
RUTHVEN, Ian. and CHOWDHURY, G.G. (eds) *Cultural Heritage Information Access and Management*. London: Facet. 2015. 253 pages. ISBN 978-1-85604-930-6. £64.95

This book launches Facet's new iResearch series, focusing on specific aspects of Information Science research. This volume addresses issues in managing digital cultural heritage information and consists of eleven chapters from a range of authors. Each chapter is well-referenced, allowing the reader to explore further any topic of interest. Although cultural heritage may be specific to different cultures and communities, the challenges and opportunities of managing digital material in any context are international, so it is useful to have international contributions to the issues raised. The drive to manage digital material is increasingly important in the cultural heritage context, so this is a timely examination of a developing research area.

Chapter 1 gives a brief overview of some of the challenges in managing digital cultural heritage information. This chapter helps to set the scene, as does chapter 2, which focuses specifically on the emerging research area of digital humanities (DH). This chapter is useful for researchers that have little understanding of this exciting field; it critically examines histories and definitions, including some consideration of the library context. The author argues that DH has usually been considered in textual terms only, excluding the broad range of data and disciplines that should be included. The author then links these discussions to cultural heritage institutions through recommendations of greater digitisation, access to materials for DH researchers and public participation. Chapter 3 focuses on digitisation and brings a more practical view through consideration of policies, guidelines, digital rights management issues and also discusses ethical issues surrounding indigenous cultural heritage. These are broad topics that can only be briefly considered in a short book chapter and also vary internationally, but the author includes examples and guidance from a range of sources, for example bringing together guidance from the EU, USA, Australia and the UK.

Arguably chapter 4 would be more useful positioned before chapter 3 as it gives a valuable overview of the current digitisation environment, including a brief description of the development of digitisation in cultural heritage institutions and also processes and technologies. Both chapters consider the value of digitisation, which is an important factor in ensuring sustainability of digitisation and digital preservation services; these are considered in greater depth in the context of cultural heritage information services in chapter 11. Also raised in chapter 4 that rightly needs further investigation is the issue of the information users need to interpret digital representations of cultural heritage material. Chapter 5 turns to an exploration of issues and challenges of creating and managing appropriate metadata for digital resources. This chapter gives a useful introduction to the topic which is then interestingly contextualised in the authors' work on digital *manga* comics. The authors also attempt to place this in the wider cultural memory context, though this aspect does not integrate entirely with the rest of the chapter. The next chapter examines the architecture of systems that store, preserves and provide access to digital resources, including discussion of challenges and issues that need to be considered when designing systems. The requirement to focus on

user needs and importantly simplicity, in particular to facilitate management of cultural heritage information in countries with poor network infrastructure and access, is highlighted effectively. This then leads into the next chapter which focuses on users and usability of cultural heritage information systems. Issues and challenges are discussed, such as the importance of understanding the behaviours of users, and the need to take a user-centred design approach when creating digital resources and services, often for an unknown or diverse set of users. As with the rest of this book, the broad scope of this chapter means that the topics can only be dealt with briefly, such as the issue of crowd-sourcing. For this reason the range of up-to-date references are welcome for the interested reader to find out more.

Chapter 8 then presents a framework for analysing and comparing user interactions in cultural heritage information services. The authors convincingly argue that by systematically analysing interactions with digital cultural heritage, in relation to modes of access, institutions can offer interactions with their digital material that go beyond only searching to improve the user experience with greater context, functionality and access. The example analysis using the Europeana digital library is helpful to understand how the framework might be applied. The next chapter continues the theme of user interaction with digital cultural heritage, giving a useful overview of issues surrounding knowledge organisation systems and metadata standards. The author argues that the choice of system should take account of usability and user engagement with information in order to make digital collections more accessible. The case studies illustrate well the way in which the proposed method of evaluating search interfaces to support different information seeking tasks can be applied, although more comparison here of the case studies would be interesting. Chapter 10 provides insight into the 'PATHS' system which aims to help users with differing levels of expertise navigate and use digital cultural heritage collections, such as through recommendations and visualisations. This chapter describes the project and includes images from the resulting interface. This is an interesting project, though greater critical discussion of findings and implications arising from the project would be helpful. Finally, as mentioned, chapter 11 considers sustainability and the consideration of not only economic issues but also social and environmental aspects is especially welcome. More on digital preservation would have been useful here as it is necessary to manage digital cultural heritage information in the longer term but this chapter is a useful overview to start considering sustainability.

In summary this book provides an interesting and useful overview of many of the emerging topics involved in managing cultural heritage information. I was left wanting more on some topics, but the references given are very helpful in taking the reader further. The discussions of not only information systems but also broader issues such as policies, user needs, and sustainability will be of certain benefit to students and researchers.

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