Assessment tools vary across the case studies presented, although, because self-awareness is such a critical part of metaliteracy, all assessment activities are highly self-reflective. These include written reflection and surveys for students, as well as an examination of the process students follow to complete a project, rather than the final product. Several of the authors provide detailed coding systems used for assessment; many of these incorporate the overall structure of Mackey and Jacobson’s metaliteracy framework of behavioral, cognitive, affective, and metacognitive skills.

In keeping with the self-reflective nature of metaliteracy, the authors of these case studies also provide serious self-reflection on their own attempts to teach and evaluate for metaliteracy. Donna Witek and Teresa Grettano reach the inspiring conclusion that their own course redesign to teach metaliteracy rather than information literacy has resulted in a more dynamic and flexible course structure. Barbara J. D’Angelo and Barry M. Maid conclude that a metaliteracy approach has allowed them to better realize what their students have learned and will be able to apply following the course. Sandra K. Cimbricz and Logan Rath note that metaliteracy also challenged them as instructors to rethink their instructional practices, including a reexamination of the information sources they direct students to and the base assumptions they make about students’ technology and information skills.

The ninth and final chapter of Metaliteracy in Practice departs from the case study format, as Paul Prinsloo contributes an excellent essay on metaliteracy and agency. While this book is overall a highly practical volume grounded in a theoretical framework, Prinsloo shifts to a more theoretical, social justice–focused examination of how metaliteracy exists in a changing world where “literacy-as-agency is a prerequisite to living a fully human, dignified life” (186). He encourages us to remember Paulo Freire’s emphasis on human agency as reliant on each person’s ability to “read the world.” Prinsloo uses this as a broader framework for explaining our human need to be able to understand who influences our world and how, as well as the power each individual has to create alternate narratives in response. He encourages us to use this concept of literacy-as-agency as a broader framework for defining and motivating all literacies, including application and assessment of metaliteracy.

Metaliteracy in Practice is an important read for any librarian or faculty who have teaching roles, or who play a role in the production of content that students interact with. The practical applications of metaliteracy described in this book will be incredibly useful for anyone developing assignments and evaluation frameworks to be used in teaching across disciplines, whether they are starting to plan a new course from scratch, or simply want to rework an existing course to better teach and evaluate for metaliteracy skills. The book includes a list of figures and tables and a detailed index.—Jen Hoyer, Artstor; Interference Archive, Brooklyn, N.Y.


In this comprehensive volume, Ward, Freeman, and Nixon apply a breadth of experience amassed during their collective tenure at Purdue University Libraries to offer a balanced grounding for library professionals working in the area of e-book collections, management, and assessment. In addition to privileging the views of libraries and their users, they bring the perspective of publishers and vendors to the table. The result is a work that fosters a holistic appreciation for the challenges that extend across the e-book dissemination ecosystem. This philosophy is incorporated into the structure of the book itself, where a final section of case studies is preceded by sections dedicated to each stakeholder group.

doi:10.5860/crl.77.5.673
Those who are planning assessment endeavours will appreciate the level of detailed analysis presented in this book. As Levine-Clarke notes in his Epilogue: “one thing that e-books offer is the potential for better understanding of how library users interact with monographs” (344). This book explores the farthest reaches of that interpretation, detailing exactly how far mining user data reports can go, and the spaces around and between that still demand qualitative insights.

The book begins with perspectives from the publishing industry, giving voice to commercial, academic and society publishers, as well as aggregators. We learn that e-books have dramatically slowed in growth and profitability, leaving hardcover and softcover formats as key breadwinners. Herman’s chapter vividly relays the cost challenges of the e-book workflow with copyright clearance being a significant sticking point, particularly for the mounting of back files. Obtaining clearance for images, she claims, is particularly problematic as rights holders continue to fear digital appropriation. Provisioning of e-content for libraries adds its own overhead, particularly for the smaller academic publisher that has to build in proxy server, library branding, and DDA (demand-driven acquisition) support. Sanfilippo adds that electronic distribution requires adhering to varying restrictions and metadata standards for numerous platforms at the individual title level, prohibitively raising distribution costs. Throughout the section, we begin to see a key driver of publisher-librarian tension: DDA has become a less profitable strategy for publishers, forcing them to embargo front list titles (to push sales of print) and to raise purchase prices and short-term loan prices to maintain fiscal viability.

What follows are the creative coping strategies of libraries detailed in the Librarians’ Challenges and Case Studies sections. These sections form the bulk of the book and are quite compelling. Much is written here with respect to strategies for managing patron-driven acquisition models, including ways of mitigating one’s “risk” or “discovery” pool. To this end, Fischer offers a memorable and informative chapter on risk pool management, with an eye to sustainability. She advocates for frequent monitoring to accompany this acquisitions model, warning of the need to remove titles due to frequent price inflation and scope creep. Ward and Richardson are in support of librarians selecting e-books for addition to the discovery pool in lieu of purchasing them outright. Their data show that this hybrid selection strategy benefits both users and the library with respect to adding highly used titles to the collection as well as deferring purchasing costs. Chapters addressing a variety of topics including collection strategies in area studies, user e-book browsing and reading behaviour, and consortia partnerships building infrastructure to support ILL of e-books add breadth and depth.

The Users’ Experiences section is a sobering reminder of the learning curve that must be overcome for readers to meaningfully integrate e-books into their research strategies. Varying platform configurations, password requirements, multiple DRM models, and underwhelming searching, linking, and annotation functionality disrupt academic e-book usability. David’s case study details community responsiveness to e-book user experience shortfalls. The OCUL Scholars Portal e-book platform functions to improve user experience and also provides a basis, by way of presenting usage statistics from multiple institutions, to have successful conversations with publishers to loosen DRM restrictions. In keeping with the theme of technical infrastructure and usability, this volume would benefit from an examination of user interaction with e-books within an adaptive technologies context.

One might fault the editors for the perceptible degree of repetition throughout the book, suggesting that fewer chapters could address the topic of e-books successfully. This strategy, however practical, would surely miss the overall feeling created by the gathering together of so many disparate voices. The chorus calls the question with
resounding effect: is the state of academic e-books a full-scale cold war? This volume offers some compelling supportive evidence in its detailing of the machinations of the various factions as they engage in data gathering and analysis to support a dance of evasion, self-defense, and retaliation. And as is the case in any war, there are casualties on all sides: the publishers claim crippling revenue losses, the libraries try to best serve their patrons in the face of dwindling budgets, and the users suffer with DRM restrictions, disappearing content, and poor interface design.

The reader will find, however, that the overall message of this volume is heartening: there is hope for diplomatic relations. We see, in particular through the successful innovative consortia partnerships discussed in this volume, that stakeholder communities are collaborating in responsive and productive ways. We must continue to work together to lay the groundwork for effective communication and mutual understanding toward a more sustainable outcome for all involved, with a collective eye to augmenting user experience.—Andrea Kosavic, York University


Making Institutional Repositories Work provides a framework for institutions looking to implement an IR, create institutional policies, recruit for use of the IR, evaluate existing IRs, and next steps for this valuable service. There is also a section dedicated to case studies from several institutions.

The first section focuses on choosing a platform for an institutional repository. Corbett, Ghaphery, Work, and Byrd present factors that institutions need to consider before selecting a platform. They also discuss differences between open source and proprietary systems and offer a deeper understanding for those who want to change platforms. McNeill investigates the types of repositories and platforms available to academic institutions and addresses essential questions that will help guide the decision-making process. Arlitsch, Obrien, Mixter, Clark, and Sterman discuss discoverability of IR content. They discuss the importance of structured metadata and metadata consistency, as well as discoverability in search engines, and describing items in the Semantic Web. A few of these names should be familiar in the field, especially regarding search engine optimization (SEO).

Setting policies is the focus of the second section of the book. Wesolek and Royster present IR policy basics, as well as benefits of setting such policies. An interesting inclusion in this chapter is the argument for not implementing a mandatory open access policy. The authors also address the question regarding the necessity of these policies for a successful IR. Gilman presents a solid case that academic institutions have a goal and institutional mission of disseminating knowledge openly available by the creators of that content for the benefit of the community, while protecting and respecting faculty rights. IRs are essential in this, and they play a central role. Duranceau and Kriegsman discuss open access implementation models, including liaison recruitment, outreach, faculty profile tools, and automatic harvesting. McMillan focuses on electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs), discussing the goals of theses and dissertations, copyright ownership, and ProQuest’s Dissertation Abstracts requirements and lack of understanding on the part of graduate students in terms of what it does for their dissertations. Bergin and Roh present their decision to stop their practice of requiring the submission of students’ dissertations to ProQuest. They found their solution within the IR.

After implementing the system and establishing policies, the next logical step is recruiting and creating content, which is the subject of the third section of this book. Davis-Kahl addresses themes and patterns regarding how faculty use green archiving,