
Exploring digital libraries began with an overview of digital libraries from the 1990s to the present. In the early chapters Calhoun provides definitions of digital libraries that underpin the development of this book. In her discussion of the second decade (2002-2012) of digital library development the author explores the emergence of technology, the Web and hybrid libraries. Table 2.1 summarises the history and funding of some early digital library projects led by various organisations and governments. By today digital libraries have emerged beyond collections and services to information seeking and the social web.

The later chapters deal with communities, open repositories, social roles of digital libraries and the social web; all of this provides an exciting view of the impact of digital libraries in the immediate future. Mass digitization projects that started a decade ago have contributed significantly to open access repositories, resulting in more scholarly content being available. Calhoun also looks at the sustainability of such repositories and the prospect of an emerging global ecosystem of repositories with e-research data management. Current library management systems will give way to cloud based hybrid systems.

Some interesting discussions around the social role of digital libraries as the social web increasingly dominates communities were summarised in Table 6.1 with examples of potential social contributions of digital libraries, services offered and how communities will benefit. Exciting opportunities and challenges are ahead as digital libraries focus its new social role to empower individuals and support the progress of learning.

This book is well researched across national and international context, providing in-depth global perspectives. The reference list is over 52 pages, and many URLs are listed in individual chapters for further reading. Each chapter begins with an overview and concludes with a summary, often accompanied by tables. Charts and tables throughout the book makes it easy for the reader to grasp new frameworks, the development, challenges and strategic directions that digital libraries will be moving into in the future.

I recommend this book for information and library professionals wanting more in-depth understanding of digital libraries as it provides strategic frameworks and models for the next decade of libraries’ future.

Annie Yee
RMIT University