

Coombs, Karen A. and Jason Griffey. *Library Blogging*. Columbus, OH: Linworth Books, 2008. \$39.95 (ISBN: 1586833316)

Coombs and Griffey's *Library Blogging* has the potential to serve as a practical and detailed introduction to this topic. However, my recommendation comes with a few significant caveats.

This book serves as a fairly complete introduction and reference source for blogging, with many fine examples from libraries' blogs. Most chapters include screenshots for both explanation and inspiration. The book focuses on blogs for sharing information with the public, although advice specific to libraries' internal blogs is provided as well.

The question of the book's audience proves somewhat confusing. Despite the prominence of the "Linworth Books: Professional Development Resources for K-12 Library Media and Technology Specialists" label on both the front and back of the book, the information contained within is appropriate for librarians at all types of institutions. In fact, nearly all the screenshots from sample blogs come from academic and public libraries. The authors' statement that "We set out to write a book that was useful to librarians and libraries blogging on multiple knowledge levels, from techie librarians to administrators to reference librarians" (Coombs and Griffey, x) is fairly accurate. However, it is also apparent that librarians at the lower end of the "techie" scale will need some help interpreting and implementing the ideas in this book. The instructions are generally quite detailed, for better or worse. Just reading through the technical information contained within requires some knowledge of html. While the authors suggest that readers do not need to know this, those who are not comfortable with basic Web design terminology will likely feel bogged down at certain points. Definitions for technological terms are not always provided the first time they are used, although most appear in the glossary at the end of the book.

*Library Blogging* contains great details on many options for hosting, creating, and enhancing blogs. Discussions of the pros and cons of different blogging services will help many librarians make important choices for starting out. Technological, hardware- and software-related, financial, and access issues are covered for each of several popular services. (They do, however, miss a few common options such as Wetpaint.) Popular add-ons such as library catalog search boxes and links to Flickr photos can help librarians add functionality and interest to their blogs with minimal technological expertise. Chapter 10, "Related Technologies," provides especially useful suggestions for sharing and enhancing blogs, such as tagging, using RSS feeds, and more.

Although *Library Blogging* is chock full of useful information, the book's organization makes it difficult to navigate. This problem happens on several levels. Most importantly, crucial information is buried in sections with titles and topics bearing little relation. For example, potential blog writers will almost certainly need to understand the concept of moderation, but the

passage on moderation is hidden in a chapter on the blog service Wordpress. The term moderation is not included in either the glossary or the index. Thus readers who skip the Wordpress chapter for one reason or another will miss the discussion of moderation. Titles of chapters and sections add to the organizational confusion. For example, Chapter 12: “Blog Culture” focuses primarily on blogging etiquette, with only a small portion devoted to the culture surrounding groups of bloggers. Terminology-focused librarians may struggle with this.

Despite its shortcomings, *Library Blogging* is an excellent introduction and reference tool for librarians interested in creating blogs for their institutions. I recommend it to librarians of all types, having at least a basic familiarity with Web design terminology.

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