Guide to the ATG Reviewer Ratings

The ***ATG Reviewer Rating*** *is being included for each book reviewed.* ***Corey*** *came up with this rating to reflect our collaborative collections and resource sharing means and thinks it will help to classify the importance of these books.*

- ***I need this book on my nightstand.*** *(This book is so good, that I want a copy close at hand when I am in bed.)*
- ***I need this on my desk.*** *(This book is so valuable, that I want my own copy at my desk that I will share with no one.)*
- ***I need this in my library.*** *(I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)*
- ***I need this available somewhere in my shared network.*** *(I probably do not need this book, but it would be nice to get it within three to five days via my network catalog.)*
- ***I'll use my money elsewhere.*** *(Just not sure this is a useful book for my library or my network.)*

incorporate user feedback into a space reconfiguration project, building and leveraging strong relationships with other entities (facilities departments, consultants, and, of course, users) when planning a space reconfiguration or remodel, weeding and/or relocating legacy print collections, and assessing the use of physical space. Taken together, these chapters reflect much of the variety of issues and situations that health sciences libraries face when considering the future of their physical facilities. Also, several chapters include extensive bibliographies which will help readers identify additional resources related to their space planning needs.

This book is a valuable resource for health sciences librarians considering the future of their spaces, but it has two significant drawbacks. The first is the price, which seems high for a collection of ten case studies. Second is the uneven quality of the chapters. Some, for example **Mellanye Lackey**, **Jean P. Shipman**, **Camille Salmond**, and **Darell Schmick's** chapter on working with **Ithaka S+R** to evaluate space at the **Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library** at the **University of Utah**, are tightly focused and add fresh ideas to the conversation around heath sciences library spaces. Some other chapters would have benefitted from stronger editing, and one seems only loosely related to the topic of the volume.

ATG Reviewer Rating: I need this available somewhere in my shared network. *(I probably do not need this book, but it would be nice to get it within three to five days via my network catalog.)*

Hirsh, Sandra and **Susan Alman**, eds. ***Blockchain***.
Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2020.
978-0-8389-1743-5, 104 pages.

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Blockchain is a new technology that has emerged in recent years and is used almost exclusively in commercial transactions but is far less known in the world of information and libraries. The collection of essays in this book, written by different experts of technology, offer an introductory, but complete view to understand this new technology and its potential applications in libraries. The editors **Dr. Sandra Hirsh** and **Dr. Susan Alman** both are on the faculty of the **San José State University School of Information**.

The first few chapters explain what blockchain is and how it fundamentally works. Blockchain is actually a set of technologies based on a ledger structured like a chain of blocks and containing transactions based on a peer-to-peer (P2P) system. Each block of the chain is connected to the previous block by a code called hash and secured by cryptographic validation. For its characteristics, blockchain is considered inviolable and trusted. At present, it is mainly popular in commercial transactions with the use of digital assets like bitcoins, called tokens. In the second chapter, there is a very interesting comparison between blockchain and books, tracked by **Christina Cornejo** and **Stacey Johnson**, demonstrating also a relationship between this new kind of tokens and the value of tokens as an exchange tool in the Middle Ages.

Blockchain's main feature is to be a decentralized and distributed ledger technology. This is one of the important shifts that the book analyzes in many chapters, that is the implications of a change from a centralized database system, to which we are used in libraries and not only in libraries (think of **Amazon**, **facebook**, and so on), to a distributed one with no central authority. A decentralized system like blockchain has many advantages, like security of transactions, authenticity of identities, unalterable information but some of those might turn into problems. For example, the immutability, which means that data in the chain cannot be changed or corrected, if needed. Other problems may also arise, like concerns about privacy, and limits about usability and interoperability.

The authors contributing to the book deal with theoretical aspects and practical possible applications of blockchain in libraries. Applications cover a wide range of library activities, from loan and ILL transactions to reference service, from collection development to information literacy, and many aspects related to the publishing world in general. The health sector looks like being one of the first scientific and library sectors where blockchain is deeply studied. Anyway, all kinds of libraries should deepen knowledge of blockchain because of the possibilities it offers to manage data and metadata, which are core activities for librarians.

A very useful aspect is that most of the contributions of the book, either explaining theoretical aspects or describing specific experiences already realized in libraries, end with a synthesis of pros and cons and with considerations for the future, which discuss long run possible developments. This helps very much in fully understanding the potentialities and limits of blockchain technologies so as to have a quite clear framework and an insight into fields where librarians should invest more time and resources. A first step may be offering education and training about blockchain. Primarily, increasing knowledge among librarians themselves, who firstly need to understand and manage this technology, and then transfer it to people who are already

asking for libraries to offer education on this subject. This book can certainly aid in this first step.

ATG Reviewer Rating: I need this in my library. *(I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)*
