

members, responding to a number of items on the Library's holdings, felt that the critical mass of materials in the general circulating collection needed

to support their area of the curriculum was not yet available and needed to be given first priority above all other needs in any area of the LRC.

The Tufts/EDUCOM data-sharing project for library statistics

By John A. Dunn Jr.

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The Tufts University data-sharing project supports college and university planning and management by facilitating self-assessment and comparisons with peers, using computer-supported data-aggregation and analysis techniques. A primary advantage of the database approach to library statistics is that it gives the user access to data on a more current basis than is generally possible with paper surveys.

The project has three components: EDUCOM's Higher Education Data-Sharing Service (HEDS) software; sets of definitions and ratios (data profiles) developed by Tufts University with the guidance of the members; and collections of data contributed by the member schools. The HEDS software and the database reside on an IBM mainframe at Cornell University.

The set of data to be collected is based on data already being collected by ARL, ACRL, and LIBGIS, as well as by Arthur Monke at Bowdoin for his college survey. It also goes beyond those and beyond the ARL supplementary questionnaire in the area of automation, and is more inclusive of other indicators of institutional size and character. The software allows the computer on which the database resides to perform the ratio calculations for the user, so that the output includes ratios and trend indicators as well as raw data.

Each user collects data for his or her own institution following the profile descriptions, and enters them using Telenet, TYMNET, BITNET or other data communications networks. The user can then obtain:

- time-series data for his or her own institution, and for any other participant, including differences between those sets of data in absolute or percentage terms;
- data for any given year for all institutions or for the set of schools specified (access to peer group data is by consent of the members);
- statistical measures on each variable, for all institutions or for the set selected, as well as several types of graphic displays of the data.

The user can enter and print out the data in

“pure time-sharing” mode using an ordinary terminal or modem. Alternatively, in “microcomputer-to-mainframe” mode, the user can employ spreadsheet software (e.g., LOTUS 1-2-3), to enter or extract data by file transfer, using the microcomputer for further local analysis and graphics.

The areas of data collection and analysis include financial statistics such as operating incomes and expenses, endowments, private support, and balance sheet changes; statistics on undergraduate admissions, enrollments (by level and by degree program), student charges and financial aid; institutional data in such areas as personnel and facilities; sponsored research; libraries and faculty demographics. A profile on faculty compensation is in preparation. Profiles include both the base input data and a wide variety of computed ratios, growth rates, and comparisons to national statistics.

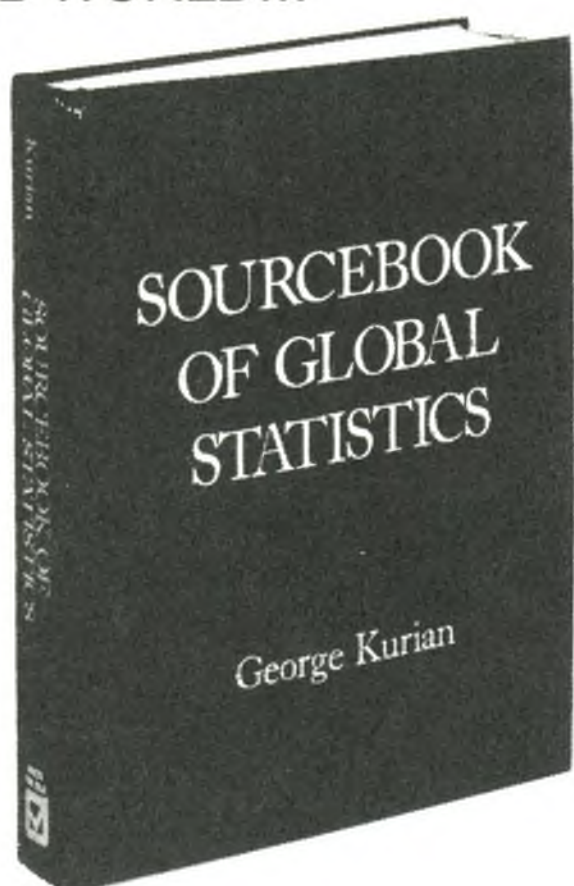
Current university participants are Brandeis, Carnegie-Mellon, Cornell, Emory, Georgetown, NYU, Pennsylvania, Rochester, Southern Methodist, Tufts, Tulane, Vanderbilt and Washington University. College members are Amherst, Bates, Bowdoin, Bryn Mawr, Bucknell, Carleton, Claremont-McKenna, Clark, Colgate, Colorado, Dickinson, Franklin and Marshall, Grinnell, Hamilton, Haverford, Kalamazoo, Kenyon, Lafayette, Lawrence, Lehigh, Lewis and Clark, Middlebury, Mills, Mount Holyoke, Oberlin, Pomona, Reed, Scripps, Smith, St. John's (Annapolis), St. Lawrence, Swarthmore, Trinity College, Trinity University, Union, Vassar, Wellesley, Wesleyan, Wheaton, and Williams. Several other colleges and universities are considering joining.

Participation within the two user groups is voluntary. Only a few libraries now have data in the system, but more have indicated a willingness to join actively.

Future directions include expanding and further refining the areas of data collection.

Interested librarians may contact me at (617) 381-3274 to find out how to participate most effectively. ■■

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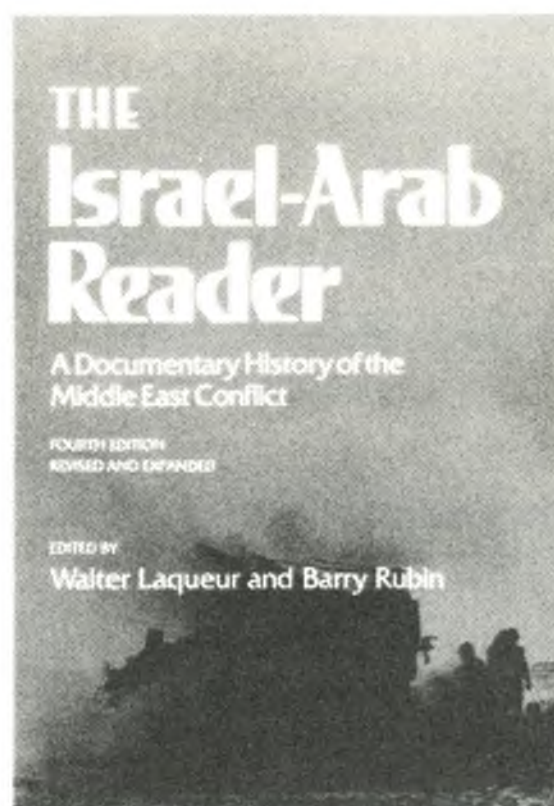
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