

Book Reviews

The Computer and the Library. By N. S. M. Cox, J. D. Dews, and J. L. Dolby. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1967. 95 pp. \$4.50.

For a field which has been captivated by the promise and lure of automatic data processing, it is surprising how little librarianship has to show for this preoccupation insofar as its own documentation is concerned. The literature of particular practices in individual institutions goes on and on, seemingly in an endless stream, but the number of books, pamphlets, or other documents which generalize or genuinely assess or analyze the uses of the technology for library applications is very thin indeed. This slender little volume, first published at the University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne as their library publication No. 4 in September 1966, comes therefore as a welcome addition.

The book serves to introduce the library reader to the "role of the computer in the organization and handling of information in libraries." In this volume there is packed a great deal of good sense and enterprising thinking, beginning from the back of the title page, where the authors have quoted from W. T. Williams in Barbara Kyle's *Focus on Information and Communication* to good effect, upon central differences between the needs and uses of computers and of men. Those who spend some time with this volume, and any librarian committed to tomorrow rather than yesterday will want to do so, are encouraged not to miss the quotation from the Kyle volume.

The introduction to the work sets the stage well for its content. It is written by Frederick G. Kilgour of Yale University library, who has himself contributed appreciably to generalized understanding of applications and implications of computer uses in library for repetitive processing activity. The volume grows out of the effort at Newcastle-Upon-Tyne where one of the authors is a computer expert, another a librarian, and the third a statistician concerned with the problems of interrelating librarians and computers. The emphasis throughout the book is upon providing the

detailed means whereby manual procedures may be converted to more automatic processes using contemporary technology. Unlike many more extended treatments, this monograph is precise and always to the point. From this work the reader will better understand the background of libraries as they relate to utilization of machinery. There is a discussion of the limits and opportunities provided through the use of computers; their use in acquisitions and cataloging, and the printing of catalogs. The prospects for libraries of using machines for information and reference requirements are treated. Finally, the general dimensions of the library problem and the prospects for new developments in computer technology and their implications for librarianship are explored.

Of course, the value of any such work is in some measure a function of the sophistication which the reader brings to the task. In the present volume, the requirements for sophistication are limited. The reading of this book will reward any librarian who takes the time to work his way through, since a good deal of sound and useful thinking is provided about the whys and wherefores, the promise and the limits of the technology.

In this book, several individuals who have worked together and accumulated experience in both computer applications and in librarianship, offer a clear and meaningful explanation of the potential role of the machinery in terms of library and library related activities. The work is a must for the bookshelf of the librarian who is concerned about the ways in which computers can and will influence the performance of his tasks; it will be of special interest to academic librarians.—*Paul Wasserman, University of Maryland.*

The Community Junior College; an annotated bibliography. Ed. by Emory W. Rarig. New York: Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1966. 114 pp. \$4. (66-29990).

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