Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Hagler, Ronald and Peter Simmons. *The Bibliographic Record and Information Technology.* Chicago: American Library Assn., 1982. 346p. LC 82-14706. ISBN 0-8389-0370-3.

As noted in the preface, this book grew out of the authors' experiences of teaching a core-curriculum course at the School of Librarianship, University of British Columbia, on basic bibliographic information and its automated handling. The purpose was to develop a "timely text or texts to introduce novices to computer functions in the context of bibliography, to deal with manual and automated bibliographic databases of all kinds as part of a single coordinated system of bibliographic control, and to analyze the technical, administrative, and economic aspects of a rapid transition from older rules, practices and techniques to present-day ones." The authors are speaking to all librarians—the users as well as the creators of bibliographic data—and in the process have developed a textbook which can also serve as an administrative and management text for a variety of library professionals.

This book succeeds on a number of different levels. First, there is a nice emphasis throughout the book on the reality of the necessity for the application of judgment to the bibliographic process. Where possible, therefore, there are answers to the questions of why things are done as they are and how developments have gotten to where they are. At the same time, there is the recognition that the bibliographic process is an art—exemplified nicely in a section early in the book on "The Bibliographic Temperment."

Second, the authors succeed, from chapter to chapter, in discussing "purpose" and "alternative" within the parallel context of "cost." This continuing discussion and assessment of cost as a part of standards and system development is concluded specifically at the end of the book in a section on "The Commerce in Bibliographic Data." The result is a balanced presentation of the complex interrelationships of bibliographic control—when practices and/or standards can be simplified and when complexity is required, the needs of the ultimate user, the costs that can realistically be borne by libraries, and the best compromises that have been and could be made.

The first chapter moves quickly into bibliographic changes caused by (or enhanced by) technology, explaining the workings of computing—a level of presentation consistent throughout the book of necessarily limiting the width and depth of detailed information. In addition, the presentation begins with a history of the topic and then comes to the present by including brief descriptions of fiber optics, satellite communications, digital transmission, and other topics.

The other chapters are presented with similarly balanced scope, detail, and brevity and include: "The Content and Format of the Bibliographic Record," "Using Files of Bibliographic Records," and "Creating and Sharing Bibliographic Records." Only a few examples of the topics receiving more than competent attention include the development of formats and standards, including the importance of international cooperation, the interaction of filing rules with pre- and postcoordination of subject headings, automated authority

control: changing and linking search keys. The last is a good example of a clear and simple exposition on a complex topic that is currently widely discussed, but with a great deal of confusion.

Although this book does read like a textbook, it succeeds in meeting the goal of introducing the bibliographic and technological concepts needed by librarians—all librarians, including technical services, public services, administration, and computer librarians. Though bibliographic control is not considered by many to be an interesting topic, this book succeeds in presenting the "intellect" of the issues as well as their theories and pragmatics. It is certainly required reading for administrative people and should, indeed, be read by novices as well as seasoned professionals.—*D. Kaye Gapen, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.*
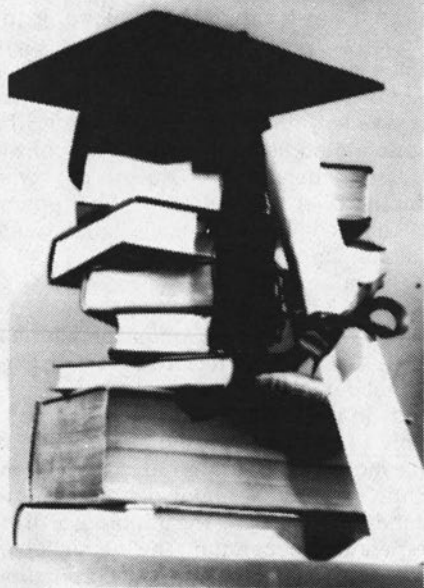
The Impact of New Technology on Libraries and Information Centres. Report of the Library Association Working Party 1981–82. Phoenix, Ariz.: Oryx, 1983. 54p. $10. ISBN 0-85365-925-7.

The stated purpose of *The Impact of New Technology on Libraries and Information Centres* is to cover a wide range of issues broadly and to highlight areas needing more investigation. Issues ranging from employment to library design are among those the report mentions (one cannot use the word *covers* in reference to a report that devotes seven lines to copyright and four lines to system security). However, the report does do what it set out to do—and considering the scope of the topic and the length of the book—it does it very well.

The report is divided into three sections: one explaining the background and purposes of the study; another defining the components of "new technology" and reviewing some of the major social and commercial ramifications; and a third discussing the impact of technology on libraries and information centers in particular. Most readers who are even peripherally involved in the world of technology are all