To me as a new practitioner in this field, this slim but meaty volume has given me plenty of food for thought. Editors Rankin and Brock are academics from Leeds Metropolitan University and have drawn contributions for this work from the UK, as well as Australia and the USA. Whilst Rankin has worked as a practitioner in special and academic library services, she and Brock are writing from the viewpoint of academics in early childhood education. The connection between literacy and learning is understandably their main focus. Their thesis is that ‘libraries change children’s lives, but they also need to support the needs of digital natives’.

Rankin and Brock’s work makes a significant contribution by presenting a strategic and visionary view of the future for practitioners supported by case studies. Contributors acknowledge that libraries are in danger of being seen as unnecessary, irrelevant or a luxury in straitened economic times and the age of Google. In such circumstances how best might we face these challenges and stay not only relevant but also successful as library and information science practitioners?

The book consists of four sections with the following themes: policy, people and partnerships; connecting and engaging; buildings, design and spaces; and issues for professional practice. There is material here of interest and importance to school librarians as well as public librarians. Many of the themes and insights are not necessarily new but are worth reiterating: the importance of partnerships, trained staff, advocacy skills, constant evaluation and gathering, and publishing of evidence to demonstrate value.

There is advice ranging from developing, selecting and promoting a comics, manga and graphic novels collection to designing a space that will appeal to children. Van Riel reminds us that young people ‘in the Western world are sophisticated consumers…used to commercial standards of presentation, both in real life and on television’.

The work concludes with thoughts on issues for professional practice which will be of particular interest to those responsible for training or educating in library and information science. Gildersleeves highlights the need for more and different methods of training in evaluation and advocacy. She also calls for practitioners to extend their publishing on the impact of libraries outside the domain of library and information science journals into education literature.

This work certainly made an impression on my reading and I suspect will be re-visited as a valuable resource for many years to come.

Alex Daw