

Review of *The Anywhere Library: A Primer for the Mobile Web*

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Reading *The Anywhere Library: A Primer for the Mobile Web* is a great first step toward creating a mobile-optimized library web site. The book is authored by three public services librarians who recently experienced the process of creating a mobile site for their own library. The experience prompted them to write this book with the intent of providing a useful framework for other librarians who are considering entering the mobile web arena. Greene, Roser, and Ruane state in their introduction: “with a user-centered, practical emphasis geared to the non-technical librarian, this book approaches the creation of a mobile-optimized library web site as a process rather than simply a product.” (p. v.). This approach makes for an interesting and edifying read!

The book begins by providing background information regarding the users, as well as the uses, of mobile devices (e.g., smartphones). Assessing user needs via a needs assessment is examined, and the authors suggest that considering the readiness of library staff to embrace and participate in the development of a mobile web site is important as well. In fact, the importance of involving library staff from the beginning stages to the end is emphasized throughout the book. The authors go on to supply information about creating a project proposal and a project plan and then delve into the basics of building, launching, testing, and marketing a mobile site. The final chapter discusses ongoing decision-making and upkeep regarding the creation of a mobile library web site. Throughout the book, the authors also touch upon the importance of meeting users at their “point of need.”

Greene, Roser, and Ruane provide research and examples to support their suggestions

and also include recommended resources that can be consulted prior to and throughout the development process. The inclusion of visuals that depict actual library and commercial (e.g., airlines) sites as examples of ways that organizations have adapted their full-screen web presence to mobile devices enhances and complements the text. Readers will appreciate the authors’ provision of clear and simple guidance in developing both a project proposal and a marketing plan. A helpful decision tree, included in the “Building the Site” chapter, addresses the ways in which libraries might approach the actual building (i.e., coding) of the site. Additionally, the authors provide an impressive list of references at the end of the book.

Overall, this is an easy-to-read, well-organized, and cohesive “getting-started guide” (p. 70) for librarians considering the development and implementation of a mobile library site. The authors not only suggest how to approach a task or an issue (e.g., creating a project plan), but why they think it is important. Greene, Roser, and Ruane do indeed deliver an overview of the process of creating a mobile-optimized site, from conducting a needs assessment through the upkeep stage, and they also introduce the reader to a wealth of other valuable resources. This little book offers a great deal of helpful and useful advice and is well worth checking out!

Greene, Courtney, Missy Roser, and Elizabeth Ruane. *The Anywhere Library: A Primer for the Mobile Web*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2010.