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Storytelling: Art and Technique (review)

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Ellin Greene and Janice M. Del Negro. *Storytelling: Art and Technique*. 4th ed. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2010. ISBN 978-1-59158-600-5. US\$55.00.

Storytelling is one of humanity's oldest cultural traditions; since the dawn of language, people have used stories to define the experience of being human. The traditions and techniques of storytelling as an oral art continue to be relevant, perhaps particularly relevant, in our visually oriented and media-saturated society, and Greene and Del Negro share a belief in the positive effects of stories and the personal interaction between storyteller and audience. Greene, a former associate professor at the University of Chicago Graduate Library School, co-authored the first three editions of *Storytelling: Art and Technique* with Augusta Baker. In the newest edition, Greene is joined by Janice Del Negro, assistant professor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University and professional storyteller.

The fourth edition of *Storytelling* is divided into four main parts. Part 1 provides a brief social history of storytelling, which is followed by several useful chapters detailing the practice of storytelling in libraries, covering key topics such as purpose and values of storytelling, selection of stories, preparation, program planning, and administration. The authors also address storytelling for specific audiences, including children with special needs, young children, and young adults. Unlike earlier editions, this edition incorporates research in early brain development and how babies, toddlers, and preschoolers respond to stories. Part 2, another original component of the fourth edition, provides international case studies of storytelling in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, and the People's Republic of China. Part 3 contains the full text of thirteen stories that appeal to children of different ages and represent a range of different story types. Part 4 is an updated list of resources for the storyteller, including professional resources, stories of appeal to different groups, 100 personal favourite stories for storytelling, and a sampling of storytelling recordings.

Firmly rooted in the tradition of such classics as Ruth Sawyer's *The Way of the Storyteller* (1970) and Caroline Feller Bauer's *Handbook for Storytellers* (1977), *Storytelling: Art and Technique*, fourth edition, is an invaluable contemporary reference tool for any librarian wishing to provide storytelling programs for young people from babies to teens; it would also be an excellent supplementary text for classes in library

services and resources for children and teens. Although the international perspective is quite selective, those with a particular interest in storytelling in Canada could complement this volume with *Telling Tales: Storytelling in the Family* by Gail de Vos, Merle Harris, and Celia Barker Lottridge (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2003). Similarly, those with a stronger interest in the research validating the importance of story reading and storytelling in cognitive and literacy development could complement Greene and Del Negro's practical manual with Kendall Haven's *Story Proof: The Science behind the Startling Power of Story* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2007).

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Gloria J. Leckie and John E. Buschman, eds. *Information Technology in Librarianship*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2009. ISBN 978-1-59158-629-6. US\$50.00.

This edited collection of essays is a reprise of a 1993 work by John Buschman. The goal of the earlier work was "to look soberly and critically at the phenomenon of information technology in our profession and in our institutions" from a critical perspective based on a number of extant, analytical approaches. This general theme continues in the current volume with the additional purpose of updating the thinking surrounding these approaches as they apply to the increasingly dynamic and even more compelling technological environment we find ourselves in today. As stated by the editors in the introductory chapter, "alternative perspectives on our library technological juggernauts need to be renewed so that they may be an effective part of the discussions over technology in libraries."

The critical ethos invoked to guide discussion throughout the essays is based on Ricouer's interpretive method aimed at exposing the interests concealed behind what might be, and otherwise is, indifferently accepted as quite sensible "matters of fact," in this case, focusing on the role and effect of information technologies on our social structures and personal identities. Within this larger critical orientation, six themes are outlined and addressed in each of the essays comprising the volume: capital control of technology; rationalization, control, and monitoring; the information revolution as ideology; feminist critiques; technological utopianism; and technology politics and the public sphere.