BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

You Don't Look Like a Librarian: Shattering Stereotypes and Creating Positive New Images in the Internet Age. By Ruth Kneale. Medford, N.J.: Information Today, Inc., 2009. 216 pages (soft cover). ISBN 978-1-57387-366-6. US\$29.50.

Stereotypes are oversimplified images of a group; they can leave you with a good impression of someone, but more often they perpetuate a negative view. The most common librarian stereotype is that of the bun-wearing, shushing older woman. So what! You may say "I'm not like that." But how we are represented affects how our patrons or stakeholders see us. Our skills and contributions are valued based on the stereotype or image people carry of us. Ruth Kneale is on a mission in her book *You Don't Look Like a Librarian* to examine why people kept telling her "you don't look like a librarian" and to discover what people think a librarian should look like. She does this by investigating contemporary images of librarians in popular culture and by getting to know librarians working in the field today.

You Don't Look Like a Librarian begins by describing the various librarian stereotypes. The first chapter is peppered with some amusing, some scary, and some even insulting anecdotes from librarians across the profession. Kneale poses the question: what are we supposed to look like? "A profession cannot serve those who do not understand its purpose and expertise" (p. 4). Often people don't know who is a librarian. Kneale attributes this to the problem of job titles; what we call ourselves leads to identity confusion for our clients. Kneale conducted a job advertisement review, where she examined job postings for librarians. She compared the salaries offered to librarians with salaries offered for similar work done by non-librarians. The same work classified under a different job title, received higher pay. It would appear that doing the work of a librarian but not calling yourself a librarian nets you more money.

The second chapter is the strongest one in the book; it describes the images of librarians in pop culture. Here, Kneale provides an annotated bibliography of the many books, comics, movies, music, television programs, advertising, toys, and clothing in which librarians play a significant role or are the main subject. After reading this chapter I had to wonder why, with so many images of librarians out there, the image we dislike the most is the strongest?

Chapter 3, "Breaking the Stereotype," showcases current librarians, who through their work and life, dispel the stereotypical librarian image. After a while the chapter started to sound a little like job descriptions with the same story repeated: "you don't look like a librarian." The chapter ends with descriptions of librarian groups that Kneale considers to be breaking the stereotype, for example, Belly Dancing Librarians, Butt Kicking Librarians, and Facebook Librarians.

A discussion on the changing roles of librarians is contained in Chapter 4, "Thoughts on the Future." This chapter focuses on the strengths of librarians for adopting new technologies such as virtual worlds and social networking. Chapter 4 elaborates on what should be done to change the librarian stereotype. The advice given to shatter the stereotype is really common sense: just keep doing what we are already doing, don't be afraid of change, and get out there and sell your skills. This is all very good, but I was looking for more. Kneale's final word of advice is to be "loud and proud." The two appendices of the book contain the summarized results from the *You Don't Look Like a Librarian* survey conducted in 2001 and again in 2008, and the summaries include results of a 2003 "Where's the Librarian" survey directed at library patrons.

You Don't Look Like a Librarian is written in an easy-reading style that makes the book fun to read. There are a number of cartoons and pictures that add to the light-hearted nature of the book. Kneale's book provides a great number of further reading possibilities and the potential for hours of Web surfing. The companion Web site provides updated URLs and information not included in the book. However, the issue of how librarian stereotypes affect our work and the public perception of our profession is only covered superficially. Although Kneale gives excellent examples of librarians who don't fit the stereotype, the heavier issue of what to do and the negative impact of the stereotype is only discussed briefly.

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