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KENNEDY, Marie R. and LAGUARDIA, Cheryl. *Marketing your library's electronic resources: a how-to-do-it manual.* **London: Facet. 2013. 181 pages. ISBN-13 9781856049429. £49.95**

This book landed on my desk and I immediately pounced to tear open the packaging. However, upon making my way through the masking tape, I was struck by the texture of the book, which is something like linoleum. It feels slightly unusual in the hands, but the content is useful and immediately practicable, and also well researched. It contains huge margins for notes and is rather nicely structured.

The two authors, Marie R. Kennedy and Cheryl LaGuardia, highlight what we all experience, and what frustrates us all - online systems that do not make e-resources very accessible; that are poor quality, with clunky discovery. What we have to stress and make clear is that the Library is aware of its patrons' needs to the extent that it can say "out of all of these available resources, it's this one, this is the one you want" (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, xvi) Along with emphasising the need for using our resources, and justifying the need for them (which, when they are difficult for users to operate, is hard) there is the "heightened expectation to see a palpable return" (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, xvi). So, Kennedy and LaGuardia suggest (and a useful suggestion it is), envisioning a shopping list for a library with e-resources that needs to be satisfied and sustained. This is carried through to remind us why everything in a marketing plan is necessary – the use of data, both the usage, and cost in knowing "what you already have in your pantry". The supermarket analogy extends to sending out consistent messages to customers: "Thank you for shopping at Kmart" (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, 9) is a consistent message spoken by every member of staff after every transaction in a Kmart supermarket. Similarly, the marketing of e-resources could be performed consistently by all staff, indiscriminate of their personal preference. From experience, librarians often prefer one media, either print, or electronic, and will steer patrons towards this format. As the authors rightly argue, marketing cannot just be seen as something that can simply be left to a team or specific person – all staff should be actively marketing. An idea that I liked and think would actually be wonderfully successful (although I do not know how practical it would be to implement) is to hold a vendor day with one feedback question "what five resources do you want to know more about?" (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, 12). One month later, the authors suggest a day of focussed training with all staff, and all who signed up. As the authors say, feedback does not have to be seen as a problem, it can in fact be seen as an opportunity, an opportunity to have things tailored and to build a very useful relationship.

For someone new to marketing resources, the practical advice in this book is invaluable. The useful ideas for spreadsheet keeping, such as merging subscription price data with use statistics, "can tell you how much it costs each time your patrons download an e-journal article, read an e-book chapter, or perform a search in a database" (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, 8). Following this advice is a description and explanation of COUNTER data in order to store cost of use for e-content. The reality of e-resources is that they do not exist on the shelf, and can't be browsed in the way a physical book can be. The digital *is* one

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dimensional, but unlike the authors of the present volume, I see the searchability of the electronic domain, which I consider in many circumstances to be much more powerful than browsing an area of the shelf.

Some more advice: "convey serious tone through budget – account for everything even if free – add time. Value the libraries funds" (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, 36-37), and to be more qualitative with measurement, ask users for descriptive feedback, such as "didn't learn anything", "I learnt…", or "I would like to learn more about…". The authors offer a great deal of guidance regarding what to do at every stage, and suggest that, even if it does not work, document everything as it is valuable information to learn from. Additionally, they say, as we go through the initial stages we gather information, called "actionable knowledge" (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, 39) which gives us an indication on how to adapt, but we must also think about our goal: does it remain the same throughout? If the use increases, which, realistically is our goal, do we simply stop?

Another benefit of a solid marketing scheme is the ability to ensure the plan "focuses on a specific cluster of patrons" which "may make your marketing go further if you can identify a library fan in that cluster with whom to directly communicate" (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, 50). And with a strongly anchored marketing plan, reason will be given to the rest of the steps. It had not really occurred to me to have an end goal in sight, and it really should have, considering that the guaranteed new influx of users every year means that there should be a point at which I feel comfortable with the level of awareness and marketing generated through my actions. At this point in the text the authors offer some of the best ideas from the literature around, including brilliant insights from pertinent published articles:

- give incentives for training;
- have a name for the campaign;
- make a poster explaining why you are marketing;
- have staff on call to offer one to one training.

The book opens with a complimentary preface by a member of faculty who provides an extremely positive review of the publication, describing it as just what the field of e-resources needs and has been longingly waiting for. This reinforced my own understanding of one of the most promising and rewarding things we could do: educate all staff thoroughly in the area of all library holdings; most people do not regard libraries as a place to begin electronic research. This would ensure that a consistent and well informed message is given to students within universities. Through distinguishing and bridging the gap between departments, a more visible, and acknowledged presence will be made. This preface highlighted the need for a thorough promotion to permanent fixtures, before embarking on promoting to transitory students.

In the opening to the book we are provided with the following statement:

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Competition with information fulfilment systems outside libraries is increasing, although the competition may not actually be offering products that are any good.

(Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, xvi)

Whilst I thoroughly agree that we should be promoting and prioritising our own resources, and reinforcing that they are not available anywhere (they are peer-reviewed, scholarly, and reliable) I do not believe that information from the "dreaded internet" should be highlighted as "competition". The authors state that "if our patrons really knew and understood how much we make available to them online, they wouldn't go to alternative information providers" (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, xv). I do not perceive other sources as competition, merely as something to complement and enrich the resources that the library is providing – after all, there are some wonderful and brilliant online open access resources and materials; it is simply a case of being able to find them. Furthermore, once found it is important to have the necessary analytical skills to know what is useful, scholarly and trustworthy – a further place where *we*, the information professionals step in. This is not a positive or useful stance, and is something that jarred with my further reading of the book. However, it is a very useful tool with a great deal of helpful practical advice, tips, and examples.

This is a great book for beginners and first time marketers, but also for people to use as a reference book, or to dip in and out of, with rounded excellent advice for people of all experience and expertise. It is an encouraging book that pushes the reader towards confidence and the mind-set to be convincing in explaining the benefits of promotion, and understanding why the dialogue needs to be opened through marketing. A good bit of advice is "if you have an elite group of potential patrons for your electronic resources, you can develop an entire marketing plan for them" (Kennedy and LaGuardia, 2013, 77). The book closes with marketing plans from several libraries – one solely digital and an academic library. These are a great addition to an overall quality book.

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