E-Book Collections

Catherine Anson and Ruth R. Connell. *E-Book Collections*. Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 2009. 183 pp. $45.00. Paper. ISBN: 1594078254.

The ARL SPEC Kits are designed to present research on current issues facing academic libraries through a combination of detailed surveys and practical documentation from the responding libraries, which are ARL members. Anson and Connell's survey encompasses aspects of e-book management such as e-book selection, collection development, and promotion. Like all SPEC Kits, the first half of the book contains an executive summary of the survey and the survey results in their entirety, including comments. The executive summary gives a good overview of the challenges and opportunities e-book collections present for libraries.

Every aspect of e-book management is covered by the survey, such as how budgeting is done, how statistics are used, and benefits and challenges of having e-book collections. It is helpful that most of the respondents gave thoughtful comments when there was an opportunity to do so. A variety of questions were asked as to the main reasons for purchasing e-books in the first place, as well as specific policies and procedures for acquisition, and the variety of comments about specifics at responding libraries helps to round out the survey.

The second half of the book consists of representative documents collected from the survey respondents. It is encouraging to see that a brief collection development policy is sufficient for large libraries, so even small libraries can find good examples here. While some libraries post these kinds of documents online, it is helpful to have a snapshot of what libraries are doing at a particular moment in time, and it will be helpful to review these documents again in coming years to see how e-book collection management has evolved.

Next are representative screens of online catalogs to show how searches can be limited to e-resources or e-books, as well as screen shots of how the full record for an e-book appears in different catalogs. Another section of screenshots consists of web pages dedicated to describing e-book collections at each library. Some libraries group their collections by vendor, while others provide subject-based finding aids or other search mechanisms for e-books; the various examples of search and discovery for e-books are useful. While most e-book collections represented are online, a few libraries loan e-book readers, and their loan policies are included.

Additional documentation is provided on promotional methods, such as blogs and e-newsletters, and a brief bibliography completes the volume. Overall, the documentation provided complements the variety of issues on e-book management covered by the survey. For libraries of all sizes and types, this book provides many practical examples of how to manage e-book collections through the survey responses and by the selection of documentation from the responding libraries.

Lisa Gonzalez
Catholic Theological Union