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Book review

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Chan, L. et al (2002) *Budapest Open Access Initiative*. New York: Open Society Institute. <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> (Retrieved 22 January 2007)

Secker, J. Boden, D and Price, G. (eds) (2007) *The Information Literacy Cookbook: Ingredients, recipes and tips for success*. Oxford: Chandos Publishing. 165pp. pbk; ISBN 978-1-84334-225-0. £39.95

Reviewed by Sue House, Information Librarian for Law, University of Glamorgan, UK.

This book's appealing title piqued my interest immediately, using food and cooking as a framework to explain in a practical way what can sometimes be a rather 'dry' subject. We already use a similar theme of smoothies at the University of Glamorgan to promote blended learning to academics so at first glance the book seemed to be a good extension of this type of approach. If you are tired of celebrity chefs however, don't be put off by this because there is plenty of juicy content to get your teeth into.

It is a slim volume divided into nine chapters, each chapter title is food-related, for example, it begins with 'Appetisers and aperitifs: getting started with information literacy' and ends with 'Conclusion: coffee, cheese, biscuits and petit fours'. The editors are the 'chefs', all from UK higher education libraries, but there are also several contributors from a range of other sectors, so this book should appeal and apply to all. They note it is a book written by practitioners for practitioners and that we all have something to learn from each other hence each chapter covers a different sector.

Being in the higher education sector myself I flipped to chapter 8 'Information literacy beef bourguignon (also known as information skills stew or i-skills casserole)' and found myself familiar with the environment described. Previous reports, definitions, projects and learning theories are well-referenced making this a useful review; it is also up to date mentioning social software and the ubiquitous Web 2.0. The authors acknowledge the limited depth they can reach in a brief chapter but to me this was a bonus as we are all operating with limited time and anyone wanting more detail can follow up on the many references. There are reasonably detailed descriptions of lesson planning, assessment and evaluation and tips on project management. I also liked the analogy of 'tapas' used to describe the need to have a variety of 'bite-size' training materials to hand which can be flexibly combined to suit differing needs.

Onto the less familiar, as a contrast I turned next to chapter 2 'Feeding the masses: digital citizenship and the public library. This chapter was very different and was not so much a 'how to' guide as a review of developments in the public library sector. It did make me think about how IL could be worked into other aspects of the library service not simply utilised in training sessions. It describes how public libraries provide a core service of reference and enquiry work, how they support informal learners of all kinds, the recent

moves to support digital citizenship and how IL approaches are being worked into all three areas.

I then followed the chapters sequentially through and being mindful to keep this review brief all I will say is that there is an interesting variety, covering a slight divergence into digital literacy in the NHS, the challenges of promoting the business benefits of IL for the commercial sector, IL from the point of view of a solo information professional and last but not least chapters covering secondary and further education. All have specialist approaches or particular takes on IL that can be informative wherever you do your 'home-baking'.

The book concludes that we all need to be skilled in IL; one collaborative project to look out for is LolliPop which aims to deliver such skills to librarians in the workplace. It urges HE librarians to get involved in practitioner research and others with perhaps fewer opportunities to keep reading the literature and try to identify areas for collaboration across sectors.

One slight criticism of the book is the editing, there are frequent typos which make reading it less of a pleasure, but if you can overcome your inner pedant it is a very practical book which will inspire any librarian to get into the IL kitchen and rattle those pots and pans! I found that whilst writing this review I was at the same time making notes about ideas to include in my own work and things to remember because they were useful hints and tips. I took this as a good indication of the success of the book and I raise my glass to the chefs.