

October 1999

Review of *The Mirage of Continuity: Reconfiguring Academic Information Resources for the 21st Century*,  
edited by Brian L. Hawkins & Patricia Battin

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Giesecke, Joan, "Review of *The Mirage of Continuity: Reconfiguring Academic Information Resources for the 21st Century*, edited by Brian L. Hawkins & Patricia Battin" (1999). *Faculty Publications, UNL Libraries*. 66.  
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*The Mirage of Continuity: Reconfiguring Academic Information Resources for the 21st Century.* Edited by BRIAN L. HAWKINS and PATRICIA BATTIN. Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources and Association of American Universities, 1998. Pp. xii+301. \$25.00 (cloth). ISBN 1-887334-59-9.

As an academic library administrator, what are the library issues that keep you awake at night? Budgets? Changes in higher education? Scholarly publishing crisis? Digital everything? These are the kinds of issues that are outlined in the collection of essays in *The Mirage of Continuity: Reconfiguring Academic Information Resources for the 21st*

*Century*. Brian Hawkins and Patricia Battin have collected a series of think pieces addressing the coming changes in higher education and how digital resources and technology will affect the campus and the library.

The editors begin as one might expect with an overview of the problems facing higher education. Donald Kennedy presents his arguments for why universities must change to survive. While the arguments are not new, Kennedy does provide a context for reviewing the higher education environment and sets the stage for the rest of the essays in this collection.

In the next section, six pieces are presented on integrating information resources more tightly into the activities of the institution. John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid look at the issue from the perspective of distance education and how the digital world is changing the view of a university. They note that the core parts of a university—the faculty, the facilities, and the ability to provide formal, accepted representation of work done (that is, grant a degree)—can be separated in the digital age. They outline the consequences of a distributed approach to the functions of a university. Peter Lyman and Stanley Chodorow review the problems of the system of scholarly communication and the responsibilities of the university in their two pieces. They note that the problem of increasing costs of scholarly journals is a symptom of the overall problems in the entire system of scholarly communication. They argue that universities need to “stop subcontracting with publishers for the evaluation of faculty research and find a more direct way to accomplish this task” (p. 78). They also pose some of the questions that arise in the digital age, from “What is a publication?” to “What is a digital library?” While these pieces do not provide new information, the essays do provide a good foundation for a reader new to these issues and place the issue in a historical context.

In a slight change of pace, Samuel Williamson addresses the question of the future of liberal arts education and concludes that the value of a liberal arts education in smaller institutions should be enhanced. Technology can expand students’ access to information resources and recorded knowledge while preserving the qualities that make the liberal arts college an important part of the higher education landscape.

The section finishes with Daniel Greenberg addressing concerns of ensuring quality in the digital research library and Susan Hockey reviewing how humanities research is changing with new technologies. Greenberg’s piece is a good overview of the issues of quality control and provides succinct arguments that administrators can use in discussing these issues on campus. Susan Hockey presents a quick review of the world of SGML coding, tagging of texts, and research changes that are possible with the use of electronic text. Her piece is a good introduction for those unfamiliar with this area.

The third section of the book moves into the challenges of bringing change to the higher education environment. Brian Hawkins explains why traditional libraries cannot be sustained in the twenty-first century, as these libraries spend more and more for less and less information. A new paradigm is needed to look beyond the print world to how libraries can remain viable enterprises in the future. Another piece that stands out in this section is that of Michael Lesk and his review of the technical limits on creating digital libraries. He outlines the barriers that still need to be overcome before digital libraries can be created that are as organized as their print counterparts. Finally, Jose-Marie Griffiths reminds readers of why the Internet and the web are not libraries. She summarizes what librarians already know but have not been able to communicate to the public, that the web is a disorganized, random collection of information, not an organized collection of researched knowl-

edge. Her piece provides handy arguments for those making this case at their own institutions.

The final section of this collection examines the leadership issues facing libraries in this transformational age. While the scenarios presented in this section give readers some ideas to consider and the authors call for open-minded leadership, the pieces do not provide much that is new.

In all, the collection of essays does accomplish the editors' goal of focusing on the issues that are emerging as digital technologies transform our campuses and our libraries. As one might anticipate, the collection is a bit uneven, as some pieces are clearly geared to the novice in the field while others are more useful for experienced administrators. There is also a fair amount of repetition found between the pieces as each author included basic information in their works. For example, the statistics on rising costs of journals and decreasing ability of libraries to purchase monograph and journals appear frequently throughout the collection. The collection is perhaps best sampled, rather than read through, so that readers can reflect on the issues of most importance to them while skipping over sections that may be too introductory.

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