The New Professional's Toolkit. BETHAN RUDDOCK. London: Facet, 2012. xviii, 237 p. ISBN 13: 978-1856047685.

An ambitious new entry in the area of personal professional development and information management literature, *The New Professional's Toolkit* is aimed at students planning careers as librarians and archivists, new information professionals, those re-entering the workforce, and those whose jobs have changed to include information management in their field. Edited by librarian Bethan Ruddock, a content development officer at the University of Manchester, this "toolkit" clearly identifies the need for information professionals to take control of their own professional and career development.

The book comprises a collection of essays arranged into twelve chapters. Each begins with an introduction to a particular topic, and includes case studies, examples of how to apply key concepts, self-directed learning suggestions, and recommended readings. The contributors, many of them new to their professions, offer personal and practical insights and advice drawn from their own experiences to help with the transition "from settling in to your first professional role to managing your career development" (p. xvii). The inclusion of personal experiences and practical examples to illustrate concepts is one of the book's strengths, although one might question how much experience the contributors are able to bring to the table at this early stage in their own careers. The book is supplemented by a website that will host new and updated content as it becomes available,[1] and will perhaps foster an informal professional development community online.

The chapters cover the following topics: project management (offered as a sample chapter on the book's website); teaching, training, and communicating; meeting your users' needs and measuring success; marketing your services and engaging stakeholders; using technologies; getting and staying online; generating funding; managing money; and understanding information ethics and copyright (including three case studies). But where this work really stands out from other archival literature is in its discussion of the skills needed for personal professional development, which is covered in the chapters on "up-skilling," networking and promoting oneself, and professional involvement and career development. The latter includes information about the importance of attending conferences and "unconferences" (meetings that are loosely organized around a topic but allow participants to drive the specific agenda), other professional involvement, and tips for résumé and interview success.

The contributors include a range of information management and allied professionals from a number of countries, most of them working in the United Kingdom and the United States and representing "academic, public and law

1   LIS New Professional's Toolkit, http://lisnewprofs.com/.

libraries, archives and special collections, as well [as] specialist information providers in a number of environments" (p. xvii). A Canadian case study is included in chapter 6, "Getting and Staying Online," in which Amanda Hill discusses the use of social media at the Deseronto Archives (pp. 102–4). Other contributors are from Australia, Greece, and the Netherlands.[2]

A business-management style of writing has been adopted throughout, as demonstrated in the chapter on marketing, which frames outreach activities as marketing, accompanied by proactive advice like "Don't state that you have many original historical documents available – shout about how you can help them to find unique sources to produce unique research" (p. 55).

The chapter on up-skilling and professional development offers some practical guidelines for self-assessment that could be a useful starting point for taking control of one's career path in any field. Perhaps one of the most valuable pieces of advice in this chapter is to "remember the importance of taking action. This may sound obvious, but a lot of people are good at identifying goals and discussing them, and not as good at turning those goals into action" (p. 158). The remainder of the chapter provides first steps for getting that process started, beginning with a brief self-assessment, and advice about how to create an action plan and how to access the resources needed to see it through. The presentation of competencies in this chapter is generally useful. Discussion of the responsibilities of the learner as part of the "experiential cycle of learning" – having an experience, actively reflecting on the experience, forming theories based on the experience, and putting the experience into action (p. 168) – is helpful to any person looking to get the most from a learning opportunity. The section that explores mentoring as a means of professional development is useful to anyone who wants to take advantage of a mentoring opportunity. The chapter on networking and self-promotion discusses topics not often addressed in traditional archival publications. As archival careers continue to change, many archivists will find themselves needing to do a credible job of promoting their skills to present and future employers. Advice like "the more people know about what you can do, the more likely they are to ask you to do it" could have a significant impact on how rewarding a position or career may become (p. 179).

The strong emphasis on technological knowledge and solutions throughout the book results in some general assumptions about technology and technological capacity that could benefit from greater refinement and balance. Statements such as "An online presence for your service is vital, and new professionals may be expected to contribute to their workplace's web presence" (p. 93), "nearly all institutions have a web presence of some kind" (p. 93), and a how-to section on becoming a "Zen master of technology" (p. 76) might have been balanced with

2   Contributors' biographies can be found on the book's website: http://lisnewprofs.com/
    contributors/.

discussions of the issues faced by professionals who work in archives with little or no digital content or Internet access (some archives are located in areas that have poor or no Internet access, and some may not make use of technology for cultural or philosophical reasons).[3]

The New Professional's Toolkit will be a useful resource for many – however, from the point of view of new archivists, it is limited by its focus on career planning and issues associated with new technologies in information management, with the result that it tends to gloss over differences between professions within the broader information management field. Since the book offers further reading and other resource suggestions throughout, it would have been nice to see in these sections more references to professional development resources available specifically for archivists. Perhaps this will be forthcoming on the website.

These gaps aside, *The New Professional's Toolkit* is a credible entry into an emerging area of interest. As experienced archivists retire, new archivists, especially those in smaller archives, may find themselves with less support and mentorship than have been available in the past. The book challenges archivists to take control of their careers and outlines some of the steps to do this. It is hoped that this will inspire others to develop career planning and management resources specifically for new archivists, lone archivists, and those whose careers are in transition.

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Past or Portal? Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives. ELEANOR MITCHELL, PEGGY SEIDEN, and SUZY TARABA, eds. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2012. xiii, 320 p. ISBN 978-083898610-3.

Past or Portal? provides how-to examples for librarians, archivists, and teaching faculty who want to bring archival and special collections resources to undergraduate students in the humanities. In their introduction, the editors comment that "Undergraduate engagement with the rich holdings of special collections and archives in colleges and universities, public and special libraries, is a powerful trend in higher education" (p. ix). They further state, "We hope that it will

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3   For example some Aboriginal communities may object to the digitization of culturally sensitive material. Where a group or community decides not to digitize material, it is important that archivists respect that decision and provide alternative methods to manage and maintain those records effectively.