

## **Review of *Blogging and RSS: A Librarian's Guide***

Reviewed by Shannon Roy, Editor

*Blogging and RSS: A Librarian's Guide*

by Michael P. Sauers. Information Today, Inc. 2006.

Michael Sauers is a librarian, trainer and writer who has shared a lot of information with a lot of librarians as electronic information has become a major force in society.

In *Blogging and RSS: A Librarian's Guide*, Sauers gives a good description of the blogging world and very good, step-by-step instructions on creating and using a blog. Many librarians will fervently wish they had had this book when they created their first blog. The author also explains and identifies a variety of feeds and clarifies the sometimes confusing field of RSS.

He also gives information on many good blogs and noteworthy feeds for librarians to investigate. Not only do these sites offer a lot of current-trend information, but they illustrate how good blogs are put together. A librarian who enjoys reading these sites will probably go on to create and use blogs.

This book shares a lot of very practical information on using blogs and feeds. It also does a good job of explaining why the information is important. Sauers is aware that many librarians are not anxious to add informal online information sharing to their already swollen job descriptions and he is trying to make it easier.

Sauers strongly recommends accessing blogs to stay informed. He gives very good information on using a blog aggregator. He points out that blogs are an informal and fairly low-tech way to share and control information. He recommends using blogs when you have something significant to say and say it can regularly and responsibly. If anyone is inclined to heave a sigh of relief and turn to something else, Sauers also points out with the utmost bluntness that librarians are usually very bad at telling their library's story.

"Libraries are notoriously bad at promotion.... Every time I make that statement to a librarian, he or she instantly agrees with me. Sorry, folks, we librarians are bad at publicity." The implication is that if you don't have something significant to say on a regular basis, you had better start asking why.

Michael Sauers titled the Afterword to this book "Will You Tell Me a Story?" Whatever information is being shared, blogging is essentially storytelling. So many thousands of stories have already been shared that sorting and organizing them has become a major industry. For many people, especially younger ones, this is as natural as telling tales at the dinner table or late night in the bar or around the campfire. Librarians vary in their relationship with library technology. But if there is one thing they do understand, it is stories.