

The Greening of the Library

Surely it is possible for librarians to come to grips with the decade of the seventies! Now that we have caught our breath as we start the second half of the academic year, and now that we are indeed sure that we are well into the seventies, academic librarians can be forgiven some self-questioning. One question which formerly served as a touchstone to the process was: Where is the computer in my life?

The glamorous sixties—compounded of one part computer manufacturers' hyperbole and one part systems analysts' jargon, mixed with two parts of our own fear and gee whiz incomprehension—have faded, but will there come about in the seventies a flinty-eyed realism, controlled and controllable aims, and more precise cost consciousness where computers are concerned? The conventional wisdom tells us that as we move into what Brzezinski has called the Technetronic Era, we will surely shrug off our accumulated hangups from the nineteenth century; we will master our computerized environment; we will neither fear nor adore the machine, we will use it.

But what if the conventional wisdom is wrong, or even just wide of the mark? What if neither the peculiar standpatism favored by the Nixon administration persists, nor the total dissolution desired by the hairy Left really happens? What if people like Charles ("The Greening of America") Reich are right? What if the established consciousness is doomed?—that is, what if enough people get high on self-awareness, become satiated with the shams of the political structures, refuse to tolerate the madness of the corporate state? What if the new consciousness, the new spirit, becomes old hat during the seventies?

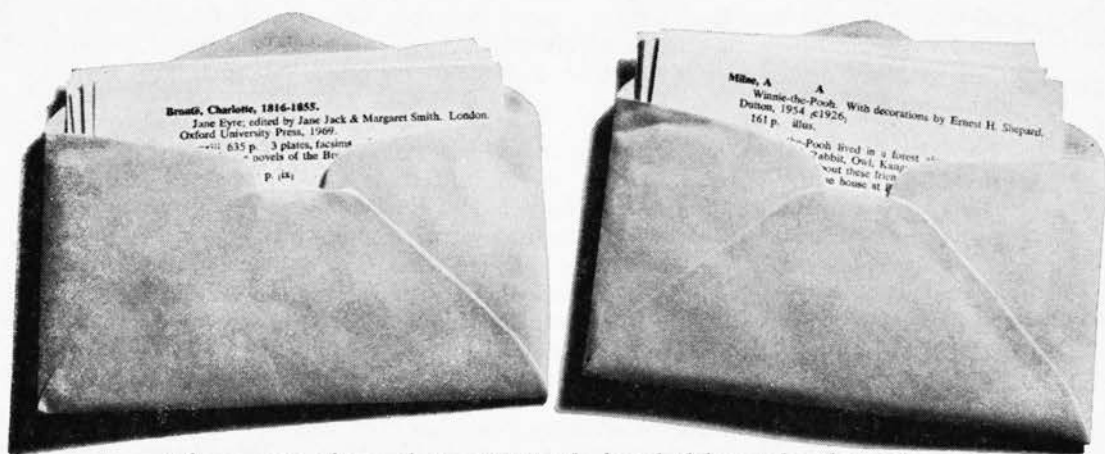
Then the librarian will not ask: Where is the computer in my life? Rather, he or she may well ask: Where is the *love* in my computerized library's life? The latter is not just a different question, but a different *kind* of question altogether, for its premise is something totally unsuspected by the hard-working drones in contemporary American libraries. Just as the "little old librarian" of recent memory was written off because "she" could neither comprehend nor accept computer manipulation of library problems, so the "modern academic librarian" is in imminent peril of being ignored by the new spirit on the campus.

That new spirit does not demand ever larger and larger libraries, ever larger and larger budgets, or ever larger and larger computers and computer products. Rather, that rapidly growing minority infected by the new spirit insists that the function of a library is to serve people as people—and not as "patrons," "clients," or (worse yet) as "mere numbers." The new spirit suggests that the purpose of the librarian is to help explain (with all the tools available) mankind to man and each man to himself. If the library and its librarians fend off the questioners and avoid confrontations with the new consciousness, then surely they will lose the opportunity of coming close to the concerns of present day students. They will not touch reality and they will surely be forgotten.

The solution to problems lies not in giving right or even "wrong" answers, but in asking relevant questions.

W. H. WEBB

NOW YOU CAN GET JANE EYRE ON THE SHELVES AS FAST AS WINNIE THE POOH.



After years of supplying LJ Cards for children's books, we've now grown to adults!

LJ catalog card sets are now available for all English language adult titles published from 1969 on.

Our adult card sets are designed to accomplish the same thing as LJ processing kits for juvenile titles—namely, to get new acquisitions on the shelves while they're still new.

So, as with all LJ Cards, we guarantee to fill your order within 10 days after receiving it—provided, of course, the book has been published. If we fail, return the order and we'll return your money. (To make sure we don't have to return any money, we've recently increased our order-handling staff by 250%. And our facilities by 300%.)

You can order adult card sets three ways: with standard Library of Congress order slips; copies of multiple order forms; or any 3" by 5" slip listing author, title, publisher, date of publication, and edition. The price is \$.35 per set.

And no matter how you do it, you can now have what elementary and high school librarians have had for some time.

An up-to-date reading room. Instead of just an up-to-date storage room.

XEROX® BiblioGraphics

2500 Schuster Drive, Cheverly, Md. 20781