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**MATTHEWS, G. & WALTON, G. (Eds.). *University libraries and space in the digital world*. Farnham: Ashgate. 2013.**

**228 pages. ISBN-978-1-409402382-9. £55.00**

This edited textbook provides a comprehensive account of how the physical space of university libraries has developed over time and how it is likely to change in the future. This is achieved by dissecting the numerous factors that affect and dictate library space usage. The two editors, highly respected practitioners and researchers in the field, introduce and conclude the book, presenting twelve further chapters contributed by library experts. Despite this large number of contributors the book flows well and all of the chapters are written in a highly accessible style.

The book begins with a well-researched chapter on the history of university library space which, starting with the libraries of Ancient Mesopotamia, tracks the transformation of libraries as places for book storage into libraries as places for study. It sets the scene well and the reader may be surprised to learn that many of today's issues are actually age-old, for example fears of running out of space were already in evidence in 1480.

In chapter 3, the book moves on to discuss the sociological theories applicable to library space and themes that run throughout the rest of the book are presented here, including the emergence of the knowledge society and the library as a 'third place'. Changes in pedagogical methods are also considered significant and chapter 10 explores the impact of student-centred learning.

The chapters mentioned so far are largely theoretical but one of the book's strengths is that it strikes a good balance between theory and practice. Chapters 4 and 5 address the two practical issues that are at the forefront of any discussions about library space; the impact of digital resources and the changing nature of print collections. Other practical chapters include chapter 6 (developing a new university library) and chapter 7 (different approaches to library refurbishment), and many of the chapters include real-life case studies and examples.

The other main strength of the book is its comprehensiveness. It covers topics that are often ignored by both authors and planners of library space and will automatically score points with its audience by including a chapter on space requirements of library staff (chapter 9). Emerging areas are also explored and there is a chapter dedicated to sustainability issues (chapter 13). Another topic tackled head-on is the fear that university libraries are becoming increasingly redundant for researchers and will continue to do so unless they provide multi-functional space (chapter 11).

Although the book contains many tips that would be useful for those engaged in reviewing library space (for example chapter 12 details how to provide evidence that library space is being used), it is not an instruction manual for how to design or refurbish a university library. Furthermore, and despite the title, the book is not solely about the impact of digital technologies. It is actually much more than that, and provides a window into nearly all of the issues that affect university libraries today. In light of this, I would recommend it to new professionals entering the HE sector as well as to those with a particular interest in library spaces.

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