

Book Reviews

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AZZOLINI, J. *Law Firm Librarianship Issues, Practice, and Directions* (2012) Oxford: Chandos Publishing. ISBN: 9781843347088. \$85.00.

John Azzolini has been working in private law firm libraries in New York City for over ten years. He began in technical services and cataloguing, but later the lure and challenge of reference enquiries got him hooked. John is always interested in discovering new legal research content and methods, as well as the continuing possibilities of digital libraries.

Azzolini presents the reader with a comprehensive run through of the law firm librarian with a US slant, their role, the challenges faced and the place of the library business unit in today's law firm. UK professionals will certainly find parallels with the role outlined, those challenges, and reflections on the function of the library business unit.

Beginning with a situation everyone can relate to, a social gathering where the “What do you do?” question comes your way. Lots of professions appear to approach this answer as an ‘elevator speech’. Azzolini's point is that most people don't know what a law firm librarian is, or does, and getting the point across neatly is tricky!

Throughout the book there is an underlying theme of change and how it will shape our roles tomorrow. This is not surprising given the unprecedented changes in the legal services industry generally in the UK and USA, for example, the recent US market event of the collapse of Dewey and LeBoeuf.

The way these changes and emerging trends affect law firm librarians has many facets and Azzolini address how librarians can potentially respond to and leverage them. For example, better connecting with lawyers to engage them and explain your offering, identifying ‘value’, how to deliver it and then delivering it. He stresses these are not tick box exercises, but much more fundamental questions to be addressed.

This metamorphosis could be due to various factors which Azzolini explores through the influence of technology, demands of the law firm, change in business strategy and budgets, and new opportunities.

Azzolini paints a positive, dynamic and resilient picture for law firm librarians of the future, and sees the law librarian's role as “facilitating the practice and business of law by letting lawyers be lawyers”.

Perhaps thinking again about the “What do you do?” question will assist in re-framing and re-purposing the

message the law librarian needs to communicate to lawyers and key stakeholders in the business.

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SUSSKIND, R. *Tomorrow's lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future* (2013) Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199668069. £9.99.

Richard Susskind's new book, ‘Tomorrow's Lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future’ has been called “a must-read”, “insightful, thought-provoking and challenging” and “required reading”. I would agree with all these epithets, especially the last.

It is a delightfully concise, pithy book with a conversational style, which makes it easily readable over a weekend.

Although primarily aimed at aspiring lawyers, Susskind encourages all lawyers who are not facing imminent retirement to read the book. I would also recommend it to those who work in support services inside firms, those whose businesses supply the legal sector and those in legal education. Information, Knowledge and IT professionals may not find the contents as revolutionary as some practising lawyers will, but it is still a worthwhile read.

The first section of “Tomorrow's Lawyers” is an updated simplified summary of Susskind's previous work, explaining the key drivers of change (the challenge and opportunity of information technology, client pressure for “more-for-less” and market liberalisation) and his key themes (how and why these drivers will change practice and outlining the relevant disruptive technologies). The second section outlines Susskind's vision of the “new legal landscape” and the final section suggests, in positive terms, all the different and exciting opportunities for lawyers of the future, especially those who equip themselves with suitable skills. Susskind's vision is grounded in the UK legal sector, which is facing a particular period of change, but it has global reach.

Personally, I enjoyed the chapters on disruptive legal technologies and new jobs, and new employers for future law graduates. These chapters are truly useful: concise, but packed with practical information.

Whether you agree with Susskind's vision of the future of the legal sector or not, all those working in the