

MANAGING AND IMPROVING ELECTRONIC THESIS AND DISSERTATION
PROGRAMS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR LIBRARIANS. Mariner, Matthew C. Lanham,
MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, 117pp., ISBN: 978-1-5381-0100-1

Many people who have completed graduate degrees will likely have written a thesis or dissertation as a requirement for graduation. Since the late 1990s these documents are likely to have been “born digital,” making them readily accessible through campus institutional repositories and other websites. Managing electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) is the focus of this book, No. 36 in the publisher’s “Practical Guide for Librarians” series.

The “ultimate goal” of the book is “to serve as a powerful reference tool for librarians and ETD practitioners to wield” as they manage ETD programs and all of the considerations that those collections entail. (xv) Well-written and well-organized throughout, the book consists of seven chapters and an index. Each chapter ends with key summary points to reinforce the material covered. Chapters 1 and 2 present basic concepts and instructions for establishing an ETD collection. Chapter 3 deals with author rights and responsibilities as well as fair use. Chapter 4 describes issues related to the retrospective conversion of older print theses and dissertations to digital formats. This chapter had especial significance for me, as I recently went through the process described when my alma mater contacted me in 2016 to request digitizing my 1998 print master’s thesis. Chapter 4 additionally outlines a case study from the author’s library in Denver, CO. Chapter 5 considers non-traditional works such as capstones, projects in lieu of theses (PILOTs) and portfolios; this chapter also includes a case study from the University of Florida Digital Library Center. Chapter 6 discusses ways to enhance ETDs by increasing their interactivity and including more metadata to enhance findability. A case study of the University of South Alabama relays how librarians conducted citation analysis of 88 undergraduate theses. Chapter 7 summarizes the content of the previous chapters by giving five essential takeaways: understand the needs of your institution; expand definitions of theses and dissertations; protect the rights of authors; get the most out of a project; and rely on the successes and failures of others.

The author is currently digital collections manager at Auraria Library in Denver. As he states in the preface, this book is aimed toward librarians, ETD managers, digitization specialists, and graduate school coordinators. (xiii) I would add that Chapter 3, “Authors’ Rights in ETDs,” contains useful information for anyone writing a thesis or dissertation. This book is a thorough guide for any professional tasked with ETD management.

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