Book Reviews

Beth M. Whittaker and Lynn M. Thomas.
Special Collections 2.0. Westport, Conn.:
Libraries Unlimited, 2009. xxiv, 150p.
alk. paper, $45 (ISBN 9781591587200).
LC 2009-013451.

All libraries, regardless of patron base, are grappling with the opportunities and challenges of changing patron expectations in an increasingly digital world. Special collections libraries face their own set of challenges in this arena, particularly with regard to increasing collection visibility.

Special Collections 2.0 presents an overview of the ways in which Web 2.0 technology can be utilized by special collections libraries, archives, and other institutions that present and preserve cultural heritage materials. The authors acknowledge that there are numerous books and articles discussing Web 2.0 technologies in general, and that this book focuses on those that can play specific roles for special collections libraries, archives, and museums. The book is an expansion of a survey (included as Appendix 1) distributed to cultural heritage and special-collections professionals via the listservs EXLIBRIS-L (for rare-books professionals) and Archivists, and the Facebook groups for Rare Books Professionals and Archivists intended to gauge knowledge of and interest in Web 2.0 technologies in this community.

The book is divided into six chapters, each of which addresses a Web 2.0 technology of specific interest to the special-collections professional and how it can be used to create, promote, and manage materials and find new audiences for them. Chapters range from a basic outline of various social-networking and communication tools and how they can be used for networking, promotion, and community-building (chapters 1–4), to specific library-related issues and tools (chapters 5 and 6).

Chapter 1 provides an outline of social networking and collaboration tools, ranging from Facebook to SecondLife to ALAConnect. Chapters 2 and 3 move beyond basic social networking to more actively collaborative technologies. Chapter 2 focuses on blogs and RSS feeds, providing an overview of how (and why) to blog and follow blogs, noting that blogging can facilitate professional conversation and allow the development of collaborative projects. A further note on the preservation and archiving of blogs highlights the convergence of Web 2.0 technologies and cultural preservation. Chapter 3 illustrates how wikis can be used with an internal focus: to make documentation available, note the history and peculiarities of specific collections and items, document local cataloging practices, and serve as basic internal communication; and with an external focus: communicating with donors, patrons, and other professionals in the field, promoting collections. The authors provide an example of the use of a wiki as a collection development and enhancement tool: the Edward T. LeBlanc Dime Novel Wiki Project of Northern Illinois University, still in the pilot stage at time of publication. Chapter 4 begins the progression to more detailed, collection-focused examples of Web 2.0 technology, by discussing the use of social tagging, Flickr, and podcasts to promote collections, create digital collections, and enhance collection description.

Chapters 5 and 6 turn the discussion toward field-specific tools and issues. Chapter 5 provides great detail on access to collections via catalogs and finding aids, and the current state of descriptive access to special collections. Much work is presently being done in the greater library community on catalog interfaces, particularly the "Next Gen" trend that tends to design interfaces that replicate the search-engine experience. The authors note that these interfaces often homogenize records and hide the specific information pertaining

to special-collections materials—specific information that is often why the material is special in the first place—from users, and highlight the need for special-collections professionals to take an active role in catalog development to prevent this.

The authors go on to discuss the increasing standardization, after an absence thereof, of archival descriptive standards via DACS (Describing Archives: A Content Standard) and EAD (Encoded Archival Description), and the commercial and open-source software solutions available to museums to publicize description of collections most often relegated to internal databases. Additionally, the authors discuss the ability to harvest and share metadata and the use of "social cataloging" to make searching across digital collections possible.

Chapter 6 focuses on "digital preservation 2.0." Here, the authors note that cultural heritage professionals "have a unique viewpoint and skill set that equips them to take on the challenge of preserving digital materials," and that the community must be part of the digital preservation movement, particularly for 2.0 materials, which are dynamic, rather than static. The many issues in this area, including those of mass digitization, copyright, and cost and scale of projects, are addressed, with an exhortation at the end:

> … when will cultural heritage professionals, the people who will, ultimately, be responsible for the long-term preservation of dynamic materials, acknowledge the elephant in the room? … If the cultural heritage community does not make a concerted effort to catch up, we are in danger of losing a significant part of our history, as surely as if we were burning family papers after the death of a loved one[.]

Appendix 2, "A Digital Preservation Primer," provides practical advice on achieving the above, with lists and descriptions of tools and services available to facilitate digital preservation.

Special Collections 2.0 is well written, reaching those with little knowledge of Web 2.0 technologies without condescending to those more experienced in Web 2.0; extensive bibliographies of both print and online resources close each chapter. This book is vital reading for current and future special-collections professionals: not merely as a guide to improving collection access and promotion, but as an exhortation to become a driving force in the larger Library 2.0 effort.—*Deborah DeGeorge, University of Michigan.*

Brent L. Pickett. *Historical Dictionary of Homosexuality.* Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2009. 280p. alk. paper, $85 (ISBN 9780810859791). LC 2009-004763.

The central dilemma confronting an author of a reference work on homosexuality is the inherent historicity of sex and gender categories. How can one assemble a comprehensive dictionary of homosexuality if the category itself is historically contingent? Pickett, a political science professor at University of Wyoming/Casper College Center, acknowledges this challenge in his introduction, pointing to the difficulty of "identifying the precise scope of the subject matter…the apparently simple question of what counts as homosexuality ends up being extraordinarily complex" (xxxi). Pickett deals with this complexity by drawing some rather stark lines. For example, he excludes coverage of transgender and transsexual histories on the grounds that sexual orientation and gender identity are distinct categories with distinct histories. And yet, the Stonewall rebellion—led largely by transsexuals and transvestites, though largely marshaled to explain gay and lesbian history—receives coverage, as do berdache, transsexual, and transvestite. Even for Pickett, the boundaries cannot hold.

Despite this (perhaps inescapable) weakness, Pickett's historical dictionary will fill a need in smaller collections that do not support LGBT or Queer studies programs but do want to provide students with a general reference text about