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Book review

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Chan, L. et al. 2002. Budapest Open Access Initiative. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Accessed: 18 November 2015].

O'Brien, K. and Jacobson, T. (ed.). 2018. *Teaching with digital badges: Best practice for libraries*. Lanham: Roman and Littlefield. 226pp. 978-1538104170. £29.95. Pbk.

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Digital badges are becoming increasingly used as a micro-credentialing tool within education settings, and librarians especially are embracing the opportunity to use them to showcase student achievements within an information literacy context. This book considers the wide range of applications of digital badges within Higher Education, and how they can provide an opportunity to recognise learning outside of the curriculum and allow students to showcase specific skills to potential employers.

The book is written in two parts, with the first part 'The Badging Environment' exploring the current context in which digital badges operate, as well as broadly examining the challenges and opportunities which digital badge creators face. Within this section; Chapter 2, which focuses on the recent changes in the Higher Education environment, and Chapter 3, which considers stakeholder needs, are both useful to provide context around the benefits of digital badges and how they can provide solutions to meet the expectations of what students expect to gain from a university education.

Chapter 6 on 'Badging best practices' was one which I found especially useful in terms of offering a practical process for badge design. Here, the author applies the 'Understanding by Design' framework to the creation of badges, and reminds us not to get caught up in the excitement of using badges just because they are the trendy technology of the moment, as the focus should always be on the learning process for the students. This part of the book really encourages the reader to think about the purpose of the badges they create, and emphasises the importance of identifying a gap where there is insufficient representation of learning and considering the value of the badge for the recipient.

A key strength of this book is the volume of real-life examples which are included. As well as short examples being scattered throughout the first section, the second part of the book 'Badging and Information Literacy Case Studies' focuses entirely on providing five detailed case studies from various educational institutions throughout the USA, which offer practical advice for anyone considering implementing their own badging initiative. These case studies create a sense of excitement and possibility about how digital badges could be used, as well as encouraging the reader to think carefully and be cautious about the approach they choose to take. Each case study describes the aims and reasons for using digital badges as well as explaining the development and implementation phases which took place and the challenges which they faced along the way, be these technical or related to staff/student engagement. Especially useful are the diagrams showing the structure of the badge systems and the criteria required to gain each one, which provide a clear visual representation of the different ways in which badges have been adopted. There is a detailed reference list at the end of each chapter, as well as email addresses for the individual authors, who state they are happy to be contacted if more detail is required regarding a specific case study.

Another strength of the book is its overall readability. Each chapter is written by a different author and could stand-alone as an interesting paper about digital badges, meaning the book is a very accessible read. You do not need to read the book chronologically, and can dip in and out of the chapters you perceive to be most relevant. Even a complete beginner in the world of

digital badges can quickly gain an overview through the first chapter on the 'History of Micro-Credentialing', which provides the concise explanation of the nature and potential applications of digital badges which you need to get started.

As the book was written by American authors, there are references to terminology and university contexts which are USA specific, along with a discussion around using badges in relation to the American Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education. Although it would have been useful to see examples of digital badge application from different locations and how they have been used in relation to their own information literacy frameworks, the majority of ideas and reasoning can be easily applied to educational settings across the world.

If you are interested in beginning to develop your own digital badging initiative, then this book will definitely provide you with useful advice and inspire you to get started. If you are already using digital badges, this book will provide stories of success and failure which will be familiar to you and your own badging journey, and will encourage you to reflect on your practice and consider ways in which your own scheme could be improved or refined.