

a comprehensive collection development policy. General models can and should be followed, especially in these days of increasing national-level cooperation. By no means will that lessen the amount of local effort and careful planning that must go into a policy. We are not interested in copying each others' policies; we do want to learn by sharing insights and processes. That goal is indeed possible by referring to this book and to the many examples of acquisitions policies it presents.

In reporting on the survey she conducted to determine the extent to which libraries have written and/or unwritten acquisitions policies, Futas shares some useful information with her readers. However, of some 4,500 questionnaires distributed, only 327 "usable" responses were returned. From this information the author has created a profile of academic and public library collection policies and processes. The idea is a good one; it is unfortunate that Futas did not disaggregate her respondents further by size, however, since the categories of "public" and "academic" make subtle analysis difficult at best. For example, the range of materials budgets represented in her first group, academic libraries, runs from \$0-\$9,999 (two libraries) all the way to \$1 million or more (some twenty libraries), with a peak at \$100,000-\$249,999. It is impossible to draw any meaningful conclusions about patterns in academic libraries with such a wide spread of statistical information. Yet, for example, Futas uses this data to calculate percentages about who initiates order requests. It is not surprising that her survey shows that the number of bibliographers and collection development officers who are responsible for orders is low (9 percent and 16 percent, respectively), nor that faculty participation is high (55 percent); most smaller academic libraries are understaffed in their collection development functions and rely heavily on faculty for initiation of orders. Had the author grouped her respondents according to size, a different and more accurate picture would have emerged.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that these two books are not truly comparable. The Futas volume is important as an example of the wide range of ways in which

libraries organize their acquisitions functions. It will be a useful working tool for staff participating in the development of policies, although its audience will necessarily be more narrowly defined than the readership of the Magrill and Hickey work. The latter will only serve as a guide to the intricacies of collection development work and as a source of citations for further reading on many related subjects.—*Deborah Jakubs, Duke University.*

Retrospective Conversion: From Cards to Computer. Ed. by Anne G. Adler and Elizabeth A. Baber. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian, 1984. 312p. \$39.50. LC 84-81656. ISBN 0-87650-177-3.

Most libraries today are facing or have already faced the task of converting paper card catalogs to machine-readable files, with attendant planning and discussions of local policies and procedures to be followed in the conversion process. Because of this common simultaneous process, the American Library Association LITA ISAS/RTSD Retrospective Conversion Discussion Group serves as a popular forum for airing retrocon issues. Case studies are interesting starting points for the group's biannual meetings, providing the same excellent background material that warrants their use in the many journal articles that treat retrospective conversion. An entire book composed of case studies of retrospective conversion projects, however, makes for difficult reading. Lack of an index makes access to specific topics virtually impossible, so that one must read every detail of every project or else know in advance which project most closely matches the needs of his or her institution.

The editors obviously had good intentions in bringing together the separate projects into one book, since their early experience had shown them that not much was available on retrospective conversion. Their solution was to collect the papers presented at the discussion group with two updated versions of original projects into this book. As with many other collections, the articles themselves vary in style and depth. Some have been tightly edited for publication while others appear to be the original speech presented to the dis-

cussion group. Some projects are described concisely with an attempt to focus on the broader issues of retrospective conversion, such as authority control and manipulation of holdings data. Other articles drone on about local policies and procedures, and several articles are buried under descriptions of local problems, such as illustrations of every possible variation of shelf list card notations. One article even includes a "collage" of memos from the author to her staff about the retrocon project, along with other "cute" illustrations to promote the project itself and the resulting com catalog. Some of the appendixes can only be labeled as filler to make the chapter or the book itself look respectable; why else include seven pages of "Tables of Holding Library Symbols," plus "Handling of Stamps on Cards" and "Color-coded Envelopes to be Used in Flagging Problems"—in all seven appendixes totaling fifty-one pages? Although the editors did try to represent all types of libraries, their bias shows toward academic libraries and especially toward their home institution, Rice University (four of the fourteen

articles). Adler and Baber or the Pierian editors should have exercised more control in putting together this book. There is much that is superfluous and a lot that is redundant in this method of compiling descriptions of separate conversion projects. Some of the projects, such as MITINET/retrocon and Texas A&M, have already been explained in journal articles, which makes the \$39.50 price seem a bit much.

For the library planning a retrospective conversion project, Ruth Carter and Scott Bruntjen's 1983 *Data Conversion* provides a solid introductory overview of retrospective conversion. It is more current than the 1978 *Library Technology Reports*, "The Conversion of Manual Catalogs to Collection Data Bases." If a librarian wants to know what other libraries did (for better or for worse), or what they would or would not do again, *Library Literature* indexes a multitude of articles on retrospective conversion; these allow readers to much more effectively match type of institution, material format, or other considerations to their needs.—Doris R. Brown, DePaul University.

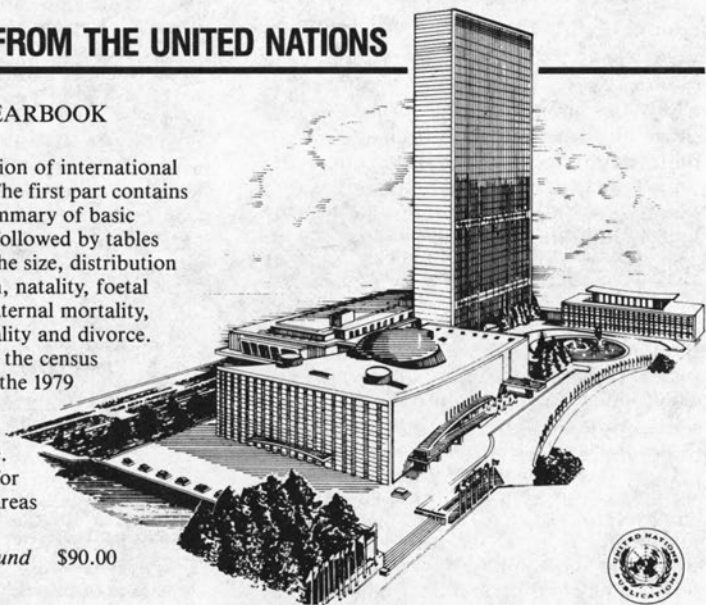
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