

**Dowell, Arlene Taylor.** *AACR2 Headings: A Five-Year Projection of Their Impact on Catalogs.* Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1982. 146p. \$22.50 U.S./\$27 elsewhere. LC 82-9927. ISBN 0-87287-330-7.

Arlene Taylor's dissertation (published under her former name) has received much public attention. Her presentations and dissemination of the preliminary and final findings, and the timeliness of these, may have left some librarians feeling that reading the finished product is unnecessary. This impression is a mistaken one. Taylor was able to give the library community some needed information, but this work is much more than a way to answer the question, "How much might AACR2 and desuperimposition cost my library?"

The work makes several major contributions to library practice and research. One is the clear description and analysis of the problem that confronted libraries in implementing AACR2 while using Library of Congress cataloging in the current *card catalog* environment. The careful description of the problem and the development of hypotheses, choice of methodology, and analysis of data, provide insights into the dissection of a complex problem. The result is the information needed to analyze the problem in the reader's own library.

On a more general level, the work addresses the problems faced by the cataloging administrator who must look at the complex bibliographic environment, and improve the relatively rudimentary ways by which most of us continue to provide bibliographic access. It suggests some means of analyzing this environment toward increasing our understanding of the forces at work in maintaining a catalog. The work also looks at the entire question of costing library services. Research that looks at costs and describes alternative models is still at a basic level. Taylor's work has moved us closer to planning with facts rather than planning primarily by instinct.

One of the early discoveries made by Taylor was that librarians know very little about the proportion of types of headings in the card catalog. Taylor has docu-

mented the disproportionate number of personal names in our catalogs. Her discovery, that sampling theory may not produce samples of a sufficient size to measure the characteristics of other kinds of headings, is an important one. As research into catalog use proceeds, it becomes more and more important for us to understand the inherent biases of the catalogs we build, so that we can interpret our research findings correctly. Taylor has laid a foundation for studies into the nature of modern catalogs.

The work is easy to read, and not overly "cataloger-ish" in its approach to the problem. It is clearly a landmark study and should be read by all professionals.—*Nancy R. John, University of Illinois at Chicago.*

**Chen, Ching-chih, and Herson, Peter.** *Information Seeking: Assessing and Anticipating User Needs.* New York: Neal-Schuman, 1982. 205p. \$22.95. LC 82-6320. ISBN 0-918212-50-2.

This book is an important contribution to an ever growing body of literature on the needs of information users. Breaking new ground in methodology (first time use of telephone survey), the study covers a wide geographic area (six states). The investigators place information seeking in context, distinguishing between occupational related and nonoccupational information needs, and view the library as one of many competing information providers.

Use of the telephone survey technique allowed a very large sample to be surveyed at low cost: 2,400 persons were contacted in six New England states. Analysis of the data revealed that respondents drew heavily on interpersonal providers for most of their information needs, and that libraries constitute a secondary and often unimportant resource. Although libraries were consulted by 17 percent of all respondents (a figure higher than prior studies conducted in Baltimore, Seattle, and California), libraries ranked only ninth among all information providers.

This conclusion is not surprising considering the wide diversity of information needs and information seeking covered by these studies. The decision of the present

investigators to distinguish work-related information needs from other information needs yielded significant results: two-thirds of the use of libraries is in work-related information settings, particularly in relation to technical issues, getting or changing jobs, or organizational relations. The occupational categories most likely to use libraries were students, professional and technical workers; these groups accounted for 40.9 percent of all library use. While these data suggest that further research into work-related information seeking might yield important data for library planning, the authors also discuss seven action areas which might improve the market share of libraries among competing information providers: information services to special populations, expanding services, technology, marketing, public relations, alternate funding sources, and future studies.

The authors are to be congratulated on their ability to present the results of this major statistical study in a concise and highly readable fashion. This book should be read not only by those interested in research on information needs and information seeking, but also by all those seriously interested in the future role of libraries as information providers.—Peter J. Paulson, *New York State Library*.

*Information Technology: Critical Choices for Library Decision-Makers.* Ed. by Allen Kent and Thomas J. Galvin. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1982. 504p. \$57.50. LC 82-14886. ISBN 0-8247-1737-6.

At first glance it appears that this work is merely another gallimaufry in the widening arena of the "technological ecosphere," as Thomas Galvin, coeditor, so aptly describes the environment. It is, on the contrary, an extraordinarily valuable compendium of the information economy.

Although "awesome" is a cliché-tinged adjective, in its original sense it can be applied to this volume—the fourth number in a series of Pittsburgh conferences focusing on the technology and its relationship to libraries. The editors wisely repeat their successful formula of the past: careful or-

ganization; impeccable research; an eye for the dramatic; as well as contributors who can serve as linchpins for the conference, such as Richard Boss, Toni Bearman, and Jane Hannigan.

How can librarians deal with the critical local and national decisions that involve complex questions concerning issues in the information society? The five key developments considered are: the impact of technology on librarians; the local choice and local commitment; the network level decision; the human factors in human consequences; and the competition in the private sector.

During the 1970s, most librarians were willing to leave to the experts such concerns as mass storage technology, micro/mini/mainframe computers, data communications, networking, distributive processing, data entry-display-response, in addition to the important topic of software. The assembly of the 400 at Pittsburgh, however, attests strikingly to librarians' current awareness of the diverse environmental and social impacts of technological decisions.

In this collection the statements of Robinson, Bruntjen, Pollis, Rolhf, and Simpson emphasize a growing demand for librarians' participation in questions involving trade-offs among conflicting values and equity issues. We also note an increasing challenge to the so-called expert's opinions.

How can the librarian in the trenches participate in these decisions? One answer lies clearly in a more informed librarian community. The level of librarian awareness of technical issues is most certainly heightened, for example, in the papers on network level decisions by Haas, Avram, Rochell, Brown, and Handley. The opportunity through the proceedings to peruse the comments of any one of the other thirty-one contributors is a rewarding enlightenment. The comments on human factors by Sara Fine, Agnes Griffen, Lewis Hanes, and James Nelson are also luminous efforts in sensitizing librarians to cope with the new technology.

Galvin cogently notes that the aspiration of the Pittsburgh faculty members was "to share at least a part of the spirit of