to understand the various aspects and challenges of digital project collaboration as discussed in Chapter 11.

Finally, Chapter 12 discusses the important topic of digital preservation. When curating digital collections, it is important to ensure that content will be accessible in the future. Digital preservation standards and practices are still developing, and this chapter provides an excellent introduction.

This compilation is well-organized and includes a table of contents, a glossary, a section about the contributors, and an index. Relevant anecdotes and case studies enhance several topics and useful lists of recommended resources follow most chapters.

As a new digital librarian, I understand how important versatility and adaptability are and how diverse digital librarian skills and roles can be within the field. If you are planning on or considering entering this exciting area of library and information science, this book is an excellent guide.

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