A Textbook for Infinite Learning. It's a Small World, After All − Review of Sandra Hirsch [Ed.] (2015): Information Services Today: An Introduction. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 514 p., ISBN 978-1-4422-3957-9

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The first thing I took note of upon starting a master's degree in library and information science (LIS) is that LIS professionals use and must be knowledgeable of many academic fields – and an infinite number of acronyms and abbreviations. Thankfully, the new LIS textbook, *Information Services Today: An Introduction*, is well aware of that fact, and of how confusing all the abbreviations can be for a new student, or even a seasoned information professional. ASRS? ISIS? ILFA? CCBY?[1] Don't worry, *Information Services Today* has got you covered with four pages worth of explanations. It's a necessary part of understanding our profession, and just one small example of the myriad of thoughtful details in a textbook compiled and edited by Sandra Hirsh, an all-around intellectual trainer-teacher-learner.

Today's textbooks must necessarily not be the same old hard-bound tomes that were the standard. In this digital age, Hirsh, Director of San José State University's iSchool, a completely 100 % virtual educational environment, intimately understood that an introductory textbook must encapsulate the history of LIS, provide an overview of information relevant to the field, and then take it one step further by making use of the multimedia and collaborative tools at our disposal. As a benefit of working with instructors and students from across the globe, all connecting via online classrooms, document-sharing systems and collaboration applications, the one thing a textbook compiled and edited by Hirsh *would not be* is stagnant. "Given how quickly our field is changing," Hirsh says, "it will be important to continually update the material in this book and refresh the perspectives." So, working with publishers Rowman & Littlefield, the author created a textbook that would meet the challenges and unique situations today's information professionals address on a daily basis.

A Multipurpose Book for Many Audiences

The book has four different audiences who will benefit from the content in different ways: instructors, students, current information professionals, and non-LIS professional laypeople.

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[1] ASRS: automated storage and retrieval system. ISIS: International Society for Information Studies. ILFA: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. CC BY: Creative Commons Attribution Only

Instructors can use this book to help their students learn all about the field. What it means to be a library and information professional today, with particular emphasis on how information organizations will remain valuable entities in their communities, how they will continue to thrive but need to remain creative, innovative, and technologically advanced. It's a good lesson that applies to all of us.

The new student will learn the foundational core of the field, understand where the profession is today, and explore career development strategies useful when applying for and achieving the dream LIS job, post-degree.

Current information professionals can use the book to refresh their knowledge and learn about topics that might not have been covered when they were in school. The entire *Part V – Information Organizations: Management Skills for the Information Professional*, covers management of employees, collections, budgets – everything you need to be aware of when in a management role. The old expectation was that employers would be responsible for ongoing skills and learning. Today, each individual is responsible for taking charge of ongoing learning, to keep up with the ever-changing knowledge base. That's where the book comes in especially helpful.

And *Information Services Today* is perfect for non-LIS professionals who are curious about what our field is and what we do. When friends, family, random strangers fallback on the old stereotypes and assume being an LIS professional or a librarian is just about the books, or ask, "What do librarians DO?": buy or loan them a copy of this book. In a nutshell, this book provides any reader with a glimpse of what libraries, information organizations, and information professionals "do" and provides an overall understanding of the complex, technological, and global information environment we all live in.

For Your Information

But no matter where you are in the LIS-sphere, the best resources, those that will be updated as information changes, are the book's supplemental materials. That includes the usual discussion questions and informative call-outs, but also sections titled "Check this Out", hyperlinked highlights of examples and outside sources for further study. And launching in April 2015 are webinars featuring authors from the book (*http://lj.libraryjournal.com/webcasts/hirshondemand*) discussing the trends and issues in their respective areas. Hosted by *Library Journal*, each 50-minute nugget, moderated by Hirsh, offers an introduction of the topic, presentations from panelists, and a brief Q&A session where panelists discuss key trends, competencies, and strategies for success within the field of library and information service. It's all carefully formulated to give readers the opportunity to go beyond the content on the page and gain a deeper understanding of the topics.

So if you're considering makerspaces for your own library, Chapter 19: *Creation Culture and Makerspaces*, written by Kristin Fontichiaro, *won't* provide a DIY blueprint, but you will get an overview of the history of these spaces, sometimes referred to as digital labs or production studios. You will learn how they have developed in libraries to support a community's "intellectual and personal interests"; how you can use them to support community inclusion; and, highly useful if you are in charge of library programs or grant writing, understand key questions to

ask your library team before delving into a makerspace plan. Then jump to the online supplements and go on a *Makerspace Virtual Tour* to visit a working space, in action. Follow up with Chapter 36, where Barbara M. Jones discusses intellectual freedom, and offers cautionary advice about the spaces, which, "like many innovative information programs ... often lack intellectual freedom policies." Now you have an understanding of makerspaces, examples of how they are used in libraries, and questions to consider when planning your own space.

The LIS-specific abbreviations spelled out in *Information Services Today* are just one facet of our exhilarating "meta-discipline"[2], one that encompasses academics from arts to humanities, science and logic. It is clear that LIS instructors, students and professionals need to have a general understanding of many things, with resources available to point in the direction of further study, when necessary. Like the discipline itself, *Information Services Today* brings together many different voices through its contributors, covering a multitude of topics all combining to provide diverse perspectives and unique points of view. Bottom line: this textbook is simply a good read. Contributing author Paul Signorelli notes in Chapter 20: *Infinite Learning*, that "learners in many parts of the world have come to expect that learning will occur when and where they need it." *Information Services Today* is a book created expressly for lifelong learning, for immediate access and thoughtful advice from experienced professionals who have followed this path, and now share their expertise for the benefit of the next generation. When your field is constantly changing, life-long learning is a necessary path to education, and *Information Services Today* can be a key investment to LIS enlightenment.

Alison Peters is currently obtaining her MLIS from *San Jose State University's iSchool*; earned a B.A. in English from *UC Berkeley*; and, when not working, querying, or in class, puts her M.F.A. from *Mills College* to good use and shares her love for all things bookish on *Book Riot*. She was inspired to write for LIBREAS by the memory of her grandfather, a self-taught German-speaking African American who, the story goes, translated for Albert Einstein at a *California Institute of Technology (Cal Tech)* lecture in 1931. You can find her serious professional side on LinkedIn. California Institute of Technology (Cal Tech) lecture in 1931.

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[2]Bates, M.J. (2007). "Defining the information disciplines in encyclopedia development" *Information Research*, 12(4) paper colis29. Retrieved from: http://InformationR.net/ir/12-4/colis/colis29.html