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The Librarian's Career Guidebook
By: Priscilla K. Shontz (Editor)
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Review

The Librarian's Career Guidebook offers practical strategies and ideas to potential, new, and even established librarians to help them design a career in librarianship. The book consists of essays from librarians on topics ranging from why someone should become a librarian, to maintaining a life-work balance once you have entered the field. To achieve this goal, the book is divided into eight sections: career planning; education; employment; experience as an entry-level librarian; experience as an established librarian; skills; professional development; and enjoying your career. Each section is designed to answer questions librarians might have as they progress along their career path.

Although intended for a wide audience, *The Librarian's Career Guidebook* is best suited for those considering a career in librarianship or current MLS/MLIS candidates. The first three sections offer concrete information that will guide those who are new to the library world through the many choices ahead of them. For example,

the different career alternatives open to MLS/MLIS holders are clearly laid out (from academic, public and school librarianship, to freelancing or working for a library vendor) and written with great enthusiasm by the various professionals. The practical advice on how to manage the demands of library school, and tips for a successful job search, given in Sections Two and Three, would serve most students well.

The Librarian's Career Guidebook suffers from some inconsistencies. The citation style varies from chapter to chapter and, due to the many contributors, so does the tone. The commentary can range from the sublime ("Tenure-Track or Tenure Trap?" by Christopher Nolan, who gives a clear pro-versus-con discussion of the tenure process) to the ridiculous ("Never a Dull Day in the School Library" by Linda Rowan, who gives a detailed "day in the life" profile that even includes restroom breaks). Although the changes in tone are meant to demonstrate the diversity of those in the profession and create a sense of "dialogue" between the professionals, the tone changes can distract from the essay's main point.

The most helpful sections of the book are the related readings at the end of each chapter. Often, the essay only provides a brief overview of a complex topic. For example, the importance of a well-written cover letter and resume are stressed numerous times. However, these topics are too complex to be covered in two chapters. The related readings give interested readers more resources to pursue. At the end of some of the chapters, online resources are suggested. Brief searches for some of the

URLs proved that not all of them are still functional.

The best way to read *The Librarian's Career Guidebook* is to pick and choose the chapters that interest you. If you are a new student trying to figure out what career path to follow, then the sections on life-work balance might not be of immediate interest to you. If you have decided to pursue public librarianship, then the essays on tenure and publishing could be skipped so that you can focus on more pertinent chapters. Because *The Librarian's Career Guidebook* was written by a diverse group, it offers a basic,

generalized guide to building a career in librarianship. Although a good starting point for those new to the profession, a more experienced reader may wish for something more substantial.

Reviewer's Bio

Deborah Hicks is a MLIS student in the School of Information Management at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Canada. Her interests include library history, future directions of librarianship, and the opinions and attitudes of librarians towards change.