More Technology for the Rest of Us: A Second Primer on Computing for the Non-IT Librarian

Nancy Courtney, ed. *More Technology for the Rest of Us: A Second Primer on Computing for the Non-IT Librarian.* Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2010. 172 pp. $50.00. Paperback. ISBN: 9781591589396.

This edited volume is a sequel to a 2005 publication, *Technology for the Rest of Us: A Primer on Computer Technologies for the Low-Tech Librarian.* Both volumes aim, in the words of editor Nancy Courtney, to "provide an introductory set of readings on technology topics that are fundamental to library operations today. The intended audience is librarians, library school students, or library staff members who are not in technology-related positions but who nevertheless want to have a greater understanding of the technologies that affect us on a daily basis" (vii). Since there are very few librarians who would not like to have such an understanding, this is potentially a very useful book. It largely fulfills that promise, although in a few cases the charge to the authors to "describe how the technology works and its current and potential uses for a nonspecialist audience" seems to have gotten lost in translation.

The first volume dealt with computer networks, wireless, cybertheft, OpenURL, RFID, blogs and RSS, XML, open archives, local digital repositories, adaptive technology, and digital image management. This volume covers web services, digital data preservation and curation, cloud computing, learning management and content management systems, authentication and authorization, data visualization, digital preservation, systems, free and open source software, metadata repurposing, and—last but by no means least—how librarians can productively deal with IT professionals. The book also includes a helpful glossary of terms and acronyms treated in the various essays, along with a rather lightweight index. The contributors are all librarians or other information professionals, mostly at large academic libraries (Ohio State, Duke, North Carolina State University, Purdue, University of Dayton, Tufts, UC San Diego, Montana, and Montana State), with one hailing from the Boston Public Library.

The reaction to individual essays by non-IT librarians will depend on their degree of familiarity with the topics under discussion. Regardless, the best essays in the book are those that raise global questions about their topic before moving straight into the particulars of straightening out acronyms or tinkering with code. Christopher Strauber's "Cloud Computing: Distributed Power, Remote Storage, and Web Services" gives a clear explanation of what the "cloud" is ("a combination of distributed computing, remote storage, and web services that users can access from anywhere" [32]), why librarians might want to use it (and how they already are), and related concerns of privacy, security, and service. Kim Duckett's "Learning Management Systems" discusses the roles libraries can play as universities move more fully into online education, with suggestions for system-level and course-level integration of library resources into an LMS, and acknowledgement of the cultural and technological barriers to this integration. Frances Rice's "Content Management Systems" outlines how a CMS enables libraries with responsibilities for website design and maintenance to create content and design separately. She also includes helpful recommendations for vendors and approaches, whether a library is considering creating its own CMS, purchasing one, or modifying open source software. Steve McCann's "Data Visualization" is useful for anyone— inside or outside of a library—who has to present statistics to a non-statistical audience, as he explains how to create data displays that convey information without getting in their own way. Scot Colford explains the characteristics

of, and distinctions between, free and open source software (F/OSS)—how they both compare to each other and to proprietary software on ethical as well as financial levels, and why, to quote Richard Stallman, "'Free software' is a matter of liberty, not price. To understand the concept you should think of 'free' as in 'free speech,' not as in 'free beer.'" Colford also addresses the reasons why moving to free and/or open source solutions has been difficult for libraries on a global level, though there are smaller ways we all use such software on a daily basis. This may be more of an issue in large university library systems than in smaller theological libraries, many of which are already using F/OSS solutions out of necessity. Finally, Elizabeth Black builds on the Myers-Briggs personality test and Maslow's hierarchy of needs to explain methods for "Communicating Effectively with IT" (Information Technology, not the Madeleine L'Engle villain) to accomplish common goals.

The remaining topics treated (Web services, authentication, metadata repurposing, and two essays on digital data preservation) also contain useful reflections, but may require a higher level of background understanding of the topic in order for those essays to be really helpful to their intended audience. It is somewhat unfortunate that the book begins with the Web services and data preservation and curation essays, which are among the more difficult to follow. (Persevere, or skip them.) Also, while the book is clearly applicable to the smaller and more ad hoc situations in which many theological libraries find themselves—the data visualization, content management systems, and F/OSS essays are of particular value here—the contributors all are writing from the perspective of large institutions; thus, some questions remain unasked. The price may also be a bit forbidding for smaller libraries. Still, the book is probably worth the money due to its coverage of so many different topics. It has at least something that will help everyone in its demystification of acronyms, examples of best practices, and recommended resources (the data preservation, data visualization, and CMS essays are particularly thorough in recommending further reading).

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