

investigators to distinguish work-related information needs from other information needs yielded significant results: two-thirds of the use of libraries is in work-related information settings, particularly in relation to technical issues, getting or changing jobs, or organizational relations. The occupational categories most likely to use libraries were students, professional and technical workers; these groups accounted for 40.9 percent of all library use. While these data suggest that further research into work-related information seeking might yield important data for library planning, the authors also discuss seven action areas which might improve the market share of libraries among competing information providers: information services to special populations, expanding services, technology, marketing, public relations, alternate funding sources, and future studies.

The authors are to be congratulated on their ability to present the results of this major statistical study in a concise and highly readable fashion. This book should be read not only by those interested in research on information needs and information seeking, but also by all those seriously interested in the future role of libraries as information providers.—Peter J. Paulson, *New York State Library*.

Information Technology: Critical Choices for Library Decision-Makers. Ed. by Allen Kent and Thomas J. Galvin. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1982. 504p. \$57.50. LC 82-14886. ISBN 0-8247-1737-6.

At first glance it appears that this work is merely another gallimaufry in the widening arena of the "technological ecosphere," as Thomas Galvin, coeditor, so aptly describes the environment. It is, on the contrary, an extraordinarily valuable compendium of the information economy.

Although "awesome" is a cliché-tinged adjective, in its original sense it can be applied to this volume—the fourth number in a series of Pittsburgh conferences focusing on the technology and its relationship to libraries. The editors wisely repeat their successful formula of the past: careful or-

ganization; impeccable research; an eye for the dramatic; as well as contributors who can serve as linchpins for the conference, such as Richard Boss, Toni Bearman, and Jane Hannigan.

How can librarians deal with the critical local and national decisions that involve complex questions concerning issues in the information society? The five key developments considered are: the impact of technology on librarians; the local choice and local commitment; the network level decision; the human factors in human consequences; and the competition in the private sector.

During the 1970s, most librarians were willing to leave to the experts such concerns as mass storage technology, micro/mini/mainframe computers, data communications, networking, distributive processing, data entry-display-response, in addition to the important topic of software. The assembly of the 400 at Pittsburgh, however, attests strikingly to librarians' current awareness of the diverse environmental and social impacts of technological decisions.

In this collection the statements of Robinson, Bruntjen, Pollis, Rolhf, and Simpson emphasize a growing demand for librarians' participation in questions involving trade-offs among conflicting values and equity issues. We also note an increasing challenge to the so-called expert's opinions.

How can the librarian in the trenches participate in these decisions? One answer lies clearly in a more informed librarian community. The level of librarian awareness of technical issues is most certainly heightened, for example, in the papers on network level decisions by Haas, Avram, Rochell, Brown, and Handley. The opportunity through the proceedings to peruse the comments of any one of the other thirty-one contributors is a rewarding enlightenment. The comments on human factors by Sara Fine, Agnes Griffen, Lewis Hanes, and James Nelson are also luminous efforts in sensitizing librarians to cope with the new technology.

Galvin cogently notes that the aspiration of the Pittsburgh faculty members was "to share at least a part of the spirit of

discovery and constructive dialogue within the library and information communities that was characteristic of the conference itself." They succeeded most admirably.—*LeMoyne W. Anderson, Colorado State University.*

Lancaster, F. W. *Libraries and Librarians in an Age of Electronics.* Arlington, Va.: IRP, 1982. 229p. LC 82-081403. ISBN 0-87815-040-4.

"The book is laden . . . with all the defects of a first attempt, incomplete, and certainly not free from inconsistencies. Nevertheless I am convinced that it contains the incontrovertible formulation of an idea which, once enunciated clearly, will . . . be accepted without dispute." Thus does Oswald Spengler introduce *The Decline of the West*, which rests on the thesis that creative intellect is dead and that Spengler is the last philosopher whose task is to "sketch out this unphilosophical philosophy—the last that West Europe will know" (*The Decline of the West*, New York, Knopf, 1926, p.46-50).

Lancaster's book is not a first attempt. In stitching together several previously published papers, it comes dangerously close to being a textbookish cut-and-paste bibliographic review on the topic, "The Decline of the Library—maybe for sure."

The author hopes the book "will stimulate members of the library profession to reassess the role of the librarian as an information specialist in a time of extensive social and technological change" (p.vii). Not likely. Like Cassandra, Lancaster's curse may be in being right, but unheeded. If Cassandra had had a word processor and graduate students to help her would Troy have declined faster or slower? There is also the possibility that Lancaster does not have Apollo's gift of prophecy and is just plain wrong or misreading the data.

There is, for example, the statement that "development of ADONIS (Article Delivery over Network Information Systems) has been stimulated by the finding that photocopy requests made to the British Library Lending Division are dominated by requests for articles issued by commercial publishers and that 80% of all requests are

for articles 5 years old or less" (p.75). The source of this misinformation is not provided, but one need only think of the age spread of books circulated by libraries or ISI's citation data by date to get a different picture. Or, check the record. (A. Clarke, "The Use of Serials at the British Library Lending Division in 1980," *Interlending Review* 9: 111-17 1981.) There may be a paperless society and possibly even a project ADONIS in our near future, but not if a short information half-life is the critical factor.

Lancaster, finally looking back on more than 300 citations, years of thinking and teaching about librarians' electronic fate, consulting for the CIA, and massive exposure to the hard radiations of the University of Illinois Library administration, can only ask at the end of his unphilosophical philosophy, "Will the paperless society be in place by the end of the century? It seems highly likely that it will. But only time will tell" (p.206). This reviewer cannot recommend the work as being either particularly conclusive or stimulating as the basis for either that question or its answer.—*Larry X. Besant, Linda Hall Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*

McGarry, Kevin J. *The Changing Context of Information: An Introductory Analysis.* Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String, 1982. 189p. \$19.50. ISBN 0-85157-325-8.

Intended as a textbook in the foundations of information work, K. J. McGarry's survey is a ramble through the concepts and history of library and information science. McGarry has chosen a conversational style, presumably to make the material more accessible to a generation raised in the aural tradition. Loosely connected clauses, eccentric punctuation, and frequent changes of tense, number, and person give the work the informal tone often found in transcriptions of taped interviews. While McGarry's devices of casual discourse may ease the way for the modern student, they are obstacles for the old-fashioned reader of library literature who expects and prefers expository prose.

The word deals with four aspects of information science: epistemology, the history of writing and printing, scholarly