

Scherlen, Allan. Review of *Evaluation of Library Collections, Access and Electronic Resources: A Literature Guide and Annotated Bibliography* by Thomas E. Nisonger. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 30:6 (Nov. 2004) 508. ISSN: 0099-1333 Version of record available from Elsevier Inc., ScienceDirect: doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2004.08.004

BOOK REVIEW

Evaluation of Library Collections, Access and Electronic Resources: A Literature Guide and Annotated Bibliography, by Thomas E. Nisonger. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003. 316p. \$60.00. ISBN 1-56308-852-5. LC 2003053877.

The increasing number, variety, and cost of library resources, combined with precarious library budgets make the librarian's task of evaluating the library collection daunting. Literature guides and bibliographies can conveniently gather together in a single place information on a variety of collection evaluation approaches and help librarians discern trends in the practice. In the past, librarians consulted Thomas Nisonger's now dated 1992 book, *Collection Evaluation in Academic Libraries: A Literature Guide and Annotated Bibliography*. Here they found guidance in his encapsulation of ten years of collection evaluation literature from 1980 through 1991.

Much has happened in library collection and evaluation practice since 1991, and collection managers may be interested to see Nisonger's 2003 book, *Evaluation of Library Collections, Access and Electronic Resources: A Literature Guide and Annotated Bibliography*. It takes up where the 1991 volume left off and covers evaluation literature published from 1992 through 2002. This work is distinct from the author's first in a number of ways: none of the entries in the first appear in the second; the author has expanded his focus from academic settings to all types of libraries; and there are new chapters about access and electronic resources. Like the older work, the author presents a clear introduction to his project before delineating various topics of collection evaluation in twelve chapters.

Each chapter contains an introduction to the topic at hand followed by annotated citations in alphabetical order by author within subtopics. The chapter topics include: collection-centered approaches, the conspectus, client-centered and combination approaches, collection evaluation at the national and multi-library levels, performance measures and standards, serials evaluation, evaluation of use, citation analysis, journal ranking studies, evaluation of electronic resources, and evaluation of access. The book covers a wide range of material types, such as journal articles, book chapters, monographs, and conference proceedings. There is a substantial amount of international coverage,

including English language material from such countries as Malaysia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Sweden.

The author clearly notes in the introduction that the bibliography is not comprehensive and that the inclusion of an entry is not an endorsement of its quality, but rather reflects its importance in providing information or in filling a niche in the literature. The 641 annotated citations, averaging fifty-three per section, are concise and well-written. An examination of their publication dates reveals more citations from the first half of the decade with fifty-six percent of the entries originating prior to 1997, leading one to wonder if there has been a decline in traditional areas of evaluation literature through the nineties. A notable exception is the section on evaluating electronic resources, of which eighty percent of the cited articles were published after 1996.

The author's dedication in preparing this bibliography is evident from the frequent cross-references among the works annotated. However, the indexing could have been more thorough. A number of citations spot-checked in the text—for example, on evaluating Latin American studies (p.53), interdisciplinary studies/geology (p.126), and free online journals (p.257)—could not be located in the index using these terms. The traditional alphabetical order by author surname may present problems for readers looking for trends in the history of collection evaluation. A chronological arrangement within subsections or a chronological cross reference would have been helpful in this regard.

Evaluation of Library Collections, Access and Electronic Resources is a useful resource for collection development librarians. If a librarian seeks a good general source on the literature of collection evaluation, Thomas Nisonger's book fulfills this need. It is also an informative resource for library and information students.—**Allan Scherlen, Collection Development Librarian for the Social Sciences, Appalachian State University Libraries, P.O. Box 32026, Boone, NC 28608-2026 <scherlnag@appstate.edu>.**