

The final section, “Part IV: Moving Forward: Antiracism, Activism, and Allyship,” starts with chapters on Black librarian recruitment from Satia M. Orange and Tracie D. Hall and from Vivian Bordeaux and Jahala Simuel. Orange, a prior director of ALA’s former Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, and Hall, ALA’s current and first Black woman executive director, reflect on their longstanding mentoring relationship and the power of strong mentoring connections. Relatedly, Bordeaux and Simuel explore the recruitment of Black MLIS students and issue a call to action for removing barriers into the field. In their chapter, Taliah Abdullah, Hadiyah Evans, and Regina Renee Ward describe ways to use public libraries as spaces for healing community dialogue in post-2020 America; and Angiah L. Davis and Michele E. Jones share thoughts on sustaining academic libraries in a pandemic world. The final contribution of this final section rests with Keondra Bills Freeman and her exploration of the work of digital content creators to expand Black narratives and archival collections beyond the violence of institutions.

The volume closes with an afterword by former ALA president Julius C. Jefferson Jr. that reflects on the “State of Black Librarianship” in the 50 years since the first edition of the volume and the founding of BCALA. This brief moment of looking back to look forward is a fitting end to a collection that encourages readers to do just that, as symbolized by the Sankofa bird<sup>1</sup> design on the cover. *The Black Librarian in America: Reflections, Resistance, and Reawakening* is a powerful reminder of all that Black librarianship has endured and is enduring, as well as a joyful celebration of survival and empowerment for the steps that are to come. Not much and so much has changed in 50 years for Black library workers; but, as always, hope for the future lies in careful reflection on the past. —April M. Hathcock, *New York University*

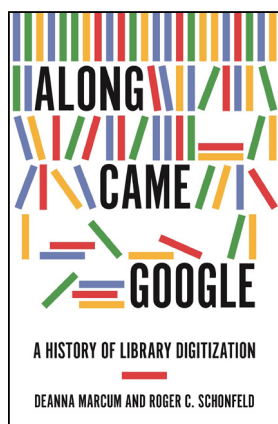
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### Note

1. Sankofa comes from the Twi language of Ghana and roughly means “go back to get it.” The concept of Sankofa is symbolized by a bird with its head twisted backward as its body faces forward. See *The Power of Sankofa: Know History*, Carter G. Woodson Center website, Berea College, accessed June 21, 2022, <https://www.berea.edu/cgwc/the-power-of-sankofa/>.

**Deanna Marcum and Roger C. Schonfeld.** *Along Came Google: A History of Library Digitization*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021. 232p. Hardcover, \$25.99 (ISBN: 978-0691172712).

The impact of digital technology on academic libraries has been discussed and debated a great deal over the years, but the elephant in the room often remains Google. Whether more formally or less, contributions to the professional conversation that take the long view and consider the full, ongoing range of Google’s impact seem hard to find, even as that impact is ubiquitous and undeniable. On the backends of their systems, in the interstices of their workflows, and on the front lines of their services, research libraries depend on and deploy any number of the company’s apps, tools, and projects, to say nothing of the consequences and influence of Google search itself. It is therefore a welcome and valuable contribution to the professional literature that Deanna Marcum and Roger C. Schonfeld make in their work, *Along Came Google: A History of Library Digitization*. As the subtitle suggests, the authors offer a perspective based on the passage of time—call it recent



history, and in some sense official history too, as the heart of this book derives from interviews conducted by Marcum and Schonfeld (both of Ithaca S+R) with the key players in what was originally called Google Print (now Google Books). This is an interesting inside story of how Google came to partner nearly two decades ago with a handful of major research libraries to digitize their scholarly collections. It does not avoid the shortcomings of a top-down history, including the tendency to speak in the voice of Silicon Valley promotion, but it is a timely and apt primer on the significance of what happened then and what may yet follow.

The authors convey their leanings toward Google from the start. "For nearly a decade," they write, alluding to the years beginning in 2002, "Google and its partners aggressively pursued the dream of a digital universal library" (6). Libraries on the one hand and publishers on the other were Google's crucial partners. Among the former, the library of the University of Michigan was most important, and it would furnish the primary track for Google's efforts to digitize library books. Publishers and, in time, authors felt increasingly troubled by Google's plans with libraries. Lawsuits over intellectual property ensued, followed by what seemed to the main entities a promising settlement agreement that was then dismissed in court in 2011. Officially thus ended the dream of a "universal digital library," but the notion still animates Marcum and Schonfeld's book, and the phrase frequently hovers ("universal" generally coming before "digital") throughout their text.

The first two chapters set the stage. Chapter 1 provides a useful, wide-ranging overview of predigital efforts among research libraries to create networks of shared information and resources. Chapter 2 is called "The Dreamers," and it presents a series of brief sketches of librarians, technologists, and others who embraced digital technology and the idea of mass digitization of the scholarly record. As an inside story, *Along Came Google* truly commences with chapter 3, in which we learn about the private conversations and meetings that particularly led Google and the University of Michigan to work together. Especially important here—and for the story as a whole—is material drawn from interviews with Michigan's Paul Courant (then provost) and John Wilkin (then associate librarian), as well as the salient background fact that Google's Larry Page was a Michigan graduate, explaining this historical contingency in the first place. The information in this chapter (and more to follow in the rest of the book) demonstrates the validity of what Marcum and Schonfeld say in their very acknowledgments: "The real strength of this history is that so many key figures in book digitization were willing to talk with us so candidly" (vii).

Chapter 4 is quite brief and somewhat tenuously connected to the rest of the narrative. It reads perhaps as though a manuscript reviewer suggested the authors address the issue of open access, or the authors themselves wished to discuss it; but, in the absence of a better fit elsewhere, they simply decided to insert some of their thoughts here, as a bridge between chapter 3 (which detailed the lead-up to the Google/Michigan partnership) and chapter 5 (entitled "The Academy Protests"). Here, the authors delve into the fallout from the previous, effectively showing the challenges of accomplishing mass digitization without the resources of a Google. Philanthropic organizations (like the Mellon Foundation), universities besides Michigan (for instance, Harvard), and newly formed nonprofits (one example would be Brewster Kahle's Open Content Alliance) all may have wished and tried for a path toward digitization outside Google's corporate orbit, but ultimately such approaches were, as the chapter's concluding subheading declares: "No Match for Google" (125).

Chapters 6 and 7 insightfully add to the story. Publishers' reactions gradually coalesced to oppose Google, which had proceeded to digitize what would ultimately be millions of books from library collections without first securing copyright permission. A settlement that appeared to satisfy Google, publishers, and authors alike was eventually put forward. The ALA, ACRL, and ARL all cautioned against it. The U.S. Department of Justice advised the same, and finally the court denied it, but in parallel developments over the previous several years had materialized the planning and will among academic institutions (led by Michigan) to create a "library-controlled platform" (165) for mass digitized books. This took the form of HathiTrust, and chapter 7 recounts its emergence, including its emphasis on digital preservation and significance as a discovery platform.

The book concludes with an intriguing chapter reflecting on what the Google Print/Books era still means and might augur for the future. "Through today's lens," the authors write, "many are now asking if the major research libraries are actually representative enough of American history, culture, and scholarship to serve as a comprehensive digital library" (190). Marcum and Schonfeld in turn offer a revised definition of their guiding principle, or, that is, "another model for the universal library: one that is *the accumulation of many efforts, all of them ultimately incomplete, controlled by an array of different actors*" (194, italics in the original). This is agreeable enough, and certainly closer to the realities of scholarship and collecting, but whether it represents a "universal" library, and whether such a library is (or ever was) desirable, will be for each to decide.

This book is worth reading and will no doubt help librarians to understand where we are in today's research landscape and what brought us here. But rendering judgment on the underlying tensions between libraries and Google—which is to say, the tensions between culture and commerce—it might have displayed a little more balance when speaking of libraries and librarians, who tend to appear in clichéd fashion as mostly tradition-minded professionals reluctant to engage with the digital future. At one point, even those library leaders admired by Marcum and Schonfeld seem paradoxically to have less agency than the book's other protagonists, for they "were constrained by their organizational perspective from recognizing the transformational, and in some cases disruptive, potential that accompanied the vision they were pursuing" (40).

That the book is couched in the language of Silicon Valley optimism is to some degree understandable, given its source interviews with key players who partnered together from Google, Michigan, Stanford, and the like (a complete list of which interviews would have made for a useful appendix). Still, the evidence from the interviews themselves is telling. Marcum and Schonfeld learn that Google's discussions with its partner libraries were "steeped in secrecy" (82), with nondisclosure agreements preventing each library from speaking frankly with the others. Ultimately, if librarians expressed hesitation about Google's aims and actions, then perhaps this had more to do with observable power imbalances and wariness toward Google's domination of search, rather than with an inability to grasp technology's potential. It is fascinating, at any rate, to look back at the Google Book Search beta site, where there appeared, early on, a reposted series of blurbs in favor of the project, juxtaposed with the publisher and author counterarguments. Among the favorable blurbs was one from Tim Wu in *Slate*: "In the end, it is just a search, not a replacement product." Nearly 20 years later, it now seems fair to ask whether search has indeed become the product, though that is subject matter for another book on Google. —James Kessenides, *Yale University Library*