

Diaz, Albert James, ed. *Microforms in Libraries: A Reader*. Weston, Conn.: Microform Review, Inc., 1975. 428p. \$17.50 (LC 75-6666) (ISBN 0-913672-03-3)

This book brings together and reprints some of the best basic recent microform literature selected from professional library journals and other sources. Both students and practicing librarians would benefit from reading the most significant articles. No one would want to read it from beginning to end, because a work consisting of reprints of forty-two articles on various aspects of microforms without any cutting is bound to suffer from repetitiousness and other weaknesses.

These readings cover most basic microforms knowledge and tell the experiences of academic librarians and some other authors concerning the organization, bibliographic control, selection, and use problems of microforms. It will be especially practical and useful to new microforms managers in libraries with collections of more than 15,000 microform units.

The editor's introductory essays at the

beginning of the six subject sections are good. The many bibliographies are excellent.

It would be preferable had the editor written an encyclopedic-type essay on each of the six major topics covered: introduction to microforms, organizing the microform collection, bibliographic control, applications, standards, and user reactions. Thus redundancies could have been removed, many passages synthesized, and the documentary sources put in an appendix.

These shortcomings are mentioned: (1) the same information appears in several articles; (2) lack of an index is a serious fault; (3) authors are not identified; (4) despite the compiler's statement to the contrary some articles are excessively technical; (5) the text is "processed," the print is small, and there are typographical errors; (6) an occasional article is too old; and (7) varying styles of writing hurt readability.

Despite shortcomings this book would be helpful to managers of large microforms collections for the general and technical information on microforms conveniently as-

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sembled here in one volume. It is not an essential reference work.—*Louis A. Kenney, Director of Library Services, San Diego State University.*

Sherrod, John, ed. *Information Systems and Networks. Eleventh Annual Symposium, March 27-29, 1974.* Produced by Informatics, Inc., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1975. 200p. \$11.00. (LC 74-11941) (ISBN 0-8371-7717-0)

If you like Irish stew this book is for you. Hidden behind a vague title is a symposium on on-line interactive data base services. The Data Base Industry, or more accurately the Data Base Complex, embraces activities ranging from creating data bases to providing data base services to end-users. It faces issues of design, economics, organization, and user requirements, and hardware-software-telecommunication arrangements.

The actors in the data base drama are: organizations that create and often publish data bases; organizations that produce machine-readable versions of data bases; organizations that provide software access to data bases; organizations that supply telecommunication connections; organizations that offer services directly to users or to intermediaries such as librarians, research organizations, and their funders; the administrators and staffs of these organizations; and the end-users themselves. Most of the actors are represented in the symposium.

The issues facing these actors include the optimal design of data bases, of hardware, of software, and of service interfaces. They include issues of financing development and operation, of subsidizing and recovering costs, and of marketing and pricing services. Issues relating to users include the characteristics of various user groups, their work requirements, and the system and service functions that best meet these requirements.

Most of these issues are covered in varying depth in the symposium. Some of the more substantive presentations are Roy Kidman's statement of the harsh constraints on academic libraries in offering on-line services; Thomas Martin's review of alternatives in designing interactive retrieval soft-

ware; Donald King and Raymond Brown's economic model for decisions on using interactive services; Bennet Lientz's quantification of factors in deciding to secure computer services through a network; Kenneth Siler's description of criteria for evaluating data base management systems; and Paul Zurkowski's discussion of the role of the marketplace in providing access to information. In addition, there are lucid discussions of data bases and services in areas such as toxicology, medicine, aerospace, biology, and chemistry. Historical and summary papers offer background information for the nontechnical reader.

The virtue of this symposium is that the main actors and issues in the Data Base Complex are represented. Its defect is a lack of a unifying plot that highlights the parties at issue and the alternatives each face. The papers appear one after the other, covering an astonishingly wide range, more like a drama festival than an evening with Ibsen. The symposium advances our ability to reach an integrated understanding of what commercial, academic, professional, and governmental groups must do to make interactive services better and supportable. Librarians, systems personnel, administrators, and business people will each find several valuable papers in this symposium. The organizers deserve credit for making the proceedings available rapidly.—*Douglas Ferguson, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California.*

OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST TO ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

- Alloman, Katherine A. *A Reference Guide to Postsecondary Education Data Sources; A Directory to Data Sources Corresponding to Items in the NCHEMS Statewide Measures Inventory.* Boulder, Colo.: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems at Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 1975. Iv. unpagged. \$12.00.
- American Library Association. Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged. *Multi-Ethnic Media; Selected Bibliogra-*