Impact of Digital Technology on Library Collections and Resource Sharing (review)

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Impact of Digital Technology on Library Collections and Resource Sharing (review)

Abstract
A snapshot of the issues facing libraries in the digital age, this book gives readers a view of how digital formats are changing libraries today. The contrast between the vendor and publisher positions as they attempt to determine how the market for electronic publications will develop is presented along with a view from the librarians trying to design digital services and collections that incorporate digital technologies.

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Comments
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the Netherlands, and Australia, who described current practices and challenges in digital preservation. The volume also features an introduction by Deanna Marcum, president of CLIR.

This publication can be considered a follow-up to CLIR’s 1996 landmark report, *Preserving Digital Information* by John Garrett and Donald Waters. The Garrett and Waters report has been highly influential and has shaped much of the discussion of digital preservation since its publication. Though the current volume does not break new ground in the same way, it still is an important contribution to the literature.

*The State of Digital Preservation* begins with two overview articles. Kenneth Thibodeau, director of the Electronic Records Archives Program at the National Archives and Records Administration, presents an excellent summary of technological approaches to digital preservation. Thibodeau’s article will be useful to a broad range of librarians and archivists, especially those new to the field of digital preservation. The second overview article, a very brief one by Margaret Hedstrom of the University of Michigan, presents a framework for future research. This article will be of most value to those already involved in digital preservation research initiatives.

The rest of the volume largely consists of progress reports on various projects testing approaches to preserving digital information. Meg Bellinger reports on four aspects of the Online Computer Library Center’s (OCLC’s) current activities in digital preservation. Laura Campbell summarizes work on the National Digital Infrastructure Initiative at the Library of Congress. Titia van der Werf describes initiatives at the National Library of the Netherlands. Colin Webb shares lessons from the National Library of Australia, which has been particularly active in preserving Web content. Finally, Donald Waters, program officer for scholarly communication at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, reports on the task of archiving scholarly e-journals.

This volume does an excellent job of achieving its purpose—summarizing some of the major large-scale international initiatives in digital preservation. As with much of the literature, however, it fails to address the situation faced by small and medium-sized institutions. Perhaps CLIR could assemble a conference to address digital preservation for smaller institutions that will have to face the challenge largely without external grant resources.

Digital preservation is a fast-moving topic of concern to librarians and archivists worldwide. By making these conference proceedings available so quickly, CLIR has performed a valuable service for the information professions. *The State of Digital Preservation* is a volume worth acquiring for the latest insights into this important topic.

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A snapshot of the issues facing libraries in the digital age, this book gives readers a view of how digital formats are changing libraries today. The contrast between the vendor and publisher positions as they at-
tempt to determine how the market for electronic publications will develop is presented along with a view from the librarians trying to design digital services and collections that incorporate digital technologies. This volume contains eight edited papers from a conference held at the University of Oklahoma Libraries in March of 2001. The editor, Sul H. Lee, is broadly published and is also the editor of the *Journal of Library Administration*. Overall the papers present a wealth of information on a variety of interesting topics; however, they are not groundbreaking in either their coverage or their ideas. Most libraries, particularly academic libraries, are facing budget questions on a grand scale, but these articles add little to new information to the body of knowledge in this area. Although it is important that proceedings of conferences are shared with the profession at large, most of the papers included in this volume are at best a good summary of the state of the profession and the issues. Few new solutions are offered and once again Haworth Publishing has double-published an issue of a journal, *Journal of Library Administration*, as a monograph.

Perhaps the best of the eight papers is Paula Kaufman’s “Whose Good Old Days Are These? A Dozen Predictions for the Digital Age,” in which she offers twelve predictions for the future of digital resources in academic libraries. Several other papers in many ways discuss the status quo. Clifford Lynch looks at the meaning of digital books for libraries without really offering any new alternatives, and the vendor and the publisher articles, although of general interest, break no new ground. Perhaps a better article in this vein is Barbara Baruth’s “Missing Pieces that Fill in the Academic Library Puzzle: Cutting Edge Technologies Can Assure Our Place in the Big Picture” (*American Libraries* June/July 2002, p. 58–60). One article, from the perspective of special collections and their interest in the digital future, lays out the issues but offers little advice. The final article, “Copyright and Intellectual Property Legislation and Related Activities,” by Prudence Adler (Associate Executive Director, Association of Research Libraries), does a thorough job of discussing the copyright issues facing libraries; however, because it was delivered in 2001 it did not comment on the results of the Tasini case or the Sony Bono Copyright Extension case. Both these cases have since been decided in the courts.

Many of the issues addressed in the book are timely ones. How will scholars react to digital formats? How will electronic resources change the direction of collection development? Will libraries stop buying print materials or replace them with digital alternatives? Will library portals become the one-stop shopping answer? And will libraries maintain their central role in the university? However, the answers presented by the authors were not new. Perhaps the weakest feature of the collection is the small to nonexistent readings/bibliographies. I would recommend this book as an excellent overview of the state of digital resources in libraries, easy to read and digest, but not as leading edge answers to questions about the impact of digital technology.

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