

lescents tend to be early adopters, driving families to purchase computers and establish Internet connections. Ultimately, how much of an impact interactive media have on children is determined within the family and household. The total effect of interactive media on children, adolescents, and the family needs additional study.

This is a very interesting book. Well researched and well written, many of the chapters point to research that still needs to be completed. As librarians, we need to be aware of not only what technologies children and adolescents are exposed to in a learning environment, but also what technologies they embrace for play. This awareness will allow us to plan for the future and make us better prepared to meet the expectations of our patrons.—*Tim Daniels, Georgia Institute of Technology.*

***Rowing Upstream: Snapshots of Pioneers of the Information Age in Africa.* Eds.**

Lisbeth A. Levey and Stacey Young.
Johannesburg: Sharp Sharp Media,
2002. 126p. Free (ISBN 0620289139).

The preface of this book states: "The book you hold in your hands is an attempt to celebrate the achievements and document some of the most salient lessons learned from the experience of more than five years of work undertaken by successful pioneers of the technological revolution in Africa." I appreciate titles that hold up to the aims expressed in their preface, and this book certainly does.

The complex world of Internet technology, electronic communication, and information services is an ever-evolving one that increasingly defies facile description or summation. Books such as this one, then, must necessarily become histories of a particular program or period simply to limit the scope to something manageable. *Rowing Upstream* is both a summary of a five-year program and a glimpse into the lives of those who participated in the various projects funded by this program.

The book's structure often fuzzes the boundaries between personal reminiscences, institutional description, and

project narratives. This is an intentional effort, as the editors insist in their introduction that "it is important to note that philanthropy can and frequently does underestimate the capacity of institutions and individuals in the developing world to take the lead in promoting technological change ... *Rowing Upstream* testifies to the dynamism of Africans who are using technology creatively. Ford helped them secure the paddles, but they are rowing this boat by themselves." Throughout the book, there is an emphasis on illustrating that IT development is not just a top-down effort; it requires a coordinated and collaborative effort to "wire" a continent facing so many challenges.

The book does, in fact, celebrate the various ICT (Internet Connectivity Technology) initiatives and programs developed by those NGOs, philanthropic bodies, social service agencies, and individuals throughout the African continent during the late 1990s. The most enlightening—and perhaps most uplifting—message here is that despite the enormous economic and social challenges facing the people of the continent, information technology and electronic communication have not only taken hold but have developed along lines that strongly resemble routes that we in the "developed" world have taken, either blindly or by design. The same issues and challenges we have faced are echoed throughout this book. Tales of hooking up that clunky first modem, downloading that "free" upgrade that somehow disappears on your hard drive, and the mysterious hardware delivery to an unsuspecting reference librarian sound all too familiar. The fact that the hardware delivery described here was by canoe lends further insight to the unique obstacles and challenges faced by those who participated in building IT in Africa in the 1990s.

As told here, Africans have confronted—and conquered—the same thorny issues of building and enhancing electronic communication. More important, these technological developments have proceeded hand-in-glove with agen-

das aimed at political and social change. The initiatives discussed here describe programs designed to enhance communications and improve access to information for healthcare organizations, social service agencies, educational institutions, women's groups, and other popular agencies under the aegis of the Project for Information Access and Connectivity (PIAC), a Rockefeller and Ford Foundation-funded program. *Rowing Upstream* is the final report on this five-year program, and it attempts to assess the development and availability of African content on the Web, the utilization of and innovation in technology across the continent, growth and support of ICT in African universities, as well as examining the complex web of issues surrounding the work of local agencies, nongovernmental groups, and outside (foreign) donor agencies collaborating to enhance links within and between African countries as well as to the rest of the world.

Although sections of the book read like an annual corporate report, they are broken up by a collection of short personal narratives and observations of those "pioneers" who contributed to the various projects. Those personal narratives, though not necessarily biographical, lend a more emotional tenor to the overall story of the early years of IT development. It is this idiosyncrasy in both content and presentation that greatly improves the book's readability.

Rowing Upstream has seven chapters and three appendices. The first appendix is simply a list of the advisory committee members; the other two are more useful in that they list and describe selected Web sites discussed in each chapter and the organizations involved in the wrap-up conference of PIAC participants in 2001. The chapter on African content on the Web is the most substantial as it initiates a discussion of the definition of "African content" and raises important questions for both African and foreign producers and consumers of that content. The chapter and photo essay on ICT in unexpected places describes popular and regionally

based programs concerned with human rights, sustainable development, and community organizing and their use of the Internet, satellite communications, and radio programming to establish and enhance the exchange of information. The book also features a time line that charts the development of e-mail and Internet capability from its earliest recorded use (the first CD-ROM drive north of the Limpopo river was installed in a Malawian research station in 1987).

Rowing Upstream comes bundled with a CD-ROM that includes the full text and graphics from the book, videos from the photo essay chapter, and links to the Web sites mentioned in the book. The authors have produced a handsome and easy-to-navigate Web site (http://www.sn.apc.org/rowing_upstream) that echoes the contents of the book. The book is free via the publisher whose contact information is available on the Web site.

This book is probably not the definitive history of the development of IT on the African continent, but it does effectively provide a glimpse of the challenges faced and projects developed under the umbrella of one extensive and significant program. It also provides us with a better understanding of the various constituencies who comprise the overall African IT community, especially those organizations oriented toward social change.—*Tim Strawn, Harvard University.*

Samek, Toni. *Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in American Librarianship, 1967-1974.* Foreword by Sanford Berman. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2001. 179p. alk. paper, \$35 (ISBN 0786409169). LC 00-55391.

"The question for the future," concludes Toni Samek in her study of how 1960s librarians attempted to alter the profession's definitions of intellectual freedom and social responsibility, "is whose culture is library culture?"

There seem to have been two contenders. First, the "establishment," in Samek's term, officials of the American Library Association (ALA) and top library admin-