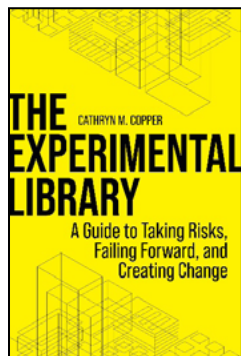


Age (c1956–1972) superhero comics were compared to other, lesser-known genres from the period, such as war, western, and romance comics. Students could compare artistic styles and editorial decisions in different types of stories, and the worldview on display in the comics could be compared to other media of the era.

In Part 4, chapters discuss specific collections and types of comics. One discusses the challenges particular to crowdfunded comics, especially regarding budgets. Another looks at LGBTQ graphic memoirs in relation to other biographical sources from members of this community. A third examines propaganda comics from Maoist China, establishing a link to earlier forms of information distribution, such as early modern European broadsheets and religious tracts. Students are able to compare tales such as the life of Confucius through the lens of the party line of the Chinese government. Another looks at comics published by the Catholic Church to compete with the popular secular comics of the time.

Comic Books, Special Collections, and the Academic Library will be a valuable resource for any librarian whose institution is beginning to collect comics and to any librarian with an underused collection looking for inspiration. The popularity of comic books and their related movies and television shows provides an excellent avenue for introducing students to larger topics in history, storytelling, and social issues in a number of disciplines. The breadth of topics covered across the chapters of this work means that almost any reader will find some applicable ideas for collecting, organizing, and using comic book collections in an academic setting. —Dan Forrest, Western Kentucky University

Cathryn M. Copper. *The Experimental Library: A Guide to Taking Risks, Failing Forward, and Creating Change*. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2023. 184p. Paper, \$59.99 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-3965-9).



The Experimental Library: A Guide to Taking Risks, Failing Forward, and Creating Change by Cathryn M. Copper is a short, handy guide for anyone looking to bring about a different way to solve problems and implement change in their library. The book is divided into three short sections: “A Culture of Experimentation,” “The IDEAA Anti-Method,” and “Mapping Experimentation to Your Organization.” Summarizing successful corporate businesses that reinvented or transformed themselves provides the foundation that libraries could follow. The meat of the book, however, is in Part 2, where Copper explains the steps in the experimentation “anti-method” and how it is relevant to libraries. Moving libraries away from being risk-

adverse and towards embracing exploration into new operational procedures or innovative programming is a major theme of the whole book. Experiments do not have to take a lot of money or space in order to be implemented—all they need is to be well thought out. This book takes inspiration from the tech sector and startups, highlighting companies like Apple and Google as experimentation models to emulate. Libraries can imitate the environment of a startup organization by encouraging small experiments and reconsidering what it means to fail. This book is ideal for someone in a leadership position who is looking to bring about changes, both large and small, to their organization. At a slim 184 pages, this book is easy to read as part of a professional-development group or for everyone in leadership to consider.

Copper has worked in both public and academic libraries and has provided examples of experimentation from her past experiences as well as samples from other libraries. The provided illustrations are equally split between academic and public library situations. Any

reader will be able to appreciate the proffered case studies and use them as a starting point for thinking about their own future experiments. Copper is not only well-versed testing in libraries, but she is also sympathetic to the potential struggles library employees might face when trying to create change. The author reminds readers that libraries are stereotypically risk-adverse institutions. The best way to create change is to start small; however, the second-best path is to be a manager or in high-level administration with the authority to institute change from the top down.

While Copper's main argument is "the beauty of experimentation is that anyone can do it regardless of budget" (ix) many readers may feel like they lack the authority to propose a new policy, event, or idea. This book is best for people in a formal or informal leadership role who can institute the necessary cultural changes, regardless of the available budget. While the author intends the text to be helpful for anyone in a risk-adverse industry, because the title has "library" and is published by ALA, very few readers outside the field of librarianship are likely to encounter it. On the other hand, many of Copper's models of companies as successful innovators are found in the tech industry. As a result, more examples of libraries doing well instead of highlighting famous technology and start-up organizations would have been appreciated. Copper knows that library culture is unlikely to transform into Silicon Valley culture, so giving the intended readers more insight into what is going on in their own field is, similarly, more likely to be applicable.

The most interesting parts of the book are found in Chapter 4 when the author discusses determining what the real question is instead of what the problem is and evaluating/connecting the results of experimentation back to the library as discussed in the last three chapters: "Fail Forward," "Reskilling the Information Professional," and "The Experimentation Roadmap." These are the most widely impactful chapters that can alter how people think about the issues they face in their workplace and determine what "success" looks like. These chapters would help someone identify the issue, not just solve the symptom, and then prove the worth of a program, service, or resource. These final chapters are perhaps the most widely relevant because, as the saying goes, "what is measured can be managed." Although aspects of DEIA are not explicitly discussed, an attitude of experimentation could be used to try bringing in more diverse policies, collections, and programming. For this reason, readers outside of a strong leadership role might be interested in reading or encouraging a library-wide read of this text.

Embracing risk and learning from failure are two tenets libraries could put to good use. Ultimately, *The Experimental Library* has value for anyone in libraries interested in making changes and guiding their institution in new directions. Copper is a knowledgeable author prepared with case studies which make this book relevant to practitioners and idea-creators alike. Although people in leadership positions are best positioned to act on what is recommended in the book, any reader or organization can benefit from the information included. I would recommend this title to any public or academic library interested in trying something different or experimenting with their programs. —Clarissa Ihssen, American University

Mike Caulfield and Sam Wineberg. *Verified : How to Think Straight, Get Duped Less, and Make Better Decisions About What to Believe Online*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2023. 266p. Paper, \$14 (ISBN: 978-0-226-82206-8).

Acclaimed economist, political scientist, and computer scientist, Herbert Simon, is quoted by authors Mike Caulfield and Sam Wineberg in the conclusion of *Verified : How to Think Straight*,