

## **JOURNAL OF ELECTRONIC LIBRARIANSHIP**

Diantha Dow Schull. 2013. 50+ Library Services: Innovation in Action. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions. xxvii. 335 pp. ISBN:

I must say that I totally misunderstood the content of this book when I volunteered to review it; after all, the title suggests that the contents are about 50 or more innovative library services. When I started perusing this book, I found out that the book is actually about innovative library services for people over the age of 50! This is definitely an example of a misleading title that the publisher might want to avoid in the future.

Getting beyond that observation, this book is chock full of enterprising, innovative, engaging, and successful library services and programs geared toward library patrons age 50 and over. The book is meant to capture the energy and drive behind older adult library services, and while the author admits it is not comprehensive, there are plenty of ideas and partnerships to enlighten librarians. The Introduction provides the background and marketing opportunities behind this emerging service model as well as barriers to change, the challenge of what to call his age groups, and the selection criteria. The author tried to select examples that illustrate a key trend in service development, offer an instructive example that could be adapted for other library systems, reflect an effort to innovate and go beyond business as usual, involve activities that take place in the library, and are targeted for active adults ages 50 to 80 and beyond.

The content is divided into 12 chapters: Leading-Edge States; Beacons of Change; Work, Careers and Service; Reflections and Transitions; Health and Wellness; Information Technology and Social Media; Creativity; Information and Community Connections; Lifelong Learning; Intergenerational Programs and Services; Financial Planning and Business Development; and The 50+ Place. Leading-Edge States mentions states in the United States that meet the criteria of innovation in action, while Beacons of Change focuses on particular libraries. The topics that follow discuss the various innovative programs. I found most engaging the various sidebars for each program that lists facts, along with the many testimonial quotes by participants that are interspersed throughout the presentation of the content. Each program listed is documented with an explanation of the program, the goal(s), features, partners and funding.

For example, the Next Chapter Programs in Transitions and Reflections by the New York Public Library has its goal “to challenge assumptions about aging and consider alternatives to traditional retirement.” Some of the previous NYPL forums include Yes, There is Humor in Aging; Don’t Retire, Reinvent; Changing Shoes: Getting Older – Not Old – With Style, Humor, and Grace; The Age of Active Wisdom; and In Search of Purpose, Passion, and a Paycheck; Finding Work That Matters in the Second Half of Life.”

This is an excellent book that explains well the new service model for libraries, and it has many examples to fuel discussion and brainstorming for libraries interested in offering services to the growing 50+ age group.

Bradford Lee Eden  
Valparaiso University  
Valparaiso, IN