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The Accidental Systems Librarian

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Larry Magrid and Anne Collier. Although no doubt useful in 2007, its detailed explanation of how to set up a MySpace account (complete with screenshots) was dated in 2009 and is completely irrelevant now. Additionally, a combined author, title, and subject index is intended to assist with locating relevant reviews, but the subject headings are far from comprehensive. For example, the review of *Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet out of Idaho* by Jon Katz is given only the subject heading of "Biography," omitting the more useful "Internet" or even "Teenagers." And the subject heading for finding books on social networks is "Online Social Networking"—a more precise term, perhaps, but one I found only by reading the index line by line.

VOYA's *Five-Foot Bookshelf* will be useful for librarians who (1) have a professional development collection that hasn't been maintained for some years and have the budget to backfill, and (2) do not subscribe to VOYA.—*Susan Cassidy, English Instructor and Research Librarian, Modesto (Calif.) Junior College*

The Accidental Systems Librarian, Second Edition

NICOLE C. ENGARD AND RACHEL SINGER
GORDON / MEDFORD, N.J.: INFORMATION
TODAY, 2012 / 302P. / \$29.50 / ISBN-13:
978-1573874533 / LC: 2012027930

Systems librarians play a crucial role in today's libraries as online resources and web-based media integrate with the print world. A dearth of information exists in the area of systems librarianship and this title fills a void in current literature. In the recent past, many systems librarians got their training on the job because there was not much available in library school. This book is intended to "start you off with a good foundation and give you a toolbox of resources to help you move forward" (p. xxii).

Author Engard is an experienced systems librarian who trains and blogs about systems, technology, and libraries. Singer Gordon authored the first edition of this work. They are connecting the various roles a system librarian performs and de-

scribing the skills needed to perform in this library subspecialty. Chapters 1-4 define systems librarianship and advise mastery of specific web applications, desktop software, and technical areas. Chapters 5-7 describe how utilization of library principles of organization of information and research techniques translates into a career managing systems. Chapters 8-9 deal with education of staff, patrons and self. Chapters 10-12 address administration/management issues, library-system migration issues, and general life lessons.

My understanding of the role and responsibilities of the system librarian has expanded by reading this book. The authors strongly assert that training and skills are crucial components of success for this position. Constant communication with staff, management, and patrons is also an essential component.

The authors advocate for a strong network of personal and online relationships and resources to navigate through technology issues. Chapter 11 describes the puzzle pieces that need to fit together to implement an integrated library system migration. The complex planning and implementation process shows how all the skills of a system librarian make this work. My hat is off to all system librarians. This work is a wonderful educational tool with tips and tricks for an accidental (or intentional) systems librarian's resource shelf. This work is a great information resource.—*Mary Pat Harnegie, Medical Librarian, South Pointe Medical Library and Cleveland (Ohio) Clinic Alumni Library*

Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck—Why Some Thrive Despite Them All

JIM COLLINS AND MORTEN T. HANSEN
NEW YORK, N.Y.: HARPER BUSINESS, 2011
304P. / \$29.99 / ISBN 13: 9780062120991
LC: 738348113

To determine why companies are more successful than others, the authors examined company reports, press releases, speeches, articles, books, and financial data of publicly traded companies which

generated earnings ten times greater than industry averages from their founding in 1965-1972 through 2002. Labeled 10Xers, they include Amgen, Biomet, Intel, Microsoft, Progressive, Southwest Airlines, and Stryker. Researchers also examined similar data from several less successful comparison companies. Their findings are presented in this work in an informative, engaging narrative with detailed notes.


These 10X companies practiced the 20 Mile Walk, a deliberate goal for consistent earnings each year. Their disciplined, moderate pace conserved energy and resources that were available during adversity and contributed to above-average cumulative earnings.

The authors were surprised that 10Xers were less innovative than comparison companies, but more creative and determined in deployment. They utilized a practice dubbed *Fire Bullets, Then Cannons* to suggest low-risk, initial research should always come before a major product or change in service.

The 10X leaders all practiced Productive Paranoia, which drove them to diligently prepare for a myriad of possibilities in order to survive competition or adversities. This led to some extreme periods of research and development for the med and tech industries, which ultimately fueled their success.

Successful companies strictly adhered to their recipe for Specific, Methodical, and Consistent (SMaC) practices which are unique to the company and changed only when observations about shifting conditions were analyzed and deliberated.

Researchers evaluated incidents of good and bad luck to determine that successful companies survived slightly higher than average bad luck, and lower than average good luck relative to comparison companies.

This look at success is valuable for business leaders, investors, and leaders of nonprofit organizations (such as libraries), as well as individuals tailoring goals for sustainable, data-driven growth. This is a worthy addition to library collections.—*Laura E. Scott, Head of Children's Services, Farmington (Mich.) Community Library* 

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