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Review of Demystifying eResearch: A Primer for Librarians

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DEMYSTIFYING ERESEARCH: A PRIMER FOR LIBRARIANS. Martin, Victoria. *Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2014, xviii + 189 pp., \$75.00, ISBN 978-1-61069-520-6.*

From the Information Age emerges “big data”: vast quantities of information created continually across a multitude of platforms – stemming from such wide-ranging spheres as high-energy physics to social media. Computers allowing for faster processing and the internet permitting easier access to and sharing of information have led to an ability to create and disseminate a deluge of content. Enter new opportunities for librarians. Data curation, in which data are managed through their life span, is emerging as valuable and often necessary to an institution’s research program. What does data management entail and what precisely is “eResearch”? (Hint: it isn’t limited to the hard sciences.) Victoria Martin provides a wonderful overview to these topics in her new book. Martin is the life sciences librarian at George Mason University and holds master’s degrees in library science and creative writing.

In *Demystifying eResearch*, Martin introduces concepts and practices surrounding digital research. She draws connections between “traditional research,” that is, how research has been done, and eResearch, noting how technological advancements have allowed for changes in the way research can be done. The author does not set out to write a comprehensive tome on the topic. She rather provides an overview and describes pertinent library services. The book is intended for librarians but would be useful for anyone interested in learning the basics of

eResearch. The book is presented in two parts, and non-librarians may choose just to read Part One, which gives an introduction to eResearch. Part Two situates eResearch in the context of library services and is especially useful for librarians who wish to explore practical ideas for implementing eResearch services and what core competencies to foster. Reading the book from cover to cover provides a nice progression of topics; each chapter is also easily read as a stand-alone.

The chapters that comprise Part One include key terminology and applied examples. Martin gives a brief history on the development of the internet and related technologies, and rather than being dry, this overview provides interesting background for how today's online research tools have been developed. One chapter is devoted to scholarly communication, with emphasis on the digital age. Another chapter focuses on how eResearch is applied in the sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities.

In Part Two, Martin describes the intersection of eResearch with library services, especially at academic and research libraries; special, public, and school libraries are given brief mention. Chapter 8 discusses practical examples of how libraries are providing eResearch services, with a focus on academic and research libraries. Following nicely from this, Chapter 9 presents librarian competency skills, along with suggestions for acquiring these skills, from self-education and continuing education opportunities to formal training programs.

Martin's *Demystifying eResearch* is a concise volume offering a well-researched primer that includes ways in which libraries can expand their services to accommodate new modes of research. Clear definitions and numerous exemplary

resources are supplied throughout the book. History and context for many concepts are a welcome inclusion. References follow each chapter, and recommended reading is cited at the end of nearly all chapters. A list of acronyms at the beginning of the book and a glossary and index at the end help the reader navigate the material. Minor grammatical errors, especially at the beginning of the book, are of minimal distraction and don't get in the way of the content. Chapters are broken up with subheadings, making the book quick to skim through or read.

The book is accessible to a general audience, but academic librarians of all types will find the content most applicable to their work. For those interested in providing library services to support eResearch or for those wanting to learn about eResearch, this book is highly recommended. The cost for the paperback edition unfortunately may price it out of some collections. Readers may also be interested in Christine Borgman's *Big Data, Little Data, No Data* (2015), as well as *Data Management for Libraries*, by Laura Krier and Carly Strasser (2014) and *Delivering Research Data Management Services*, edited by Graham Pryor, Sarah Jones, and Angus Whyte (2014).

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