

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Library and Information Science: A Guide to Key Literature and Sources. Bemis MF. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions; 2014. Softcover: 304 p. Price: USD\$65.00. ISBN: 978-0-8389-1185-3. Available from: <http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=4033>.

Until now, I would never have agreed to review a print bibliography. I've always thought them to be wildly out of date the minute they hit the shelves. Given my opinion, you might be wondering how exactly I came to review *Library and Information Science: A Guide to Key Literature and Sources* by Michael F. Bemis. I had originally put my name forward to review a book that I thought sounded of interest and was relevant to my position, but that particular book was delayed in publication and unavailable for review. I reluctantly agreed to review Bemis' book and I told myself to look on the bright side and be thankful that this review wouldn't require reading all 304 pages back-to-back like I would have to do with most scholarly works. I'd barely made it through the Introduction and first chapter before I realized just how wrong I was about the usefulness of this book. The book's organized structure and practical content make it a very handy reference tool for anyone working in libraries.

The author of this book, Michael F. Bemis, has reviewed materials for American Reference Books Annual, Library Journal, and other library publications. He recently completed a two-year term as chair of the Materials Reviewing Committee of the Reference and User Services Association. His work in this respect makes him an ideal candidate to compile a bibliography of resources on timeless topics in the profession. His experience at reviewing materials is evident in the thoughtfulness with which this book is organized.

The book is divided into 39 chapters with each chapter covering a pertinent topic in library and information sciences. Some of the topics include administration and management, architecture, careers and employment, collection management, ethics, funding and finance, humour, information technology, law, history of libraries, patron services, programming, readers' advisory, reference work, and statistics. Each chapter has a list of fully annotated books and periodicals and some chapters also contain a list of online-only articles, websites, and (or) databases. Bemis says in the Introduction that the focus of the book is on print books and journals with a copyright date of 2000 to 2012. Electronic resources are included, but are covered in less detail than print resources. Sidebars are included in some chapters, and these include additional information on the topic. For example, the sidebar in the Architecture chapter lists two periodicals that publish special issues on architecture in libraries. Each chapter ends with a list of additional readings. Appendix A lists the many divisions, chapters, and affiliates of the American

Library Association, and Appendix B lists a number of different professional library associations around the world. An author and title index is included at the back of the book.

Bemis has done a good job of selecting topics and choosing resources that are comprehensive in scope and timeless in their relevancy to the field. The chapter topics are of interest to all library personnel. Chapter 36, "Special, Academic, and School Libraries and Librarians", is the exception to this. The resources in this chapter are generally relevant to only one sector such as "Less is more: A practical guide to weeding school library collections" or "The academic library". As well, there are disproportionately more resources focused on school libraries than academic or special libraries. Grouping these library sectors together in one chapter makes it difficult for readers to quickly find materials that pertain to them and their libraries. Having a separate chapter for each library sector would have alleviated this problem and may have left room for additional valuable resources for each sector. At the very least, the chapter should have included headings for each sector with the resources listed appropriately. Chapter 36 is also where one would expect to find a smattering of resources focused on health libraries. However, there is only one book, "Changing Roles and Contexts for Health Library and Information Professionals", that is specific to health libraries and this is listed in brief format under the "Additional Readings" section. Only two of the 26 books listed in the main section of this chapter might be useful to health library professionals, and these focus on library metrics and outreach.

Bemis has selected the resources for this book with care and transparency. On page xii in the Introduction, Bemis lists his four criteria for inclusion. Resources were selected for their timeliness so that they would reflect current trends, issues, or historical perspectives. The second criterion is authority or author qualifications, and this considers who the author is, what organizations s/he belongs to, and whether the book was sponsored or not. Bemis also considered professional standing and looked at how widely a work was quoted and cited in other works in the field. Unfortunately, the method for determining citation rates of included resources is not stated. Lastly, resources were chosen based on special features including tables, diagrams, step-by-step instructions, case studies, and historical context. It is noted that there were some materials reviewed that met the criteria but were not included. The book provides a sample of some of the key resources available, but is not meant to include everything published on a given topic.

Despite the somewhat hefty price tag and some minor issues with creation-to-publication currency, this print bibliography would be a valuable resource and ready

reference tool for anyone working in libraries. “Emphasis is on usefulness and practicality for the working librarian – thus the many ‘how to’ manuals, handbooks, and other materials that may be employed for on-the-job use” (page xi). It may be of particular interest to students, new librarians, library technicians, and those teaching library science or library technology. In general, this book provides a good starting point for anyone wanting to

quickly gather information on a particular area of library and information science.

Kerry Macdonald, BA, MLIS, AHIP

University of Manitoba Libraries,

Carolyn Sifton - Helene Fuld Library,

St. Boniface Hospital

E-mail: Kerry.Macdonald@umanitoba.ca