

it has a 752. In example 5.11 and others, a 590 local note was used instead of a 541 to note the gift of the material; the possibility of the 541 might have been mentioned. The index is thorough, although “dipzines” or “perzines” were not indexed; just the broad “fanzines.” The authors provide a “challenge yourself” at the end of each section that allows the reader to test his or her skills and practice cataloging that particular format. Answers are provided in appendices. This is a really good feature and a thoughtful touch, as adults are experiential learners.

It was good that the authors thought farther than the cataloging and described the physical processing of the materials, such as in the “Special Periodicals” chapter. A final chapter on how to do name authority work is the icing on the cake. The authors create authority records through the Name Authority Cooperative Project (NACO) and the NACO Music Project (NMP), so are well qualified to address this topic.

The list price of this book is \$115.00, which is somewhat pricey but not completely inaccessible or unusual for a scholarly work. If you need to catalog any of the special materials that this book covers, and you are procrastinating because you are inexperienced in that format, buy this book (or ask your institution to acquire it), and keep it handy. The book will most likely continue to be a useful tool for years to come, RDA notwithstanding. Highly recommended.

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Conversations with Catalogers in the 21st Century
by Elaine R. Sanchez, editor; forward by Michael Gorman

We, as catalogers, have good reason to feel everything from fear and anxiety to excitement and anticipation because although we’re accustomed to change, we are currently riding the waves of massive change from outside and from within. The ubiquitous nature of the online environment has had both a positive and negative impact on libraries. Shifting attitudes have generated discussion that threatens to de-value the work of catalogers; nevertheless, the services we provide and skills we possess remain valuable and are constantly evolving. Fortunately, there are those among us who offer important discussion to help drive and stimulate new and innovative directions and who recognize the pivotal role that catalogers play in preserving the human record for posterity.

Conversations with Catalogers in the 21st Century is a collection of essays, or “conversations,” contributed by some of the leading experts in the field. Edited by Elaine R. Sanchez, Head of Cataloging & Metadata Services at Alkek Library, Texas State University—San Marcos, the essays are reflective of the wide-ranging issues and concerns faced by catalogers today. Sanchez brings together an impressive array of contributors whose backgrounds represent both large and small academic, public and school libraries, vendors, and cataloging educators. Spanning four continents, they include catalogers who serve in traditional roles, in expanded roles as metadata specialists and systems librarians, and in positions serving specialized communities. The contributors successfully express their views regarding the changes in the bibliographic universe, reflect on the impact that these changes bring, and present strategies to confront them. It’s fair to say that these “conversations” are not really conversations at all as there is no *exchange* of ideas; rather, they are essays that are conversational in tone.

Michael Gorman provides the foreword which aptly serves to introduce the issues addressed in the eighteen essays that follow. Highlighting catalogers’ roles in organizing, preserving, and providing access to the human record, Gorman juxtaposes the “cheap and quick” services offered by search engines with the precision and recall afforded by human intervention. He asserts that “the dark days for cataloguing will come to an end as more and more people realize what we are losing in letting our catalogues decay, and turn to those who have devoted their careers to making the human record accessible.” (p. viii). The essays that follow are rich in coverage and are divided into four sections: (1) “AACR2 and RDA” focuses on managing the substantial shift of how the bibliographic universe is viewed and the new set of rules complementing that change, (2) “Visions: New Ideas for Bibliographic Control and Catalogs” centers on re-envisioning bibliographic control and the structural models that deliver data, (3) “The Cataloging World in Transition” describes how catalogers are coping with their evolving roles, and (4) “Cataloging and Metadata Librarians: Research, Education, Training, and Recruitment,” whose content is self-evident.

In general, the majority of the essays reveal reservation and skepticism towards the proposed transformations in the field with considerable attention given to *Resource Description and Access* (RDA). The authors provide fodder for further discussion by offering strategies that build upon existing standards, suggesting entirely new directions, presenting survey data and historical perspective, offering insight into the impact of evolving paths, and analyzing inherent flaws in future directions. Particularly cogent is the section on research, education, training, and recruitment in the field. In many ways, the majority of the essays validate a growing uncertainty amongst practitioners; however, some offer encouragement, most notably Jay Weitz’s essay on catalogers’ abilities to thrive in the face of a challenge.

The book is a cohesive, thorough, timely, and thought-provoking discourse on cataloging in the 21st century. It should appeal to cataloging and metadata specialists as well as interested parties who have some fundamental understanding of the underlying concepts of cataloging. Beyond that, however, some of the content would appear to be far too complex. The book may not strike a balance with catalogers seeking comfort from the onslaught of changes. Rather, it may leave them feeling overwhelmed as it enhances the arsenal of ideas and approaches that catalogers may encounter. But then, that would

speaking to its intended purpose: to engender relevant discussion amongst catalogers in the midst of challenging times. Recommended.

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