

a discussion of the activities surrounding the provision of access to the resources when the decision has been made to make them available and expands the model in chapter 4 to cover the cataloging and delivery of the resources. Complementing these brief chapters are a select glossary and a two-part bibliography that covers, first, journals, electronic lists, and bulletin boards, and, second, articles, associations, monographs, and reports.

Only three years have elapsed since the book's first edition (2001), but the range and methods of providing electronic resources are rapidly changing. In the second edition, the authors have added new sections on virtual learning environments/learning management systems (very brief) and reading, and resource list software, as well as updating information and correcting previous errors. Any book that mentions specifics concerning electronic resources risks having outdated information because electronic resources themselves frequently change. This book should not be read for current information about resources but, rather, for the principles, guidelines, and the procedures it presents.

Written by British authors, the book is also relevant for decision making by American librarians. The authors are experienced with electronic resources: Stuart D. Lee is author of *Digital Imaging: A Practical Handbook* (Neal-Schuman, 2001) and is head of Learning Technologies Group at Oxford University Computing Services; Frances Boyle is electronic resources manager for Oxford University Library Services.

The book should be faulted for its brevity; many of the topics it covers cry out for more explanation and examples and must be supplemented through either the Web or more specialized books. For instance, it includes no sample collection policy, although it sends the reader to several examples. Other books address some specialized issues in greater and necessary detail, such as two of the books in Neal-Schuman's *How-to-do-it Manual*

series: Rick Anderson's *Buying and Contracting for Resources and Services* (2004), and Donnelly Curtis, Virginia M. Schemschy, and Adolfo R. Tarango's *Developing and Managing Electronic Journal Collections* (2000).—*Marilyn Domas White, University of Maryland.*

**McChesney, Robert W.** *The Problem of the Media: U. S. Communication Politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.* New York: Monthly Review Pr., 2004. 367p. paper \$16.95 (ISBN 1583671056); cloth \$39 (ISBN 1583671064). LC 2003-26386.

Many Americans are dissatisfied with poor-quality media content today, from hypercommercialism to journalism that depoliticizes our society with biased, inaccurate, or trivial reporting. Only in the past few years have some come to understand that this poor quality is due, in part, to the concentration of the media among five worldwide conglomerates and their influence on government media policies. Media reform and a truly democratic media system, essential for a strong democracy, are possible only with informed and widespread public debate. Although government representatives and media supercompanies have tried to hide their activities from the American public, recent grassroots efforts have mobilized citizens to demand that their representatives protect and increase media diversity.

Robert W. McChesney, considered by many to be America's leading media historian, has written an impeccably researched, provocative, and entertaining book that expands on his *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* (1999). A research professor in the Institute of Communications Research and the graduate school of library and information science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, McChesney renders a compelling history of the federal government's subsidy of the media, including the passage of favorable or sympathetic legislation, from the early years of our Republic to the current popular uprising against the hegemony of

the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). It is the latter story (covered in the final chapter) that dramatically builds from the corrupt Telecommunications Act of 1996 to the unwritten conclusion that is our future.

To encourage critical thinking and initiate discourse and action, McChesney demolishes eight widely accepted myths about the media and the policies that feed them. Through several chapters, he frees us from the misconception around which several of the myths revolve: that media are “naturally commercial and that government has been and is an innocent bystander (or non-productive intruder) in the process of creating media systems.”

Perhaps the most commonly accepted myth, the one that has been promoted so vigorously by conservative talk radio hosts who are fed daily talking points by the Radio Services Department of the Republican National Committee and vastly outnumber a handful of milquetoast liberal counterparts, is that the news media in the United States today have a “left-wing bias.” Among the numerous pieces of evidence he uses to refute this myth—evidence from government reports, trade publications, and scholarly articles—McChesney cites a 2000 *Editor & Publisher* survey that showed “newspaper publishers favored George W. Bush over Al Gore by a 3-to-1 margin, while newspaper editors and publishers together favored Bush by a 2-to-1 margin.”

McChesney contends that the media are dominated by a small number of very large, vertically integrated corporations

that control the content and the conduits to distribute it. Their owners are generous supporters of politicians through powerful lobbyists. Perhaps the most significant by-product of this corporate dominance is that most journalists are reluctant to aggressively investigate malfeasance by conservative politicians for fear of providing proof of the accusation of left-wing bias. Because the media almost exclusively report official spin, at which the right is supremely skilled, rather than engage in investigative journalism, the average consumer of news media believes a grotesque perversion of the truth.

The most damaging myth, though, is that “debates concerning media policy in the United States have accurately reflected the range of public opinion and public interests.” McChesney devotes the final chapter to the “Uprising of 2003,” during which a grassroots effort by concerned citizens from across the political spectrum insisted that the FCC not relax media ownership rules as it was attempting to do without public debate. Throughout, FCC Chairman Michael Powell, son of Secretary of State Colin Powell, refused to hold adequate hearings, yet continued to argue (through the media) that the FCC had given the people ample time to respond and that they simply weren’t interested. In fact, his actions were so underhanded that McChesney labels him the most dishonorable politician in America today.

Two events inspired people to action: the United States invasion and occupation of (and the media’s unbalanced and sensationalistic coverage of) Iraq and the unlikely “emergence of conservative opposition to the relaxation of media ownership rules.” Disgusted with the media and informed of the FCC’s duplicitous activities by the two Democratic Commission chairmen, Jonathan Adelstein and Michael Copps, nearly three million Americans from both the right and left officially registered their displeasure with the FCC and demanded that their elected representatives put a halt to its

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plans to further relax media consolidation laws. With the exception of the Iraq War, Congress noted that the FCC's deceitful activity was the most important issue to their constituencies in 2003. In June of this year, "both Congress and the courts repudiated the FCC's reckless decision on media ownership."

McChesney's arguments are logical and his evidence abundant, making his conclusions convincing. He posits that the media are an antidemocratic force in America today because they promote hypercommercialism and depoliticize society. Yet his book is not simply an indictment of manipulative right-wing politicians and greedy owners of media supercompanies. He reminds us that "media reform and campaigns for social justice are inexorably linked," and suggests that the small victories of the recent past can sustain hope of future victory for those who believe a strong democracy provides high-quality media representing a variety of viewpoints. He reminds us that we have the power to ensure our Republic remains "for the people." —Kurt H. Cumiskey, North Carolina State University.

**Vaidhyathan, Siva.** *The Anarchist in the Library: How the Clash between Freedom and Control Is Hacking the Real World and Crashing the System.* New York: Basic Books, 2004. 253p. \$26 (ISBN 0465089844). LC 2003-26089.

Siva Vaidhyathan is a professor of communications studies at New York University; he got considerable and deserved visibility for his very nice 2001 book *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How it Threatens Creativity*. That book was a wide-ranging history and social analysis of copyright in the United States and was, in my view, particularly insightful in its coverage of how copyright was progressively extended from textual works to various kinds of still and moving images and to music. One of the great strengths of *Copyrights and Copywrongs* was that Vaidhyathan, who is not (as far as I

know) an attorney, and certainly doesn't write like one, really focused on broader issues of culture, society, ethics, and economics that are implicated in the steady extensions of copyright and intellectual property. He wrote a lively book that was highly accessible to nonspecialist readers and that insisted our cultural goals should shape law, rather than allowing the technical logic of law to blindly determine the evolution of our society. *Copyrights and Copywrongs* forms an excellent complement and companion to a number of other outstanding books for the general reader that have come out over the past few years from thoughtful attorneys, such as Larry Lessig and James Boyle, concerned with the future of copyright and what it's doing to our society. (Pam Samuelson's articles also deserve a special place here.) Copyright has become a complex, pervasive, contentious, and crucial issue; and I think we need many more voices from beyond the legal profession engaged in the debate about its future. Vaidhyathan has been one important such voice and has done a good deal of public speaking on these topics (including talks at the ALA meetings) as well as writing books.

This brings us to *The Anarchist in the Library*, which I found to be a perhaps more ambitious, but certainly less focused and more frustrating, book than its predecessor. Vaidhyathan actually engages the evolution of the book directly in its concluding chapter, saying: "This book was supposed to be about entertainment—the battle over control of digital music, text, and video—an extension of my first book." But the events of 9/11 and their aftermath refocused his attention on what he describes as "information politics" as opposed to what he calls "entertainment politics," and indeed the book ranges over topics from copyright to philosophies of anarchism, from the future of nation-states to information warfare, from peer-to-peer technology to some really fascinating discussion of global cultural issues. (See especially chapter 7, "Culture as Anarchy.") The