BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

The Cybrarian's Web 2: An A–Z Guide to Free Social Media Tools, Apps, and Other Resources. Peltier-Davis, Cheryl Ann. NJ: Information Today, Inc.; 2015. Softcover. 343 pages. ISBN 978-1-57387-512-7. $49.50 USD. Available from: http://books.infotoday.com/.

Library professions demand fluency in electronic information sources and technologies and a strong motivation to continue building upon our skills. *The Cybrarian's Web 2: An A–Z Guide to Free Social Media Tools, Apps, and Other Resources* is designed to be a reference point for the library professional seeking to continue their education. We're called upon to use our digital fluency superpowers across an ever-widening spectrum of platforms, both for promoting our libraries and for establishing our own digital presence. This text provides a contextualized environmental scan of online tools, apps, and resources, and can help a motivated professional to use that tech in professional practice.

Be aware, this book is not an introduction to widely used, popular social media tools (which was the focus of Peltier-Davis' 2012 text, *The Cybrarian's Web: An A–Z Guide to 101 Free Web 2.0 Tools and Other Resources*). In this second, unique volume Peltier-Davis deals with an entirely new set of tools, apps, and resources you could use in your professional library practice. The coverage is broad; Peltier-Davis discusses 57 different resources or tech topics, some with overlapping functionality. Each of these is covered in straightforward, jargon-free language that opens a broad discussion of each resource and some of its uses, much like you would hear while chatting with a mentor over coffee.

The text is designed for quick reference. It is organised into five sections that each cover a particular type of technology, and it is further sub-divided into micro-chapters that cover specific resources. In most cases, each micro-chapter focuses upon a single resource, and is divided into three main sections: an overview of the resource's origin and development, features and functionality, and suggestions for use "by the library community." Most chapters conclude with endnotes and an FYI panel with other relevant information. Last of all, the text includes an index and not one but five appendices for easy perusal. Peltier-Davis breaks from this resource-per-micro-chapter format only to cover five related tech topics: ebooks, ebook readers, makerspaces, mobile apps for libraries, and QR codes. Each of these serves as an introduction to the general topic and gives examples of it in use in librarianship.

For example, in the chapter on ebooks, Peltier-Davis talks about the technology's impact on print resource use and acquisition, and guides us towards adoption: "There is substantial library literature on the potential for ebook success in *all* [sic] libraries, including case studies outlining successful and transformative ebook initiatives that have guaranteed improved services and unique end-user experiences" (p. 56). Peltier-Davis then goes on to recommend linking to freely available ebook collections such as Project Gutenberg and Google Books. If your collection is already a hybrid of print and digital, as I suspect all academic and many public libraries are, this chapter will have little to offer. Instead, it opens the discussion for the uniformed reader to be able to explore further elsewhere, offering some citations to newspaper articles, a research study by the Pew Research Centre, and ALA's "State of the America's Libraries Report 2014: Executive Summary."

The micro-chapters on unique resources are stronger. Aimed at information professionals, Peltier-Davis rightly assumes readers already have a solid working knowledge of using and accessing resources. Peltier-Davis does not provide instruction on how to acquire or install, but rightly focuses on how the tech can be leveraged in your library. For example, if you want to find an alternative to expensive teleconferencing services or time-consuming commuting for meetings with peers, flip to Appendix IV for an alphabetized list of tools by type of service. Under "Videoconferencing Service," Peltier-Davis lists both Google Hangouts and GoToMeeting. Here is the beginning of the overview to the first resource:

> Google Hangouts is a combined instant messaging and video chat service enabling Google subscribers to send and receive instant messages, photos, videos and emojis (animated GIFs) as well as initiate free video calls ... A unique service offered within Hangouts is the ability to stream live local or global events such as conferences and webinars ... Streamed events are recorded, archived, and publicly available on Google Plus or a dedicated YouTube channel. (p. 87)

Under the "How Cybrarians Can Use this Reference" section, Peltier-Davis cites a post from Phil Bradley's weblog, "Google+ Hangouts for Libraries," as a particularly useful resource guide for utilizing Hangouts to host online events, and then sends her reader to research other libraries' presentations on the Hangouts on Air website.

To compare, the overview for GoToMeeting begins:

> GoToMeetings from Citrix Systems is bundled web conferencing software with desktop sharing and videoconferencing capabilities that facilitates online meetings between a host and group of attendees in real time ... GoToMeeting holds a significant lead in this fairly competitive business arena by offering several built-in features that enable seamless online collaboration with onsite and offsite participants. (p. 92)

Reading on, you discover this very robust-seeming service is not free; after a 30-day free trial, there's a monthly subscription fee for continued access. This runs contrary to the claim on the back of the book that it covers "more than 60 free tech tools", and makes the book's

subtitle seem disingenuous. In fact, a handful of the resources listed here are available for pay, or on a tiered payment system that allows limited service use without subscription; some of these sections read like advertisements. Nonetheless, they serve to introduce the products and some general potential uses in a library context.

Be wary: this is a snapshot of the web as it recently was, not as it is. Don't fall into an implicit acceptance of the Internet as static, but research beyond this text for the complete current picture. As you research, Peltier-Davis directs you "to assist in the task of identifying important resources for the cybrarian community" (p. xxvii) by posting updates to her website, but I'm not confident her site is regularly maintained. New blog posts appear at the rate of approximately once per month. Under the Web Tools/Links tab, nine of the ten listed "Additional tools" are already included in this second volume, and at the time of this book review, "Posts About Tools" was last updated in April 2014. Having said that, there is a page on the site worth bookmarking; dig down for "Cybraran's Web 2 Links" for rapid access to all of the resources covered in the text.

I would have preferred to see Peltier-Davis focus exclusively on individual resource micro-chapters, and leave out the weaker general overviews on related tech topics. There is a marketable product here that, created and released to market rapidly enough, can be of great service—especially to the library professional working in greater isolation who needs to discover specific resources to begin experimenting with them.

Finding effective digital solutions is a challenge, but *The Cybrarian's Web 2* can help you to start your investigation. Peltier-Davis' straightforward, jargon-free style and impeccable organization combine in an affordable reference for any library professional seeking a basic introduction to some of the online resources one can use for personal or professional ends. If you're comfortable learning about the web from a printed text, then this is an excellent point from which to begin.

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