Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook

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Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook [Review]

reviewed by Lizzy Walker

Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook
Carol Smallwood, Editor
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199 pages, $65.00

Writing for publication takes time and crafting, and Carol Smallwood’s book Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook can assist librarians with this process. As part of the ALA Guides for the Busy Librarian series, the book can be read cover to cover or one entry at a time for those who have busy schedules.

In compiling this book, Editor Carol Smallwood put out a call to published librarians to share their experiences and stories related to the writing and publishing process. The beauty of the entries is that they are a mere 1,900-2,100 words, and can easily be read during a break or referenced when a writer is struggling with some aspect of their craft. When writers are having a bout of writer’s block, trying to figure out how to put together their portfolio, or any number of other issues, they can look up a section in the book and take a few minutes to read up on what others have done in a similar situation.

The book is sectioned out in five parts, each containing sound advice, amusing vignettes, and valuable lessons. The most substantial section is titled "Finding Your Niche in Print," which includes subsections on writing for various mediums such as books, essays, textbooks, newspaper articles, children's literature, magazines and journals, and reviews. "Finding Your Niche Online" provides tips on blogging, publishing online columns, and promoting the author's writing online. The section titled "Why Write?" provides essays on writing professionally and writing on non-librarian topics. "Education of a Writer" gives suggestions on how to get started on a writing and publishing endeavor, including getting past that terrible looking rough draft; putting together a writing portfolio; and writing in more specific areas such as children's books. Finding an agent, self-publishing, and marketing are some of the topics covered in regard to publishing written work. Perspectives on collaborative writing and revising and even on what to do when the writer is ready to publish are also included in this section. Finally there is a section titled "Maximizing Opportunities" which includes essays on book editing, magazine editing, maximizing ways to become a published author, and more.

Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook would be a great resource for first time writers, or writers who need a little inspiration. Carol Smallwood has extensive experience as an author and editor in the field of librarianship, and the book's forty-seven contributors have all had works published in one form or another. This unique writing and publishing handbook should be in the bookcase of all librarians interested in or thinking about writing.

Lizzy Walker is currently working on her MLIS with the University of North Texas SWIM cohort and works as a Library Assistant 2 at the Boise State University's Albertsons Library.