

In the remainder of the book, Rodgers uses historical perspective to examine issues that have an impact on the modern-day paraprofessional. Because most library workers are women, a key issue for paraprofessionals is sexism. Rodgers explains how both historic misconceptions about women and the women themselves have worked to hamper the professional growth of the library worker. Also examined is how other issues, including low pay, lack of variety, micro management by immediate supervisors, and lack of possible advancement, result in a great deal of dissatisfaction and burnout by today's paraprofessional. Possible solutions to these problems are presented, including better pay, more and diverse training, support organizations, and unionization; but unfortunately, according to Rodgers, these solutions either have been ignored or are ineffective.

Rodgers presents a very grim view of the life of the library paraprofessional. Admittedly there are problems, but after reading this book I wonder why anyone would work in a library as a paraprofessional. Almost the whole of the book is focused on what is wrong in the world of the library paraprofessional with very few, if any, glimpses of what is right. Poor organization and layout also distract from the book's readability and usefulness. In the introduction, Rodgers states that very little has been written about the library paraprofessional, yet the author found enough material to fill a thirty-seven-page bibliography, which she cites extensively. The extended use of quotations, combined with the disorganized format, disrupts the flow of the book to the point that it is difficult to read.—*Tim Daniels, University of North Carolina at Asheville.*

Scholarly Publishing: The Electronic Frontier.

Eds. Robin P. Peek and Gregory G. Newby. Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Pr., 1996. 363 p. \$35, alk. paper. (ISBN 0-262-16157-5). LC 95-35556.

Why read a printed-on-paper book about the new frontier of electronic scholarly publishing? Is not its very existence oxymoronic? Its format old-fashioned? How can it be up-to-date for such a rapidly changing topic?

Although it is true that the most recent observations and citations in this monograph date from 1994, its content is anything but out-of-date. It is a collection of nineteen essays by librarians, library and electronic technology experts and entrepreneurs, library school faculty, publishers, academic administrators, legal experts, and professors in religion, psychology, comparative literature, and public policy. Almost every essay is brimming with vision. Utopian scenarios, voices of caution, and inquiries into the legal, societal, intellectual, and cultural probabilities and pitfalls join to raise profound questions still relevant and still unanswered. The authors collectively disagree with one another's ideas provoking a lively dialog in the reader's mind. Every chapter is convincing, persuasive, and informed. The divergence in opinions expressed allows the reader to glimpse the future while we are in the midst of uncertainty and chaotic change.

The unifying assumptions behind all the essays are that the future will be different and that electronics present opportunities, not solutions. Society has a moment of choice, of redirection unequaled since Gutenberg. Publishing, the exchange and distribution of knowledge, the creative process, and traditional services such as libraries and scholarly publishing will be transformed. This book does not offer any reassuring certainties as to how the changes will look; there is no consensus. And therein lies the book's greatest power. Its discussions and contradictions invite the reader to imagine and question a vast gamut of options not all of which can coexist. It gives us the concepts and terms to explore what is happening now and challenges us to carry on in our own minds the envisioning, and next steps, in the

evolution or revolution that is occurring within scholarly communication.

The authors disagree and transmit their incompatible enthusiasms and skepticisms effectively. For example, how should we think about intellectual property rights? The several answers offered to this question in the book explode it into concerns of who owns (should own) knowledge? Does it belong to scholars, universities, copyright holders, or anyone who has the electronic equipment to view (cause online "performance") of a computerized file? Legally, our notions of ownership and use are perplexingly outdated for the electronic world. Where are our laws headed? Where should they head? When the essayists direct their attention to the costs of publishing in the electronic future, the debate ricochets between the pro-publisher authors and the visionaries who foresee the electronic world easily affordable, so desirable we will pay any cost to enjoy its benefits, or inevitable regardless of cost. When they raise issues of integrity and ethics, asking how much should we trust the electronic possibilities, the discussion is enlightened by questions indicating that our trust of print publishing is largely undeserved.

Libraries and librarians roles are discussed frequently, with many futures anticipated, all different from the present. The book's index points to about fifty passages concerning libraries, and on many other pages the prospects for the future of librarianship are implicit. The predictions range from libraries and librarians being superfluous to indispensable. Publishers usually fare even worse, except in essays written by those involved in publishing.

If there is a serious omission in this book, it seems to be in failing to address directly the question of preservation or archiving of electronic scholarly publishing. Frequently, essayists acknowledge the reliance by society on libraries to preserve somewhere significant scholarly publications in print. Some

vaguely allude to the need for national repositories, reminiscent of pipe dreams two decades ago about a comprehensive national print repository. But no essay in this compilation seriously treats the evanescence inherent in "publications" dependent for their existence on the continuous flow of electrons, nor how selection for, or management of, an archive of the scholarly electronic word might occur. Perhaps this issue would put too great a wrench in the spokes of utopian prophesiers, assign publishers a costly responsibility they heretofore have largely disowned, or invite extravagant attention to this role some equivalent of libraries might play in the electronic future.

The creativity and expertise compiled in his volume is nevertheless impressive. Many of the societal, moral, and intellectual values raised are timeless. If we feel that its 1994 date of composition is not current enough, we can easily update the theories, questions, and visions it expounds by using them to tune into the Web. The discussions and proposals in the book are observably alive and debated today. Search the Web for documents containing almost any of the authors' names. Search for specific terms used in the book (e.g., TeleRead, eco-museum, "scholarly skywriting," or USMARC and Internet). Or use concepts combined with names in the book to discover more recent Web page or newsgroup discussions (listservers on these issues also may be found). Perhaps anticipating readers' desires for more current information, the authors conveniently offer their e-mail addresses at the end of the book.

Readers new to the kinds of concerns and visions in this book will gain from it a basis for joining in the discussions, often vital to the future of libraries. Those already attuned to the issues of scholarly electronic communication will find broadening challenges to their assumptions.—*Joseph W. Barker, University of California-Berkeley.*