

Fort Hays State University

## FHSU Scholars Repository

---

Forsyth Library Faculty Publications

Forsyth Library

---

10-7-2019

### Book Review: Digital Curation for Libraries and Archives

Mary Elizabeth Downing MLIS

*Fort Hays State University*, [medowning@fhsu.edu](mailto:medowning@fhsu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholars.fhsu.edu/library\\_facpub](https://scholars.fhsu.edu/library_facpub)



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Downing, M.E. (2019) Review: Digital curation for libraries and archives. *Technical Services Quarterly*, 36(4), 420-421. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07317131.2019.1664116>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Forsyth Library at FHSU Scholars Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Forsyth Library Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of FHSU Scholars Repository. For more information, please contact [ScholarsRepository@fhsu.edu](mailto:ScholarsRepository@fhsu.edu).

**Digital Curation for Libraries and Archives** by Stacy T. Kowalczyk. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2018, 246pp., ISBN: 978-1610696319, \$60.00.

Stacy T. Kowalczyk's *Digital Curation for Libraries and Archives* provides a broad overview of the digital curation landscape. With a heavy focus on digital preservation, Kowalczyk introduces readers to both the theoretical and technical implications of digital curation. The work is broken down into sections designed to walk practitioners through the digital preservation lifecycle from initial planning to practice. The addition of discussion questions, glossary, and teachers handbook are designed to make the work useful for instructors in library schools. While the topics covered are of great interest to those currently engaged in digital curation, this particular work does not quite achieve the author's stated goal of creating either a textbook for current students or a handbook for working practitioners.

Though the work is titled *Digital Curation for Libraries and Archives*, the author almost exclusively addresses digital preservation issues. Only one of the twelve chapters is dedicated to the selection and curation of materials for digital collections. Topics such as collection development and access take a back seat to more technical discussions of preservation file formats and data management. This focus on digital preservation is important for digital curation librarians in every library setting, but concentrating on preservation to the exclusion of a well-rounded discussion of collection development in a digital environment creates a blind-spot for both students and practitioners who may be new to the concept of digital curation.

Kowalczyk's section on preservation technology fundamentals is perhaps the most helpful piece in the entire work. The author provides solid information that will allow both students and practitioners to further engage in digital preservation activities. Readers are introduced to a number of both technical and theoretical concepts that are widely discussed in the library digital

preservation world. The author identifies multiple sources for determining best practices in an industry that is constantly changing. As a practitioner who has been working in the digital curation world for the better part of a decade, this text covered familiar ground.

While the information in this book is useful and well-researched, it was not particularly well-suited to textbook use. The language is overly technical at times and the author assumes a level of knowledge that the novice likely does not possess. There is a limited glossary in the back of the book but it is not consistently tied to the text. In many cases keywords are not clearly identified within the text or they are not included in the glossary. Discussion questions at the end of each chapter are helpful for instructors designing a lesson plan, however, questions are not always clearly answered in the preceding text. The included teachers handbook does include multiple helpful activities for use in a classroom setting. If future editions of this book featured an improved glossary for each chapter and better keyword identification, this book would be a helpful addition to a digital preservation class.

Overall, this book is worthy of a place on a digital curation librarian's shelf. It may not delve deeply into collection development or presentation, but it does provide solid information on digital preservation for those engaged in digital curation. Those new to the topic may find the work too technical for an introduction and instructors may find some features lacking for textbook use. For those practitioners already familiar with the landscape, this work can provide additional information to supplement their own expertise. In a library digital preservation class, this book can play a role as a solid supplementary text.

*M. Elizabeth Downing, MLIS, is a Digital Curation Librarian and Instructor in the Masters of Liberal Studies program at Fort Hays State University.*

M Elizabeth Downing, MLIS  
Digital Curation Librarian  
Forsyth Library  
Fort Hays State University  
Hays, KS