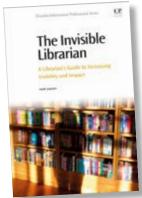# The Invisible Librarian:
A Librarian's Guide to Increasing Visibility and Impact

Aoife Lawton. London: Chandos Publishing, 2016. 349p.p. ISBN 978-0-08-100171-4. €56.95. Pbk.

This publication fills a gap in the literature on the subject of visibility of librarians and the massive ramifications that being invisible to one's stakeholders and users can have, such as the inability to demonstrate the value and impact of libraries, under-use of services due to stakeholders being unaware of them and a general misunderstanding of what librarians actually do. Such opacity around the role and librarian's inability to accurately, concisely and in jargon-free language demonstrate its importance has led to severe cutbacks and library closures, most notably in the UK.

Lawton's book can be divided into three main sections. The first, comprises an introduction and an opening chapter called "Step into the Shoes of a Librarian". I was delighted to find that this was written in a Choose Your Own Adventure format, whereby the reader was presented with a drastic scenario and given three options to solve it; once picked, the reader was sent to the relevant page to see if their approach was successful. This does a good job of setting out realistic worst case scenarios stemming from librarian's invisibility, and how to solve them, as well as pitfalls to avoid.

Comprising a large section of the book are case studies about librarian's visibility in different sectors and Lawton is to be commended for including several different types of librarians (academic, school, public, health and special), a focus which continues through the book. Each sector is introduced with an excellent overview of the issues facing them currently and each interviewee is asked roughly the same questions (how they increase visibility, demonstrate value and impact, challenging scenarios, visibility online, etc.). They are also asked to gauge their visibility with stakeholders and users of their service, both at time of appointment and currently, and to discuss how and why this has changed. These case studies are filled to the brim with practical advice, ideas, tips and information, so much so that thankfully Lawton provides a helpful, concise summary at the end of each sector's case studies, reminding us of the breadth of the information covered., However, it is to Lawton's credit that these case studies give not just practical advice but also a real sense of the interviewees as both professionals and people.

Closing the book are three chapters detailing how to measure one's own visibility, plans to improve it and strategies to improve visibility, value and impact, as well as a conclusion. The chapter on measuring one's own visibility provides an examination of stakeholders one must consider, as well as frameworks, exercises and auditing techniques to improve one's visibility, both in terms of the physical library and one's online presence, as well as sector specific ideas. The chapter on the Visibility Improvement Plan puts together a ten point plan to increase visibility ranging from strong strategic planning, to keeping all stakeholders informed, to having a "lift speech" prepared, to tailoring services to one's users. Despite a possibility for such management speak to veer into wishy-washy territory, Lawton keeps things concrete with practical, evidence-based suggestions. The following chapter provides tangible strategies to increase visibility and impact through many proactive actions, such as implementing roving librarians, getting outside of the library, strategies for online visibility, and much more. Concluding the book is a look at future trends in libraries that unfortunately feels somewhat disjointed and out of place with the preceding chapters,. There is I a very helpful appendix detailing a blank library visibility survey.

Lawton's *The Invisible Librarian* is an excellent, practical, necessary, informative and timely book that is highly recommended.

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