

neers worked. The clarity, simplicity, and economy of their designs would be the signal characteristics of twentieth-century design. After this, my third excursion into the worlds of Edward Tufte, I am prepared to concede Le Corbusier his point.—*Michael Ryan, University of Pennsylvania.*

Information Imagineering: Meeting at the Interface. Eds. Milton T. Wolf, Pat Ensor, and Mary Augusta Thomas, for the Library and Information Technology Association and the Library Administration and Management Association. Chicago and London: ALA, 1998. 255p. \$36, alk. paper (ISBN 0-8389-0729-6). LC 97-44296.

Librarians should not let the title of this book fool them: There are no Disneyesque flights of fancy here. There is no attempt “to promote the imaginative forecasting and planning for future information systems and technologies by the examination and analysis of science fiction themes and works,” as the LITA interest group was charged to do. What is here is a book with both feet figuratively on the ground. So, readers beware: Anyone seeking a pragmatic introduction to some of the issues and challenges he or she is and will be facing on the road to the digital/virtual library will find this book useful. However, anyone seeking a grandiose vision of what that future will look like and what his or her daily routines will be like will find this book of little value.

The editors sought to compile a collection of essays from a variety of perspectives (library, museum, academic department, archives, information specialist) to find out what the latest technologies “were doing to us and for us.” These essays are arranged into six sections: (1) Retooling for the Future; (2) Technology Serves; (3) From Print to Pixels; (4) Redefining Our Information Institutions; (5) Visioning the New Organization; and (6) A Mirror Held Up to Tomorrow.

Indeed, the subjects are varied, if predictable and conservatively argued. (In forecasting, one contributor warned, caution is in order.) We have the “how we do it good in my library” article, which is actually an excellent chronicle documenting the introduction of a NT client-server library network. We have the entry that reminds us that people are the key, not technology. There is the shared vision thing. There are essays that discuss how team learning is the key to the future. Another entry talks about the major misconception that computer people and book people are antagonists. We read why digital collections and print collections will coexist.

Though varied, the predominant theme is collections, be they journal, book, or artifact. One writer takes this to the point of questioning the past massive retrospective conversion projects. Perhaps they were ill-advised and should have been done gradually because our time, efforts, and dollars could have been better spent in other ways, specifically, to create local collections or access to journal indexes. Maybe so, but any librarian who has worked with split local catalogs will attest to the fact that a single catalog is ideal for users.

Because of the focus on collections, and the administrative and intellectual issues attached to them, it is the library user who is barely visible in these pages. Sue Myburgh does have a subheading in her chapter, “Pity the Poor End User,” and it is not surprising that her solution to the woes of the current searcher is a return to the librarian as an intermediary. (I say “not surprising” because the terms *instruction*, *bibliographic instruction*, *library instruction*, or *user instruction* do not appear in the book’s index.) The other missing element is the public library. Only Howard Besser reflects on the issues facing public libraries in the midst of his fascinating analysis on how current commercial and marketing trends and transformations need to be considered in our planning.

Still, for those looking for a careful reading of the issues and possibilities resident in the digital library, this is an excellent introduction, but only if they are not curious as to how these future collections will be serviced by librarians. Librarians will learn little about service here, although there is some general advice on how cataloging access to collections could be improved, a reaffirmation of Ranganathan's laws, plus discussions on how technology's, and especially the Web's, limitations ensure continued librarian job security. The theory is that librarians will continue to provide the same ser-

vices as in the past. All this is comforting to read, of course, but we also are reminded that universities are drifting toward the digital library, not shifting, which is not comforting to ponder.

The essays are well written, although the bibliographies are rather brief. What we end up with is a rather restrained introduction to the issues. A question to ponder: Is the seeming restraint in librarianship's "futuring" justified, or is the commercial sector's promise of virtual community just around the corner more accurate?—*Ed Tallent, Harvard University.*