

Webology, Volume 5, Number 2, June, 2008

Home	Table of Contents	Titles & Subject Index	Authors Index
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Book Review

Lesley S.J. Farmer (ed.). [*The human side of reference and information services in academic libraries: Adding value in the digital world*](#). Published by [Chandos Publishing](#), Chandos House, 5 & 6 Steadys Lane, Stanton Harcourt, Oxford, OX29 5RL, UK. 2007, XXII, 134 p., Paperback, ISBN 1-84334-257-X £39.95; Hardback ISBN 1-84334-258-8 £57.00.

The application of digital technologies in libraries has mainly led to disintermediation which means, no mediation, serve yourself to information.

To use most of library and information services today, users do not need to go to library or see a librarian. They can use digital resources and services at home. In some cases they may not even realise that librarians are behind the scene of the service they are getting benefit from. For example they might search for an article in Google Scholar and click and get the PDF without knowing that librarians are working to make this service, which entails serials management, IP authentication and so on, run smoothly.

In this disintermediated environment, reference services are striving. They are still part of library services where there is real interaction between users and librarians. The focus of reference work have shifted from resources to users, and from finding information for users to enabling them to find the required information themselves. Having this in mind, technology can be a source of opportunity for reference librarians and not a source of challenge.

The book *The Human Side of Reference and Information Services in Academic Libraries: Adding value in the digital world* discusses the impact of technology on different aspects of reference services. The book consists of seven chapters written by librarians of California State University at Long Beach and edited by a professor.

Reference services have three main components including resources, users and librarians. The book discusses the technology impact on each of these components separately in a different chapter. Chapter one is about the impact of technology on the information needs and behaviour of academic community, with a focus on millennial generation. Chapter two deals with the technology impact on the librarians, and discusses issues such as reference staffing, hiring and staff development. The next chapter discusses the impact on reference resources.

After covering the three main components of the reference service, the remaining chapters deal with the impact off technology on the packaging of reference and information, on the access to services, and the evaluation of services. Chapter four discusses the delivery or packaging of reference and information and covers topics such as knowledge management and role of librarians as information packager. Chapter five is about physical access to reference and information and the next chapter focuses on intellectual access for reference and information services. The final chapter, written by the editor, related to the evaluation

o reference and information services. It discusses the approaches, tools and standards for evaluation. The book ends with an eight-page long bibliography and an index.

I would have wished to see the title a little different, while it talks about the human side of reference, all of the chapters are about 'Technology impact on . . .'. It is not clear from the preface of the book who is its target audience. But the title and content imply that the book is written for academic reference librarians. As the range of topics covered by the books is wide, they do not receive a deep enough treatment in some cases. Overall, the book is somewhat enlightening for those who want to explore different aspects of the impact of technology on reference services in academic environment.

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Bibliographic information of this book review for citing:

Jamali, H.R. (2008). "Review of: Farmer, L.S.J. *The human side of reference and information services in academic libraries: Adding value in the digital world.*" Oxford: Chandos Publishing. *Webology*, 5(2), Book Review 15. Available at:
<http://www.webology.org/2008/v5n2/bookreview15.html>

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