

## Book Review:

**Transforming Serials: The Revolution Continues: Proceedings of the North American Serials Interest Group, Inc. 17th Annual Conference, June 20-23, 2002**, ed. by Susan L. Scheiberg and Shelley Neville. New York : Haworth Information Press, c2003. 365 p. \$49.95 ISBN 0-7890-2281-8 (hard cover); \$34.95 0-7890-2282-6 (Soft cover). Published simultaneously as *The Serials Librarian*, vol. 44, no. 1/2 and 3/4 (2003).

Each year, the North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG) conducts a three-day conference focusing on the issues and complexities of serials. Conference attendees and participants include representatives from every corner of the serials world. Librarians from all types of libraries and serials specialties interact closely with vendor representatives. New serialists rub shoulders with seasoned professionals, benefiting from their experience and knowledge. The casual and friendly atmosphere results in the building of new and profitable relationships.

Each year, NASIG also publishes the proceedings of the previous year's conference. Some of the papers are written by those who presented the programs, but most are written by designated recorders who are volunteers from among the conference attendees. While these publications cannot provide the full "NASIG conference experience," they do give readers an idea of the breadth and depth of subjects covered as well as much of the detail of the presentations themselves.

*Transforming Serials: the Revolution Continues* is no exception. The volume includes reports on every session, including 2 preconferences, 3 plenary sessions, 10 concurrent sessions, 27 workshops and 12 poster sessions.

Electronic journals are discussed frequently, but the issues and problems presented are wide-ranging. A preconference provides an excellent general introduction to the issues and problems related to e-journals. Concurrent sessions discuss the pros and cons of online journals being considered a "public good," explain OpenURLs and the SFX service, discuss how multi-media is being incorporated into e-journals and how librarians can make these features more available to users, and talk about the digitization of serial archives, plus other e-journal subjects. Workshops include a review of online serials management systems that were available at the time of the conference, teaching patrons how to find and use online journals, a research study on e-journals and citation patterns, how e-journals have changed job descriptions of public service librarians, etc.

Sprinkled throughout are reports on a variety of other subjects. One plenary session covers Web portals and another discusses challenges and solutions of the rising cost of science, technology and medicine journals. A concurrent session covers the state of serials cataloging at the time of the conference, while a double workshop provides details of the then new serials cataloging rules. Another steps back and offers practical instruction on the cataloging of microform and print reprints, while yet another covers the challenges of cataloging for consortium union catalogs. Several other workshops present things that are being done at various institutions, from the controversial to the benign.

Some sessions are not serials specific and the reports contain information of use to everyone in the profession. Work-related writing skills, a practical introduction to planning for change and an introduction to student supervision are just a few of these more generally useful topics.

There are a few reports that summarize the topic rather than provide the details of the presentation, and these are much less useful to readers. The poster session entries do not contain any of the information presented in the posters, but rather seem to present the original abstracts used to advertise the sessions. Even so, the amount of detail and practical information in the other reports more than makes up for this.

Unfortunately, the book contains numerous editing and grammar errors that distract the reader from the content that is being presented. These range from relatively benign things such as incorrectly used or misspelled words and the lack of punctuation, through the skipping of entire sentences or partial sentences (one abstract ends in mid-sentence), all the way to one report that is virtually unreadable because of poor sentence structure, incorrect word usage and grammar problems. Almost every report contains at least one such error.

More importantly, however, the information contained in the reports is still, for the most part, very useful. Many reports are in-depth articles that can be put to practical use. Others are excellent theoretical studies of interest to those who work with serials. Although some of the information is now out-of-date, it was of current interest at the time of the conference and may still prove to be useful for many readers. Editorial problems aside, the book is highly recommended for all librarians who work with serials.—**Mary Grenci, Serials Catalog Librarian, Knight Library, 1299 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1299**  
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