

# Bookshelf

Brian Cox

*Volunteers are always required to review books and serials for this page. Please contact:*  
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## Digital Imaging: A Practical Handbook.

Lee, Stuart D.

London: Library Association Publishing, 2001. 194 pp.  
 ISBN 1 85604 353 3. £24.95

The creation, delivery and management of digital image archives is becoming more and more prevalent throughout the UK information world. This is, no doubt, due in part to the myriad of funding opportunities available in both the educational and the commercial sectors through bodies such as eLib, the Electronic Libraries Programme. Digitisation projects are already beginning to provide the solutions to preservation and access problems.

Until now a clear introductory text covering the practicalities of a digitisation project has been lacking. This publication fills the gap.

Lee takes the reader on a guided tour of the digitisation process, from the instigation of a project, through material selection, preparation and digitisation, to cataloguing, delivery and completion. At each stage, the author discusses the options and the preservation and access issues involved, and ties together the various strands into workflows, decision matrices and bulleted lists.

Whilst the book itself purports to be an introductory text, it contains much to interest those who have already dabbled in the subject. Particularly useful for those with a library background, is the clear and instructive section on digital technology that covers hardware, software and file formats. References to further sources of information and assistance are littered throughout the text, as well as in the appendices, for those who want to delve further. An effective index makes the work useful for reference purposes.

Of particular note is the digitisation ready reckoner, which will be a godsend for those charged with costing a project and the fact that the author does not side step the issues surrounding UK Copyright Law.

If I had to make some criticism of the book, it would be that it focuses on access issues that concern increasing usage. No mention is made of access issues that deal with improving access for individual users, so that they can have access to the resource from wherever they might be. It could also be argued that digitisation on demand is not proactive, but reactive to the demand. Proactive digitisation would be identifying those items that will be in high demand before they are asked for. This is one of the themes currently being considered in the MAGiC project (<http://www.magic.ac.uk>).

This is a clearly written valuable text for all of those about to embark on or those currently in the process of a digitisation project. It will certainly be finding a place on my bookshelves.

Anne Partridge  
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## Slavic and East European Information Resources, Volume 1 no.1 (2000)

Published quarterly, Binghamton, NY, USA, The Haworth Information Press. ISSN: 1522-8886

*Institutions US\$60 per annum, individuals US\$30 per annum*

The new quarterly *Slavic and East European Information Resources* has got off to very a promising start and the articles in its first issue will have struck a chord with practitioners in the field – librarians, researchers and anybody whose work brings them into contact with publishing

and the information market in Eastern Europe. The articles (which are peer-reviewed) are well-researched, practical and written by experts with a good balance between thoughtful commentary and specific advice.

One contributor exhorts readers to 'save themselves a trip' and points out how much information on Slavic (or Slavonic!) and East European subjects is available on the array of databases and online sources which are available in any good research library (but not necessarily specifically concerned with Eastern Europe). This is a message that will bear some repeating. The problem is no longer lack of information but making readers aware of the plethora of information that is available (often online) and this and other articles in this issue provide much-needed guidance in well-documented detail.

And then again, many Slavonic librarians are now making use of agents (book suppliers who operate from within the country and who will send lists based on the profile of the customer from which the customer selects titles for ordering) as well as established vendors. For those who are not, another article provides analytical and insightful advice as well as a vivid account of some of the pitfalls that may arise when Post-Soviet free enterprise meets modern American research library acquisitions departments. It does help if your agent has a bank account outside Russia but even then unexpected problems may arise...

This is a journal for Slavonic librarians among others which reflects contemporary trends in librarianship and contemporary developments in the area which it covers. There is a shift away from books to other formats and emphasis as implied in the title on 'information'. Currency of information is now essential for researchers and academics specializing in this rapidly changing part of the world and this journal will equip librarians to develop the expertise they will need to 'come up with the goods' as well as offering original research directly relevant to academic specialists. The more traditional kind of material is not neglected and there is a good mix in the articles and reviews between electronic and print-based formats.

The layout of the journal has been well thought out with sections which will appeal to a wide range of interests. The opening section 'In our

libraries' focuses on the work-place. There then follow four longer articles looking at particular topics in depth. There are sections which will be continued over successive issues: a whole section on the Internet followed by a 'vendor's column' and then finally a section for reviews. It is well designed and the print and layout are elegant. I was impressed by the screen shots in the first issue accompanying a review of some CD-ROMs (the Czech, Slovak and Russian national bibliographies) which make discussions of such products so much easier to follow.

The articles on web sites in the journal are particularly useful both in drawing attention to particular web sites and also providing guidance through the abundance of what is available. It should also be pointed out that the journal itself has a website ([www.pitt.edu/~rondest/SEEIR](http://www.pitt.edu/~rondest/SEEIR)) which is another innovation and could perhaps lead to the journal being also available online which no doubt many librarians and others interested in this field would find useful. The longer articles provided stimulating reading on aspects of Slavonic librarianship which are not so widely known – the Hungarian Press, Polish publishing as well as on aspects of Slavonic librarianship with which one is familiar – perhaps too familiar but has never examined in depth such as book agents.

In this first issue, the majority of the contributors are North American with a number of contributions from East Europeans but the journal is open to contributions from all Slavic specialists. I did incidentally find it slightly surprising that countries such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz republic, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan are included under the heading of 'Slavic and East European' by dint of being formerly part of the Soviet Union. However, it will be interesting both for us as Slavonic and East European specialists, as well as specialists in these areas, to read articles in future issues about the so called 'Near abroad', which so far has not received the attention that has been given to countries within a narrower definition of 'Eastern Europe' and, if they are of the calibre of the articles in the present issue, the journal will plug another long-standing gap.

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