RDA essentials

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Game it up! Using gamification to incentivize your library (Library Technology Essentials series #7, edited by Ellyssa Kroski), by David Folmar, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, 148 pp., $US 4500 (soft cover), ISBN 978-1-4422-5335-3

As a profession, we know that libraries are much more than books, but that we also exist in an age of instant gratification, where information is only a click or a swipe away. Added to this is that we are now serving generations of users who have known nothing else, so we need to engage in this space in a creative way to promote the other programs and services we offer, and continue to remain a relevant, valuable resource. Gamification gives us such an opportunity. This book is part of the *Library Technology Essentials Series*, but as the author David Folmar points out in the opening pages, technology is only part of the story for gamification, underlining the importance of game thinking as crucial to its success.

We learn in the first two chapters that game thinking involves bringing the different elements of gaming together to create a meaningful experience that appeals to a wide audience, where winning the game can be measured in multiple ways. Games motivate people, but can also teach, inform and change behaviour, which is one of the benefits for libraries. A good game is not just about a good story, good production values, or understanding the types of gamers. However, two features that Folmar says games cannot do without are the element of fun and the social aspect. Educational games should also emphasize positive outcomes. Failing through the design process and incorporating gamer feedback to improve a game are seen as equally important. Libraries are all about fostering positive community experiences and inclusiveness, so this is another benefit to recommend gamification as a potential avenue for libraries to explore.

The book acts as a guide that encourages and demystifies the concept, showing that you don't have to be a technology specialist to create either physical or online games, from the simple to the more advanced for the purpose of staff development, customer service or information literacy. Chapter 3 focuses on potential tools and applications to create different elements, such as badging, avatars and social media plug-ins, while Chapter 4 focuses on the experiences of different libraries. This chapter seems to be the most out of place or needed to be incorporated into the following chapter, the most substantial part of the book, which gives step-by-step guidance on how to create different projects, including a tour around the library for new staff to learn about different areas, a library passport that links library resources to learning about attractions in the local community, and online information literacy games using Twine and GameMaker. The penultimate chapter briefly reinforces tips and tricks; this could have been combined with the last on future trends, which doesn't really live up to its name and needed more development. Following this is some recommended reading and websites that include helpful descriptions. Overall, this is a good primer on the concept.

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RDA essentials, by Thomas Brenndorfer, Chicago, IL, ALA Editions, 2016, 376 pp., US$105.00 (soft cover), ISBN 978-0-8389-1328-4

Resource Description and Access (RDA) is a standard for descriptive cataloguing which provides guidelines for the formatting of bibliographic data. *RDA Essentials* is designed as a supporting handbook for creating RDA catalogue records and is intended as a quick reference source for the

RDA element set. Each element is described using the RDA definition, scope note, core element information and basic instructions.

The guide begins by introducing RDA and its fundamental concepts and vocabulary. The book is then divided into four sections – elements, guidelines, constructing access points and other additional instructions. The format is easy to follow, although readers will need to copy links in this printed work into their browsers in order to access related material listed in this book. The format is easy to follow and the examples provided are useful in assisting cataloguers to make decisions in creating RDA records.

What the guide does not provide are coding instructions such as MARC or other encoding standards, and it does not cover some categories such as exceptions for early printed works and full access points for some types of material such as musical works, legal works and religious works. Readers requiring more specialised content would need to look elsewhere. There is a comprehensive index which is useful in finding where to look within this guide, and the useful contents page provides a structured way of finding content within the book's 32 chapters.

The author, Thomas Brenndorfer, has a cataloguing background and has been giving presentations introducing FBBR and RDA concepts to cataloguers in Canada for a number of years. His style is easy to understand although the work does assume some prior cataloguing knowledge and ability.

This book is a useful day-to-day reference for cataloguers and students, especially those in smaller libraries that do not need the full RDA or for those requiring a summary of RDA to use. It is a useful tool as a student textbook, and would be even more useful to RDA users as an online resource with an ability to link directly to related information and be kept up-to-date in this evolving area.

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Statistics for library and information services, by Alon Friedman, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, 355 pp., US$95.00, £65.00 (hard cover), ISBN 978-1-4422-4992-9

This is not a title to attract the overworked library-based information specialist looking for a weekend alternative to TV, and certainly there is no lack of publications on the theory of statistics and application to specific areas such as business and education. There is also a growing number on employing statistics in libraries, and general information work. So what has this book got to offer? One selling point is given by its subtitle: 'A Primer for Using Open Source R Software for Accessibility and Visualization'. Most of us will already be familiar with the proprietary SPSS software – one of more than seventy available. However, R (originating in New Zealand where the development team is based) is a growing organism in that packages have been developed by many contributors for a variety of applications featuring statistics and graphics. Users can download the software appropriate for Windows, Linux and Mac operating systems. Although based on R, some packages have been developed in Java and C++.

Friedman briefly explains that R uses a command line interpreter instead of machine language. His book is divided into three main parts: introduction to statistics, making sense of statistics and visualisation. The first part introduces research design, data collection and an overview of running R. The second part goes into further details about formulae and methodologies (e.g.