BOOK REVIEWS

A Computer Based System for Reserve Activities in a University Library, by Paul J. Fasana (and others). New York: Systems Office, The Libraries, Columbia University, 1969. (Final Report, Project No. 7-1129, U. S. Office of Education, Bureau of Research) iii, 50, (53) pp.

One opens this report wondering whether circulation of reserve books to readers is included in the computer based system, and assuming that such circulation would have to be handled on-line because the short duration of reserve loans, often on the order of one hour, would not seem to fit well with batch processing. It is soon made clear that on-line circulation was set as a goal of the second phase of the system; only the first phase is described here, though somewhat tantalizingly it is stated that one of the aspects of phase two already developed or experimented with is "a fully operational off-line circulation system."

What is reported here, however, in commendable fullness, is a system, called Reserves Processing, which greatly facilitates the processes of putting books on reserve, taking them off, and producing reference lists. Emphasis has been placed on developing a generalized system that can be used in different units of the Columbia University Libraries, and, with necessary modifications, in other academic libraries. The preferred form of data entry is on-line with an IBM 2741 terminal. Other functions (and backup systems for data entry) are off-line; the master reserve file is stored on an IBM 2311 disc pack. One section of the report describes the system for those who are not computer specialists; this includes copies of forms and form letters. Other sections give technical documentation, including a flow chart, details of format, and actual listings of four programs written in F level COBOL for OS/360. The report will be valuable to anyone considering the problem of reserve books; its successor covering phase two will be eagerly awaited by all those interested in circulation as well.

Foster M. Palmer

Involvement of Computers in Medical Sciences, compiled by K. M. Shahid, H. J. Van der Aa, and L. M. C. J. Sicking. Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1969. 227 pp.

The compilers of this volume have brought together the significant abstracts of the literature that pertains to the use of the computer in present-day medicine. This volume will serve a valuable purpose for those interested in the computer and its applications in medical sciences as it will give a broad overview of computer usage in medicine and many closely allied fields. As computer uses grow in frequency and diversity, a review of this type becomes increasingly valuable to those interested in the field.

John A. Prior

Translations Journals; List of Periodicals Translated Cover-to-Cover, Abstracted Publications and Periodicals Containing Selected Articles, compiled by Mrs. A. S. de Groot-de Rook. Delft: European Translations Centre, 1970. 44 pp. $2.00.

This book is an updated bibliographical list and union catalog intended as a guide to scientific and technical journals in translation. Entries, arranged alphabetically by original title, contain bibliographical details, publisher and price. The list includes both current and terminated periodicals (about 400 entries). There are cross references from the translated title to the original title. At the end of each entry selected locations and their holdings are listed.

The holdings of National Translation Centres and/or libraries adhering to the European Translation Centre are also included. A "List of Publishing Houses," the agents from which to order, are included along with mailing addresses. There is also a "List of Holding Libraries" with addresses.

Only non-Western language periodicals for which there are Western language verisions are included. No non-Western journals that contain Western language articles or journals originally published in Western languages are included.

Irene Braden Hoadley

Proceedings of the 1969 Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing, edited by Dewey E. Carroll. Urbana: University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science, 1970. 144 pp. $5.00.

The volume contains eleven invited papers presented at the seventh annual Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing held April 27-30, 1969, at Urbana, Illinois. As in the preceding volumes in this series, the purpose is to report actual experience in case history form of applications of data processing technology to areas of library operations. The book is a source of information on how particular problems were handled within a particular environment. Library operations which receive particular attention are the usual ones: acquisitions, cataloging and circulation.

"Library Networks: Cataloging and Bibliographic Aspects," by Ann Curran presents actual problems encountered in the development of an operating network as well as many thought-provoking questions. Stephen Salmon's article on automation of the Library of Congress Card Division is very informative. Also of interest are two articles dealing with PL/I as a programming language for library applications. Several articles are beginning to describe on-line applications of data processing for libraries as well as batch processing and the optimal mixes of both.

Unlike some of the preceding volumes, this volume has a very fine overall index. There is an error in the name of one of the authors (James B. Corbin should be John B. Corbin). No participant discussion is included.

Kenneth J. Bierman

Techniques of Information Retrieval, by B. C. Vickery. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1970. 262 pp. $11.00.

This book is a lucidly written text dealing primarily with manual indexing, and the manual construction of document profiles. There is a wealth of information about classification systems and their use for indexing purposes, and two particularly interesting chapters that give illustrations of some of the work going on at information centers, and of some of the basic concepts arising in systems evaluation, respectively.

The present reviewer finds this book difficult to deal with, since the temptation continuously arises to substitute one's own aims for those of the author. To my mind, this book does not deal with the "techniques of information retrieval," as commonly understood. The latter would surely include a thorough description of automatic indexing procedures, automatic classification, on-line search systems, modern storage allocation methods, fast search systems, and so on; and while some of these concepts are mentioned in passing, the reader surely cannot obtain an accurate picture in these areas. Rather, the book deals with conventional indexing procedures, and will likely be of value for the conventional training of librarians and documentalists. The text is easy to read, and includes plenty of examples, as well as some examination questions and exercises.

Still, this reviewer wonders whether a more modern book might not have been published in 1970, particularly if the title includes the phrase "information retrieval." To this question, the author would likely answer (as on page 17) that the:

> ". . . analysis and synthesis of information, though it may be aided by the machine can only be carried out effectively by skilled human labor;"

or again (as on page 43):

> ". . . if we cannot say for certain what is the optimum human selection of index terms in a particular situation, then one cannot evaluate a machine selection."

Statements such as these are easy to generate, particularly if one is not obliged to furnish any proof for one's assertions. In any case, they serve to illustrate the author's viewpoint and his particular choice of subject matter.

To summarize, this text appears to be an excellent introduction to conventional documentation work, with emphasis on manual document analysis and indexing. It does not, unfortunately, give a reasonable preview of the fundamental changes which will inevitably occur in the information and documentation fields over the next ten or twenty years.

G. Salton