Janes, Joseph. *Introduction to Reference Work in the Digital Age.* New York: Neal Shuman, 2003. 213p. alk. paper, $59.95 (ISBN 1555704298). LC 2003-52739.

Joseph Janes has written a comprehensive, yet concise, account of where, when, how, and why reference librarians should embrace the digital reference revolution in *Introduction to Reference Work in the Digital Age*. Moreover, he has done it in a readable, chatty, informal style. Author of several other books and a popular speaker at library meetings, Janes asserts that the word *digital* should be assumed nowadays when discussing reference work. His book is of interest to all academic librarians because, one way or another, all of us will be a part of the effort to provide online information services to remote patrons who are increasingly insistent about demanding library services. It should be required reading for reference librarians, especially those who are dubious about the effectiveness of remote reference work.

Janes starts with definitions, citing the history of the meanings of reference in the literature and in the guidelines offered by library organizations. In 1943, the ALA defined the reference department as "the section of the library in which its reference books are kept for consultation." Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) uses Standard Z39.7: "An information contact that involves the use, recommendation, interpretation, or instruction in the use of one or more information sources, or knowledge of such sources, by a member of the reference or information staff." Janes suggests a shorter definition and notes that digital reference is the same thing we've been doing all along, with the addition of a phrase (in italics): "the provision of direct, professional assistance to people who are seeking information, *at the time and point of need.*"

The book is divided into six chapters and the table of contents is a thorough outline of the concepts covered. There is a chapter on understanding the needs of users and one describing different ways of responding electronically. The available technological options that can be used to connect with users are discussed, as is the evolution of staff competencies that will be required. Janes then provides a concrete ten-step plan to implement a digital reference service, including assessment, evaluation, and performance standards. Each chapter is organized like a textbook, but it does not read like one, due to the author's talent at making what could be a dull topic interesting by means of his conversational style. The chapters begin with the familiar "what we will discuss in this chapter" and end with thought-provoking "Questions for Review." The legible type, font styles, and section headings make it easy to maneuver within the chapters.

In the past, Janes suggests, much of a librarian's time was spent on "sources and materials, their organization, searching, and use … and pretty short shrift was given to the actual people on the other side of the desk." Now, however, that is not enough: "The stakes are significantly higher … and the risk of doing nothing is greater." He sees what we have been doing in the past as preparation for what is coming: "the opportunity to start over, to generate and play with new ideas and revisit old ones … serving people at the time and point of *their* needs." He admits that, though exciting, this can be frightening. One of the scariest things he discusses is 24/7 service, but he also suggests ways of handling it, such as collaborative reference service with other libraries or information providers. He also discusses a favorite topic of reference librarians, the "reference interview," in light of the changing nature of reference. He also

provides samples of what some libraries have used to get the same idea across by means of an online form.

With an extensive index, endnotes, and a bibliography at the end of each chapter, the reader is provided with bibliographical leads to research the topic further. Academic librarians have, as Janes notes, "an opportunity to provide direct, mediated services to people, breaking the boundaries of place and time that have constrained us (and our users) for millennia." Academic libraries should be grateful to have such an enthusiastic, concise, well-organized, and well-written guide for the direction or implementation of digital reference services.—*Elizabeth M. Williams, Appalachian State University.*

Knuth, Rebecca. *Libricide: The Regime-Sponsored Destruction of Books and Libraries in the Twentieth Century.* Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003. 277p. alk. paper, $39.95 (ISBN 027598088X). LC 2002-44542.

The appalling phenomena of genocide (destruction of peoples) and ethnocide (destruction of cultures, often part of a genocidal campaign) are well known. Although the local conditions and specific historical circumstances can be quite varied, there is a persistent underlying focused hatred, often mindless, routinized, and administratively managed as if it were a problem in sanitation maintenance or road construction. When these impulses specifically turn to books, manuscripts, and other forms of information and knowledge records, the apt, if less familiar, term *libricide* naturally suggests itself.

For those not already familiar with at least the outlines of the story, it is starkly sobering, and the rich accounts of these case studies provide much to think about. Methodologically speaking, the evidence appears to come not directly from prima-

ry sources but, rather, from the author's readings of secondary sources. This may account for the suspiciously close fit between the theoretical discussion and the evidence of the cases. (For readers—like this reviewer—unfamiliar with whatever sources provide the foundations for the cases, a summary discussion would have been appropriate.)

Chapters 2 and 3 provide first a conceptual and historical overview ("The Evolution and Functions of Libraries") and second a conceptual framework ("A Theoretical Framework for Libricide"), which contextualizes the five case studies presented in chapters 4 through 8 (Nazi Germany, Greater Serbia, Iraq's 1990 attack on Kuwait, the Chinese cultural revolution, and the Chinese attack on Tibet) while a final summary discussion, "The Collision of Ideas," is presented in chapter 9.

The subject matter and details presented in the case studies are both compelling on their own and skillfully presented in a narrative that is engaging and readable. But I can't recommend the book unreservedly, particularly for classroom use, except for readers already quite familiar with the outlines of the social, political, and economic history that supply its larger context. Without this, one might be too easily misled by the author's unexamined bias toward the more conservative versions of free-market, Western-style liberalism. Somewhat paradoxically, her own views seem to partake of the ideological fervor she so rightly decries. For Professor Knuth, first there are the good guys: that's the modern Western intellectual tradition, bent on nothing but the discovery of the truth, the accumulation of wisdom, and the triumph of civilization. And then there are the very bad guys, such as Communists, Fascists, and extremist ideologues of various stripes. (See chapters 4 through