

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Print vs. Digital: The Future of Coexistence. Edited by Sul H. Lee. Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth Press, 2007. 138 pages. (Published simultaneously as *Journal of Library Administration*, 2007;46(2)). ISBN 978-0-7890-3576-9 (soft cover), US\$45.00. ISBN 978-0-7890-3575-2 (hard cover), US\$60.00.

The question of print versus digital materials in libraries is one that has been ongoing for some time and continues still. Many libraries have been grappling with issues of format, access and licensing, archives and preservation, space, and even staff, while others are late to enter the scene. For some libraries, the question has become one of which format to adopt. This is the issue that Lee's book, based on its title, appears to address: Can print and digital materials coexist? Should they coexist? In the introduction Lee describes the premise of the book as dealing with "how academic libraries can reach a comfortable coexistence" and speaks to "build[ing] relationships between those who oversee print and those who oversee digital information". Instead of concentrating on the issues of coexistence, I felt that this collection of articles focused more on the move from print to electronic, how libraries cope with the format change, and what libraries do with the print that they already have.

Print vs. Digital: The Future of Coexistence is yet another of the offerings that are simultaneously published as both book and journal issue by Haworth Press. It is, therefore, a collection of articles rather than the unified and cohesive style that one generally expects in a book. Still, a review of the table of contents shows a progression of ideas: from the information-seeking behaviours of users, finding synergies, envisioning new library space, archiving (specifically JSTOR), newspapers in the digital age, and digital reference, to the role of cooperatives and interlibrary loans, and finishing up with the end of print journals as we know them and what it would take to convince the various stakeholders to make the switch to e-only. My immediate reaction was, Where are the e-books? and What about the information commons? Information commons is addressed in the first article, while e-books were not addressed at all.

The eight contributors are all American-based senior library or publishing administrators, and the articles all have an academic research library focus. Having said that, the articles are not research articles per se; there are no literature reviews, methodologies, or analyses. Rather, this text includes a mixture of the practical, the theoretical, and the thoughtful; of case studies, explorations, and musings. Despite their disparate nature, the articles are quite interesting in themselves, offering interesting historical perspectives, background tidbits, and allowing the reader to grasp some of

the issues facing librarians dealing with the juxtaposition of print and electronic formats while never dealing with any issue in great depth.

The first article, which was positioned as dealing with the behaviours of the users and the resultant impact on libraries, was more of a case study dealing with space planning than with behaviours and in this sense duplicated the third article. However, it did offer an interesting perspective on the evolution of libraries, from the closed stack to library as gathering place. The article on synergies adhered most closely to the concept of coexistence, focusing on how to cross-promote the library's resources regardless of format, providing some practical examples. And the article on newspapers was thoughtful and provocative, raising issues that had never occurred to me—the threat of digitization to the news media and how to ensure that news remains the "first rough draft of history" with a permanent and uncensored shelf life.

This collection of articles is indexed, but the index has some problems. For example, a large portion of the final article deals with the problems inherent in archiving electronic journals, but the only mention of archiving in the index is to JSTOR, and preservation is not an indexed term. There are no index entries for space planning, despite two articles that focus on this topic, rather these entries are buried under the term "new research library". In addition, there is no bibliography or further reading list.

While *Print vs. Digital: The Future of Coexistence* is not a scholarly text, it is a glimpse at some of the real-world examples of how print and digital media can coexist, and a discussion of where some of the problems of coexistence lie. As a collection of articles, it highlights a number of issues related to electronic collections; however, it could have been stronger in its treatment of the concept of coexistence, as highlighted in the book's title.

If you're looking for a book that will provide you with a comprehensive or methodological approach to the issues of digital versus print, then this book will disappoint. Nevertheless, if you have a reasonable understanding of the basic challenges surrounding this topic and are looking for a thought-provoking look at a selection of the issues, then this book is worthwhile and makes for an interesting read.

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