

Sustainable Enterprise Strategies for Optimizing Digital Stewardship: A Guide for Libraries, Archives, and Museums. By Angela I. Fritz. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021. 112 pp. Softcover. \$39.00.

If the COVID-19 pandemic has done anything for libraries, archives, museums, and galleries (GLAMs), it has forced cultural heritage workers to be as efficient as possible in response to lack of funds, staffing, and other resources. Managers have been stretched to do more with less, and even as the pandemic begins to fade, new standards of higher efficiencies and slow return to normal staffing levels will continue to be a theme for years to come. This leads to a twofold challenge: to fully support all the old and new roles while ensuring that this work can be maintained.

Angela Fritz's *Sustainable Enterprise Strategies for Optimizing Digital Stewardship* gives workers from a variety of GLAM institutions a framework for understanding the history and breadth of the digital assets in their collections and also gives leadership an understanding of how to manage these assets—both at the soft/hardware level and at the staffing level. And it comes right at a cusp where many repositories are finding sustainability more necessary than ever. This brief, five-chapter text explores the history, definitions, and concepts behind the digital asset management enterprise, methods for assessing assets and their ecosystem, and strategies for building capacity, streamlining digital stewardship, and making this stewardship sustainable. And, while this text offers a good preview for making these larger plans, the high overview description and limited modes of application ultimately make this a text that will be impractical for many readers.

At a total of 112 pages, this text provides a very concise look at the issues surrounding management of digital infrastructures. The first chapter addresses the history, definitions, and concepts of digital materials and access points in GLAM institutions starting from roughly the 1960s. This works to functionally inventory all types of materials a collecting institution could have and leads into chapter 2, which documents methods for assessing digital assets, mapping digital collections' access and preservation, and assessing their effectiveness. This leaves a total of 54 pages to discuss building capacity, streamlining stewardship, and addressing the sustainability of these systems. To accomplish this, Fritz provides an overview of how roles need to change, partnerships that need to take place, and aspects of storage architecture, including cloud-based options.

This mode of listing and outlining all possibilities of digital assets, staffing, systems, and so on is very helpful in determining which decisions to make, but very limited in laying the groundwork for actions. There are no case studies in this text to help readers imagine themselves in an actionable situation, and the examples of storage and staffing models in the text only list features and not necessarily brands or titles. Part of this approach is because this volume is one in a series of LITA (Library Information and

Technology Association) Guides that were first published by ALA and later picked up by Rowan and Littlefield. While limited, scratching the surface of the topic does make this text a very good starting point for organizing thoughts, seeing which standards exist, and making pre-emptive decisions, saving the heavy lifting for further reading.

Where this text shines is in its discussion of alternate staffing models as a way to address the increased burden of managing digital records in addition to physical ones. Chapter 3, which focuses on strategies for developing leadership, for supporting work, and for expanding capacity of digital footprints, offers suggestions for alternate staffing models and professional development modes to ensure effective stewardship of digital assets. Fritz advocates moving away from the subject curator role and instead moving toward a functional specialist model, which blends content knowledge and technical expertise, thereby allowing more flexibility to work with the user base that each repository serves. Each subject specialty will be built around a team of faculty and staff who understand the topic, the methods and tools to analyze information and data on the topic, and how to best provide access to that content. Built into this model too are suggestions for allocations of professional development, which can help higher-level staff integrate additional budgeting decisions into the staffing model. This falls in line with more recent scholarship, such as OCLC's *Total Cost of Stewardship* report,¹ and the two can be used in conversation to integrate the value of digital assets in a larger sustainability model.

Still, this text has limited applications, primarily due to its unclear audience. Middle managers or upper-level managers could successfully use chapters from this text to advocate for more effective staffing structures and to explore the depth of digital records with a museum board or with university dean-level administrators who seldomly engage with the on-the-ground duties of staff. It has enough clarity and conciseness to show the major issues in supporting digital stewardship, which can help managers get higher-level staff on board. Most practitioners below this level may not have any agency to make Fritz's suggestions actionable, but they may be useful in understanding the interconnectedness and the hierarchies of their systems and organizations. Additionally, her suggestions for alternate staffing models are clear enough to be actionable for moderate-to-large institutions. However, this level and label of staffing implies an academic setting and will likely be inaccessible to many museums or historical societies.

Ultimately, this text felt like an appetizer to a four-course dinner about digital infrastructure management—enough to get a taste of what the full meal will entail, but not enough to spoil one's appetite. And, for many readers, this may be enough. Archives and other GLAM repositories can have such different staffing structures as determined by their resources, leadership, and a myriad of other factors that being too prescriptive may be just as useless as not providing any framework at all. But, once these suggestions have been put in place, the lack of follow-through with case studies or even soft/

hardware overviews makes implementation of any of these suggestions difficult if not unlikely. This makes this text a good tool for advocacy or a good overview of the role of digital systems, but discussion of these concepts in any substantive detail will require further reading.

Sheridan Sayles, MA, MLS
Archivist
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

NOTE

1. J. Gordon Daines III, Martha O'Hara Conway, Brigette Kamsler, Chela Scott Weber, Nicholas Martin, Andrea Riley, and Mary Kidd, *Total Cost of Stewardship: An Annotated Bibliography for Responsible Collection Building* (Dublin, OH: OCLC Research, 2021) <https://doi.org/10.25333/fcv7-5e65>.