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*You Don't Look Like a Librarian: Shattering Stereotypes  
and Creating Positive New Images in the Internet Age* by Ruth  
Kneale (review)

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workshops into a distance-delivery model without sufficient attention to Marshall McLuhan's admonition that "each medium, independent of the content it mediates, has its own intrinsic effects which are its unique message" (*Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 1964). Robin Neidorf's *Teach Beyond Your Reach* describes itself as "an instructor's guide to developing and running successful distance learning classes, workshops, training sessions, and more," and it fulfills its promise. This is a practical and accessible guide, particularly helpful for the instructor who is fairly new to the world of distance education (though there is plentiful helpful advice for more seasoned instructors as well).

Neidorf's mantra is that interaction is at the heart of the educational experience, regardless of the spatial or temporal disconnect. This thesis is integrated into every chapter, as Neidorf, a communications consultant and director of research for FreePint Ltd., provides a clear and sensible introduction to the use of distance learning tools to create learning through the interaction of content, peer learners, and instructor. The book begins with an overview of the current tools available for online learning and suggested strategies for using these tools. This is followed by a discussion of the characteristics of the distance learner and the role of generational differences and differences in learning styles and educational expectations. The next two chapters provide helpful advice for delivering content in a distance learning environment through effective course design and through the development and delivery of course content that encourages interaction while satisfying learning objectives. The final section of the book covers strategies for managing the distance classroom, techniques for getting to know students as individual learners, and the role of collaboration in designing effective distance classes.

Each chapter is clearly organized and engagingly written, offering numerous examples to demonstrate best practices and useful worksheets and to help the reader apply the strategies and techniques discussed to his or her particular teaching situation. Since Neidorf's focus is on effective curriculum design rather than on particular learning platforms or tools, *Teach Beyond Your Reach* should maintain its currency and usefulness despite continual changes and developments in technology and learning platforms. This book is recommended for anyone starting out in distance education or seeking to make their existing distance education classes more interactive, engaging, and successful.

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Ruth Kneale. *You Don't Look Like a Librarian: Shattering Stereotypes and Creating Positive New Images in the Internet Age*. Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2009. 216 pages. ISBN 978-1-57387-366-6. US\$29.50.

*You Don't Look Like a Librarian* is a playful book that traces portrayals of librarians in popular arts and culture. It is a must-read for anyone who has ever

chuckled about, reveled in (or been discomfited by) the Nancy Pearl librarian action figure, Rupert Giles from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* or Conan the Librarian. Kneale cites examples that illustrate the pervasiveness of librarian stereotypes in television, film, music, advertising, and on the web. Drawing on surveys and anecdotes, she shows how the popular media reinforces certain biases that shape the way librarians are viewed by outsiders to the profession.

The book is organized into four sections. Chapter 1 identifies common stereotypes and chapter 2 finds support for them in popular culture. Chapter 3 presents sketches of library professionals who possess attributes—such as being young, male, hip, or tech-savvy—that challenge conventional images. In a final chapter, the author discusses how technological and cultural changes in libraries, such as social connectedness, virtual worlds, and user-driven content are slowly altering public perceptions.

The book, published in 2009, was written by Ruth Kneale, a systems librarian for the Advanced Technology Solar Telescope in Tucson, Arizona. The book's companion website is [www.librarian-image.net](http://www.librarian-image.net). Though mostly inactive, it neatly documents the source material referred to in the book.

While the author's overall tone is light-hearted, her work obliquely addresses some of the starker issues of sexism, inequality, and de-professionalization that continue to irk librarians working in a still predominantly female profession. Refreshingly, not all portrayals are unflattering and we learn that librarians are frequently represented in popular culture as confident and strong heroines who possess special powers. In fact, it turns out that many novels, comics, films, television series, and online games not only challenge but actively subvert the stereotype of the librarian as a prim, bespectacled spinster.

This book will leave you wishing you could learn more about why librarianship attracts certain stereotypes and the impact of these portrayals on the status and credibility of the profession. While Kneale stops short of analysing the librarian stereotype as a social phenomenon, she cites several sources which do. How far have we come in four years in combating the pigeon-holing of our profession? I suspect we still have much work to do. This book is recommended for anyone who has ever been told, "But you don't look like a librarian!" After reading it, you'll have some great comebacks.

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