

## BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

**Libraries beyond their institutions: partnerships that work.** Edited by William Miller and Rita M. Pellen. Binghamton, New York: The Haworth Information Press, 2005–2006. 230 pages (soft cover). ISBN-13: 978-0-7890-2909-6, ISBN-10: 0-7890-2909-X.

It is a rare library that exists in a vacuum; most are part of a system, such as a university or a municipality, and all libraries exist in a broader societal context which requires interaction and cooperative activity. In order to best serve those who need them, libraries must cooperate widely with entities other than themselves.

With the above statement, *Libraries beyond their institutions: partnerships that work* acknowledges how interconnected libraries are with the world around them and offers to provide the reader with a glimpse of what it takes for a library to successfully work with external groups. The book is not a how-to guide or a purely theoretical text but instead offers a mix of perspectives from a variety of librarians representing a variety of backgrounds.

The “chapters” in *Libraries beyond their institutions* include two literature review pieces and 12 descriptions of real partnership projects that have been simultaneously co-published as articles in the *Resource Sharing & Information Networks* (2005–2006, Vol. 18, Nos. 1–2). The projects themselves largely came out of American academic libraries and center around the following themes:

### Education and training

- Building a foundation for collaboration: K-20 partnerships in information literacy
- Building bridges: a research library model for technology-based partnerships
- Play with the Slinky®: learning to lead collaboration through a statewide training project aimed at grants for community partnership
- Cooperative library services in southeast Florida: a staff perspective
- Collaborative training in statistical and data library services: lessons from the Canadian data liberation initiative

### Facilitating access to information resources and information technology

- Library consortia: do the models always work?
- Another kind of diplomacy: international resource sharing

- Preparing ethnic non-profits for the 21st century
- Managing the grey literature of a discipline through collaboration: AgEcon search
- Patent and trademark depository libraries and the United States Patent and Trademark Office: a model for information dissemination

### Miscellaneous projects

- Library assessment as a collaborative enterprise
- Vendor/library collaboration – an opportunity for sharing

Many of the articles featured would be of interest to information professionals working in most types of libraries, whether they are interested in the concept of civic librarianship, improving access for populations in need, or incorporating new technologies into the library. Some of the projects described may inspire the reader to undertake a new collaborative venture or to share insights from their own partnership program. Each article is unique in terms of its level of detail and writing style. Some were written with a flair for storytelling, sharing the development of a particular project and the insights and lessons learned along the way, while others briefly describe a number of projects in less detail. *Libraries beyond their institutions* is indexed by word rather than subject; for the most part the index is not useful because of the large number of terms included that are only mentioned by the authors in passing.

Although the topics presented are interesting, as a journal issue turned monograph, this book presents a selection dilemma. Some libraries, particularly smaller libraries with smaller collection budgets, might think twice about duplicating what is already in the collection if they subscribe to *Resource Sharing & Information Networks*. The topics covered in the book vary widely, making it difficult to do the book justice in a book review, but as journal articles, each chapter has an abstract that could easily be found in a number of bibliographic databases; these abstracts could be used as an additional method to gauge the usefulness of the book as a whole.

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