

Book Review

**Hirsh, S. (Ed.). (2015). *Information services today: An introduction*.
Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
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Information Services Today: An Introduction offers a panoramic view of library and information services. This edited text is a valuable resource for students, faculty, practitioners and anyone interested in libraries and information organizations. This book covers an array of topics ranging from the history of libraries, to the many changes that are currently taking place within information organizations. It has a broad scope and each of the 39 chapters is unique and well detailed. I have found the book to be timely, with thorough coverage of many important topics.

The editor, Dr. Sandra Hirsh, is an accomplished information professional. She is a professor and the Director of the School of Information at San José State University. In addition to her academic background, she has worked in numerous library settings, and with corporate research and development. She has held leadership roles in a number of professional associations and is active in her local library community. For this book, Hirsh has assembled a knowledgeable team of contributing writers to share their expertise and experience. These specialists include faculty members, researchers and practitioners in LIS that provide a far-reaching overview of the profession. Hirsh states that “[i]nformation professionals must constantly survey the information and technology landscape to identify trends that have implications for the information field” (p.4). This book does just that and it gives the LIS professional resources to help deal with the fast-paced, ever-changing environment that we are all faced with these days.

The editor has skillfully organized the book’s 39 chapters that are further grouped into 7 parts. Part 1 includes a history of libraries, different types of communities and information needs. Part 2 deals with the many distinct types of libraries and information organizations. Part 3 focuses on the different types of services that information professionals provide while Part 4 describes the user’s needs. Parts 5 and 6 cover management as well as social, legal and economic issues related to information assets. Lastly, Part 7 looks at trends and themes important to the information professional.

This book is both informative and useful. Though many topics of interest were covered in depth, I found Chapter 28, “Demonstrating Value,” to be particularly beneficial. In this chapter, Cheryl Stenström states “[m]ultifaceted and rigorous assessment that seeks to measure meaningful impact in appropriate ways will also prove to be the best way to demonstrate value” (p. 277). Building significant assessments continue to be essential for all information organizations wanting to justify their existence and show tangible value in the community in which they serve. Furthermore, the book contains a number of additional resources that will benefit the reader. A glossary of terms, a bibliography and an index are included in the text. There is also a useful list of abbreviations, appendixes and an online supplement link which includes webcasts of the

editor moderating interviews with some of the authors of the chapters. The online resources are extensive and provide the reader with a great deal of material that complements the information found in the text.

The contributors approach the subject of information services from many different perspectives and with a solid understanding of where the profession currently stands. Experts repeatedly deal with the idea of change as a permanent part of library and information services. The book leaves the reader with a prevailing sense of optimism about the field, and shows the necessity of lifelong learning in this profession.

Overall, the text provides a wide range of evidence on the current state of information services as well as a proactive approach to continually meet user needs in an ever-changing world. *Information Services Today: An Introduction* is a text built on solid knowledge and practice. The contributors' shared effort provides the LIS community with an educational read that will serve as a professional reference for the near future. It is a must have for information professionals. Add this to your personal library and you will not be disappointed.