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# Book Review

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***The Electronic Resources Troubleshooting Guide.*** Holly Talbott and Ashley Zmau. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2020. \$60.00, 184p. (ISBN: 978-0-8389-4764-7).

The discovery and access of electronic resources is full of challenges. Complicated relationships between vendors, integrated library systems, link resolvers, and knowledge bases both guarantee the occurrence of patron access problems and obscure the root cause. In *The Electronic Resources Troubleshooting Guide*, the authors provide frameworks for solving any technological problem and then break down the components of electronic resources (e-resources) access. This book is ideal for those who have found themselves in a position where they need to develop familiarity with the problems that may occur with e-resources, as well as manager who seek to formalize e-resources troubleshooting policies.

The first six chapters of the book focus on troubleshooting processes, principles, and technologies. Problem-solving theories and methodologies are discussed along with the facts that make an individual an effective troubleshooter. The authors provide concise definitions of the technology involved in the discovery and access process, as well as detailed diagrams illustrating relationships between systems. The step-by-step descriptions of the access process make this chapter an excellent resource for any library professional looking to better understand the e-resources ecosystem.

The authors also discuss specifics, such as what information is necessary to run a troubleshooting process, including web forms, soliciting access reports, and conducting effective troubleshooting interviews; how one might gather the information necessary to begin the troubleshooting process; and identifying e-resource access issues. Formal strategies for problem-solving are discussed in a way that helps provide a baseline of understanding for what methods to use when and what benefits are available via each method. Realistic scenarios and helpful tips are used to illustrate these points. The authors also review many of the systems introduced in chapter 2. They identify some of the most common problems that occur in those systems. Of note is an analysis of the metadata sources used by the various discovery systems, the type of data, and who has control.

The book delves into the actual resolving of access issues in chapter 5. While the authors have included a few hints for solving specific problems, the bulk of the chapter

is dedicated to the principles of implementing solutions. The authors discuss the need for temporary and stopgap solutions, steps for evaluating multiple solutions, and how to plan for and prioritize during a “triage” situation. As in other chapters, they include several scenarios. What is notable about this chapter is that it is not a “how to” guide. It does not include solutions. It is almost entirely focused on principles, planning, and decision making. This will particularly appeal to new managers of e-resource staff, as it can provide guidance for setting up troubleshooting training and documentation. Examples of the most common e-resource problems and offers the most common solutions are discussed in chapter 6. The authors also include realistic scenarios for each problem and solution. For each, they demonstrate the error reporting, access chain, diagnostic steps and solutions discussed in chapters 3–5.

The book shifts toward organization, workflows, and proactive thinking in chapters 7 and 8. The authors introduce guidelines for building frameworks for troubleshooting infrastructure in an organization. Inspired by Agile project management, they define a framework for building troubleshooting workflows at any institution. This includes defining guiding principles, staff roles, establishing accountability workflows, documentation, and training.

Guiding principles are similar to an institution’s mission statement; it is a brief statement designed to define the ideals of the troubleshooting team. The authors define the troubleshooting team in three groups: the troubleshooting staff with advanced knowledge, the frontline staff who can perform basic diagnostics, and the colleagues who submit error reports. They state that a good troubleshooting workflow addresses patron needs, staff needs, and the processes mentioned in earlier chapters. However, many workflows are based on local organizational culture or specific individuals. They emphasize that a workflow should embrace Agile principles, especially keeping it simple. As the goal of establishing a workflow is to make everyone aware of the steps in the process, they provide guidelines and examples for creating troubleshooting flowcharts. The final aspect the authors address is providing training. They provide helpful information to provide training to the three troubleshooting staff types previously mention. The chapter ends with helpful hints on how to troubleshoot your troubleshooting, such

as advocating for additional staff or improving team performance. The final chapter deals with proactive troubleshooting—ways to address problems before they become access issues. This includes analyzing previous problem reports, access checking, and working with vendors.

*The Electronic Resources Troubleshooting Guide* is an excellent resource for new e-resources staff looking to understand the relationship between systems and understand points of failure. Normally this knowledge is obtained by years of tracking errors, but this book concisely

and clearly communicates how systems interact, why they fail, and the most common solutions. The book is also an excellent resource for someone new in a position of managing e-resources troubleshooting staff, or someone who is looking to formalize and improve their troubleshooting processes. The very clear application of Agile principles to troubleshooting e-resources will help any manager improve their processes.—Aaron Neslin ([aneslin@umass.edu](mailto:aneslin@umass.edu)), *University of Massachusetts*