

Book Review:

Databrarianship: The Academic Data Librarian in Theory and Practice

Lynda Kellam and Kristi Thompson, eds. (2016) Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries. 378pp. \$68. ISBN 978-0838987995

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Lynda Kellam and Kristi Thompson's book, *Databrarianship: The Academic Data Librarian in Theory and Practice*, presents cutting-edge topics and pragmatic common practices in various aspects of the relatively new data librarian field. By inviting collaborations from data librarians across the world, the editors successfully deliver a masterpiece to showcase the front-end of data services in academic libraries.

In the first part of book, *Data Support Services for Researchers and Learners*, various case studies related to data service support are discussed. A diversity of data services models is offered for readers to adapt to their own situations, such as those presented in Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5. Chapter 3 sheds light on how to get started with microdata services as a subject librarian, and Chapter 6 offers hands-on lesson plans on teaching data literacy to undergraduate students who are new to quantitative methods and data analysis. Students will learn how to discover, evaluate, and manipulate data through the lessons.

In the second part of the book, *Data in the Disciplines*, readers get first-hand information about supporting geospatial data services in academic library settings. This is important, as GIS data "has its own peculiarities, tools, and approaches", and it is definitely gaining popularity in the academic research environment. To engage the reader further, evolving technologies related to GIS data support, such as crowdsourcing and cloud computing, are elaborated upon in Chapter 10. In Chapter 11, the author explains different stages of supporting qualitative research and data, and presents exploratory findings both from an analysis of IASSIST listserv job postings and from a survey of qualitative data support practices, which used carefully designed questions to inquire about key aspects of qualitative data support in academic libraries. Lastly, Chapter 12 introduces scientific data and its relevance to librarians and libraries. This material can be read together with that in Chapter 21 if one is interested in supporting science-focused data services.

In the third part of the book, *Data Preservation and Access*, key issues, such as data sharing policies, selection and appraisal of datasets, metadata, and scholarly communication are examined. A special

case of collaboration with the City of Calgary, Canada is shared in Chapter 16 for those who are interested in acquiring local data for their collection. While these aspects of data support are behind the scenes, they are just as important as the public-facing support that librarians provide to the research community. These technical components are the building blocks of the growing data collection and data services fields.

In the last part of the book, *Data: Past, Present, and Future*, readers can learn about the data services models used in the UK and Canada, including their opportunities and challenges. Chapter 21 explains interesting results from a survey of science data librarians. It is fascinating and inspiring to learn from their experience and advice. Observation from the Social Science Perspective was a nice touch. In Chapter 22, authors discuss their valuable experience in teaching data librarianship to LIS students, which was rather forward-thinking in 2011. The course plans and outcomes are shared, along with lessons learned. One example is to leave enough time to teach students necessary tools - in their case, SPSS. Personally, I feel their course plan was a little too ambitious; my suggestion would be to pair this course with another standalone class teaching data analysis tools, such as (these days) R or Python. Another class for data visualization or GIS would also be useful. It can be a struggle to gain proficiency in these concepts within one or two weeks.

I have two main suggestions to editors of this book. First, some chapters seem to fit better in a different part than they originally appeared, such as Chapter 8 for Part III, or Chapter 21 for Part II. Second, since data services is a rapidly changing field, it would be useful to include the online presence (Twitter, blogs, etc.) of the authors in their biographies, so that people who are interested in their chapter can follow up on their later works.

Overall, I believe that *Databrarianship* is the go-to book for any new librarians or librarians offering or interested in data support services. The data librarianship era is coming, and we are all part of it. This book provides priceless guidance to librarians and leads them in the right direction to start exploring with a community of awesome data cohorts!

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