

Editorial

Welcome to another issue of Library and Information Research: we are sure that you will find the papers and reviews in this issue of both intrinsic interest and of practical use, whatever your role and working context may be. Although the focus of the papers in this issue is very much on the academic library sector, we believe that all of the papers have generic messages that will be useful to all.

Thus, for example, we start with an invited contribution from Joanna Bryant, winner of the 2008 LIRG student award. Her paper is based on her dissertation for her MSc studies at Loughborough University, and discusses ethnographic research undertaken in the library at the University to investigate the way in which students were using open-plan learning spaces. In addition to contributing to our knowledge of how such spaces are used, the paper reminds us that ethnographic approaches to research tend to be under-used in the library and information sector, and have much potential to offer (as well as sometimes being fun to carry out!). Her paper also offers a timely reminder of the LIRG student award: entries for the 2009 prize are now being considered.

The refereed paper by Jon Warwick and Gary Bell explores how the use of a planning tool, the Holon Framework, can be used to facilitate single and double loop learning in academic libraries. Once again, although the focus of the paper is on exploring how the Framework can contribute to organisational learning in an academic library context, the theoretical implications are equally applicable to other library and information environments. At a time when libraries are having to work hard to justify their resource requirements, and indeed in many cases their very existence, Senge's view (cited in the paper by Warwick and Bell) that 'the ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage' has particular resonance. In today's competitive and managerialist context, an adaptive approach to learning is not simply a *desirable* attribute but rather an *essential* survival element.

Daren Mansfield's paper addresses the much under-researched area of theft from libraries, again with a focus on academic libraries. Nevertheless, the paper will be of interest to many working in other sectors: sadly, theft from libraries is not a problem that is confined to university institutions, as the British Library will readily testify after recent much-publicised losses of rare and precious works. Mansfield's paper concludes with some useful practical measures that libraries may wish to consider adopting in order to minimise stock losses through theft. Some of these may be more applicable in an academic context, but many are of generic application.

Finally, we offer a number of reviews of recent book publications. Pat Gannon-Leary reviews Weaver's edited volume on the 'transforming potential' of higher education, when students are supported appropriately and their needs are considered holistically in the context of the 'whole student'. Veronica Lawrence reviews 'A Handbook of Ethical Practice: a Practical Guide to Dealing with Ethical Issues in Library and Information Work' by McMenemy, Poulter and

Burton. As Lawrence concludes, this is indeed a useful and practical contribution to an area of practice that warrants more attention in the LIS literature. I can testify to the usefulness of the thought-provoking case studies in the book, which I have used to good effect in my own teaching.

Simeon Moore discusses Pugh's 'Change Management in Information Services', again a subject that has not been widely written about from the specific perspective of the LIS sector, despite the constant nature and rapid pace of organisational and technological change with which the sector has to grapple. Although Moore highlights the fact that the book is written very much from an academic and theoretical perspective, and is probably most relevant to libraries in the higher education sector, he also recommends it as a useful aid for LIS personnel working in every kind of library or information service. Mike Sharrocks' review of Harriman's guide to creating a business plan for your library also highlights the need to adapt business practices to the external and internal environment in which libraries operate: the accompanying CD provided with the book could, as Sharrocks notes, save practitioners a considerable amount of time and effort.

Meanwhile Juliet Eve's review of the second edition of Gorman and Clayton's work on 'Qualitative Research for the Information Personnel' is so glowing in its praise for the usefulness, relevance, interest and accessibility of the text, that it has convinced me of the need to add it to my own bookshelf!

We hope you enjoy this issue, and that these papers stimulate ideas for research that you can carry out in your own library context, and hopefully write about for the journal. *Library and Information Research* warmly invites you to submit your own contributions for publication in future issues. If you are not sure whether your work fits the journal's remit, please don't hesitate to contact either of the editors for advice. We look forward to hearing from you!

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