Academic libraries and collaborative research services

Forbes, C. (ed.)

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This book is relevant for academic librarians who want to work more effectively, strategically, and holistically to become proactive partners for students, faculty, and staff. A constant question for academic libraries is how to connect with their users to offer them services that will increase the quality of their work and show the value of academic libraries and the competencies of academic librarians in, for example, a research project. The book offers case studies in four areas relevant to change in academic librarianship: (1) emerging liaison roles, (2) research data services, (3) publishing, and (4) professional development. Unfortunately, the book was published right before artificial intelligence became a word on everyone's lips with the release of OpenAI's ChatGPT. It would indeed have been interesting to read a chapter on how librarians could contribute and what the competence development needs in libraries are in relation to artificial intelligence and offering collaborative research services.

The first part focuses on liaison roles, and it is pointed out that many potential stakeholders and others within the university community lack an understanding of what the current and new library liaison roles are and could be. I have found that academic librarians lack an understanding of what the stakeholders and university community do and need, which is why a part of the academic librarians' outreach plans should include tasks to find out what the others are doing. I am pleased to notice that the authors of Chapter 2 mention this in short. I also appreciated that more traditional skills, knowing the library collections and enriching resources with metadata, are visible. With technological developments and the rise of digital humanities research, librarians have a unique opportunity to aid in making more of the old and fragile collections available and used in research.

As a librarian with a focus on educating researchers about managing their research data, it is consoling to read chapter eight about others struggling with the task while at the same time be

reaffirmed that starting small is a good strategy. I especially liked the overview table of offered workshops as an inspiration for my work planning similar workshops. However, regarding the topic of the book, i.e., collaborative research services, a reflection on where collaboration with other stakeholders in research data management within the university is possible would have been worthwhile.

The book is focused on American academic libraries, which is fine, but readers from outside the USA should keep this in mind as there might be different ways to collaborate than what is shown in this book. Academic libraries work and are structured differently and may have roles in the USA that differ from other countries. Also, the size of the university and, consequently, the size of the library will influence which tasks are relevant for libraries to take on in relation to other parts of the university organization. For example, research data management and research evaluation on bibliometric grounds require librarians to develop competencies and relationships outside of the library organization, perhaps prioritizing library tasks and rearranging library organization.

All in all, this book was an interesting and relevant read despite missing a discussion on AI.

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