
An up-and-coming library trend in libraries, makerspaces are community-shared facilities with tools and equipment, such as 3D printers, enabling participants to learn from the process of designing and manufacturing their own creations. One of the first books published on the concept, Makerspaces “is best used as not a prescriptive guideline for all who wish to create a makerspace in their own libraries, but as a place to quickly gather information on what others are doing—while also leaving room for your own individual ideas and creativities” (p. viii).

Following an introductory chapter that briefly defines the concept and provides project-planning guidance, this book offers profiles of nine library makerspaces (located in two academic, one middle school, and six public library settings). Profile chapters typically contain sections on creation; funding, including fees charged; physical space, including noise concerns; tools; programming; marketing; staffing; and demographics, including permission forms. Appendixes include general contact information for featured libraries and resources as well as the author’s qualitative survey instrument.

Unfortunately, the ambitiously pioneering Makerspaces does not quite deliver on its introductory statement of purpose. Bagley does not draw out or summarize the unique characteristics of the featured makerspaces; aside from covering a variety of library types, it is unclear how or why she selected these nine projects (including two still in the planning phase) from among her survey respondents as exemplary cases. Due to the book’s case-by-case treatment, readers must extract information from the individual profiles to get a sense of the big picture; some overarching comparison and analysis of the decisions made for each consideration would have been helpful. Further complicating matters is the order in which chapter sections are arranged, which can be awkward at times in terms of logical flow. Inconsistencies in the level and categorical placement of details across profiles also make it more challenging to ascertain the basic data—for example, the size of the library population or how long the space has been operational—readers might wish to know in order to evaluate the options in the context of their own libraries.

Bagley’s own contributions come chiefly in the form of makerspace advocacy (despite an apparent lack of firsthand experience) and extra project planning tips scattered throughout the text, adding little substantive value to what is essentially a lengthy survey report. The superfluous narrative gives Makerspaces a self-published quality; a little more editorial oversight would have gone a long way toward making this LITA Guide worthy of issuance by a major professional organization.

Though WorldCat currently lists only three other books published on the subject (all geared toward school-age makerspaces), a quick search of the library literature indexes turns up several articles. The ALA website further yields numerous informative blog posts by various divisions in the last few years. For those interested in a comprehensive general overview, however, the best alternative at present is Maker Media’s 84-page Makerspace Playbook—not only is this guide well-organized and easily readable, it is also available online for free.

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