Book Reviews

Line, Maurice B., Mackenzie, Graham. and Sturges, Paul (eds.) LIBRARIANSHIP AND INFORMATION WORK WORLDWIDE 1998. East Grinstead, Bowker Saur. 1998. 300 pages, hardback, 24 cms. ISBN: 1 85739 169 1 Price: £95.

LIWW, as it has become known, has gained a place as a respected annual publication reviewing key developments in the field worldwide. This costly collection comprises 11 chapters, some on specific types of library (national libraries, academic libraries etc), some on types of activity (rare books, health services information) and some geographically bound (South Asia). In most cases, the articles are library, rather than information work, biased. The authors are generally eminent names in their fields.

As usual in this series, the book begins with an introductory chapter "Library and information science in context". This year it is written by Blaise Cronin and is a typical Cronin piece - wide-ranging, thoughtful and provocative. It is, however, spoiled by its UK/US bias.

The article (Cornish) on national libraries provides a thorough and clear overview of current issues. The next piece (Gilbert and Klugkist) on academic libraries is voluminous but says little about developing countries and nothing on digital libraries programmes such as eLib. Astbury's article on public libraries attempts to cover a broad field with some success but is already quite badly dated in places. St.Clair's chapter on special librarianship is an attempt at a lengthy and comprehensive report. Alas, his definition of information resources management as "a movement in the government to manage information and make it available to the people" is bizarre. His section on the "insourced information specialist" failed to convince me that this topic was anything other than the author's own private hobby horse. The failure to mention Aslib or the proposed merger of the Library Association and the Institute of Information Scientists is surprising, as is the failure to mention

medical, media, pharmaceutical or the many other types of particular special library activities.

Sweeney's article on collections is clear and comprehensive, as is Bloomfield's on rare books and special collections. MacDougall and Brittain provide a clear review of health services information but do not cover Health Information Plans. Gilchrist offers a fascinating overview of research and consultancy in information science. His chapter includes some typos including calling IMPEL IMPACT. Surprisingly, he does not cover many of the active areas of current research such as bibliometrics, citation studies and other topics dear to the heart of *LIRN* readers. Morris covers issues of staff management in a rather brief chapter. Finally, Singh's article on South Asia is best described as comprehensive and monumental. The book concludes with an excellent subject and author index.

The methods of citing articles are rather bizarre, with titles such as "On behalf of FIGIT" and authors such as "Where". It would be better if anonymous works were given "Anon" as an author. There is also no point in putting "personal communications" as citations in a book that is meant to review the published literature. Two of the authors (Cronin and St.Clair) were also rather too prone to self cite in what is meant to be an objective survey of the world's literature.

Overall, the book gives an interesting perspective on current issues and research in librarianship and, to a lesser extent, in information work. The standard of production is high and the articles are generally authoritative and comprehensive. Despite some minor caveats, it can be recommended for institutional libraries but it is unlikely that at the price quoted many individuals will feel able to buy it.

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Scammell, Alison (ed.) HANDBOOK OF SPECIAL LIBRARIANSHIP AND INFORMATION WORK. London, Aslib. Seventh edition 1997. 478 pages, hardback, 23 cms. ISBN: 0 85142 398 1 Price: £67.50 (Members of Aslib £63.00)

This book has a long pedigree. The first edition was published in 1955, edited by Wilfred Ashworth, with the last edition coming out in 1992. Like all the previous editions, the seventh has been completely revised. As the editor points out in her introduction, this is "intended as a general primer for all those interested in special information work". Of the 24 contributors, nine are independent consultants. Coverage in the eighteen chapters includes the following: analysing the organisation's information needs, resourcing the information centre, knowledge management, the Internet, serials and records management, copyright, data protection, managing people and marketing. Also included - and new to this edition - are the six case studies of IT-related developments in different types of library.

The first chapter is a succinct overview of the role of the special librarian in the electronic age, and summarises some of the current concerns of librarians: the shift from holdings to access; the concept of re-intermediation ie information specialists re-inventing their roles to accommodate and support an entirely new set of user needs; selection and evaluation of services, especially electronic media, making legal, technical and pricing issues more difficult; organisation and dissemination of material; user training.

Some chapters work better than others. The chapter on analysing the organisation's information needs - a difficult topic, admittedly - seemed too theoretical and could have benefited from some references or further reading being offered. On this point all except two chapters have references, some have further reading lists, one has a bibliography and several have lists of appendices. In particular, the chapter on the Internet has a useful appendix covering evaluation, access, searching and censorship. A full bibliography plus the appendices at the end of the book would have been more useful.

One problem, although clearly not restricted to this book, is one of currency. The chapter covering IT in the information centre refers to Windows 95 and CD-ROMs running at 12x; we now have Windows 98 and 24x as an accepted standard. This chapter is well written and has a common-sense approach to the subject, giving much practical advice eg keeping logbooks for system backups and quick reference cards for users. A general theme that crops up in several chapters is mentioned here - the information professional changing from gatekeeper to facilitator.

Two omissions (or perhaps just oversights) are evident in the chapters on the enquiry service and serials management. In the first there is no mention of the free FT.com Annual Reports service available over the Internet. In the serials chapter there is - surprisingly - no reference to the United Kingdom Serials Group (UKSG) or its publication *Serials*.

The potential minefields for all information professionals - copyright, data protection and liability - are well covered in three separate chapters. Copyright guru, Graham Cornish, gives a good summary of the issues involved and details of possible solutions. This includes a major EU project, IMPRIMATUR, which could help in standardising the terminology for copyright management. The chapter on data protection has a small but useful list of Web sources whilst the chapter on liability stresses the importance of seeking advice from a qualified practitioner.

Two minor disappointments revolve around the index and the references. The index is basic and could have been expanded to include personal names as in the previous edition. The references contain a handful of inaccuracies either in the wrong order or missed entirely.

In conclusion, what the whole book is concerned with is the vital importance of learning about users' needs and then managing the resources to maximise and deliver an effective service. Apart

from the disappointments alluded to earlier, this collection will be of interest to all those concerned in providing services to their users utilising not just IT but the totality of best practice that can be harnessed.

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Creaser, Claire and Murphy, Alison A SURVEY OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN IN THE UK 1996-97. Loughborough, LISU.A4 :1997. ISBN: 1 901786 00 5 Price: £22.50

Creaser, Claire MODELLING USE AT INDIVIDUAL SERVICE POINTS. (Occasional Paper No.18). Loughborough, LISU. 1998. A4 ISBN: 1 901786 05 6 Price: £18.00

The statistics covering public and school library services form the eighth in the series, and a new feature shows trends over the last five years which will assist in assessing the effects of local government re-organisation. They indicate that expenditure on public library materials for children fell by 5% in 1996-97 compared with the previous year and a further fall of 9% is projected for 1997-98. School library services received more support. In previous years they had suffered from cutbacks in education and library budgets. There is now an indication that some stability has been achieved, and that the number of pupils reached and levels of expenditure are no longer in decline.

The report has four sections. The first is an introduction which includes a description of the methodology, and data for materials funding. It notes that the LISC (England) recommendations on the percentage of the budget which should be spent on materials does not make it clear whether this should cover public libraries, or public and school libraries provided by local authorities. A table is therefore provided showing both figures. If only public libraries are considered, then 13.6% met the target in 1996-97 compared with 11.2% in

1996 and 13.7% in 1995. If the data for schools are added then 71.1% met the target in 1996-97 compared with 66.3% in 1996 and 52.5% in 1995. In Wales and Northern Ireland expenditure has beaten inflation over the five year period whilst Scotland has shown a "dramatic reduction". The increase in Wales is noted as being "most encouraging" but whether this reflects bilingual provision is an interesting point.

Section 2 covers staffing. In half of the English authorities there is a single post as head of public and schools services. In 9 authorities it was commented that there is no one person responsible for the day to day running of children's libraries. The average salaries for those in charge of services based in public libraries is £21,400, in schools £21,200 and for joint posts £24,300.

Section 3 considers public library services to children. It is good to note that 72% do not charge fines. Software is provided by 16% of the authorities and CD-ROMs by 65%, though these are mainly for use in the library. Only 4 charge for print-outs. Storytelling sessions are clearly very well supported. Wirral is to be congratulated on providing a Braille picture book collection.

Section 4 covers school library services and notes the cooperative arrangements that are now in place between local authorities in England and Wales. Amongst the appendices one provides some interesting information about staffing structures, and another lists the new local authorities and their former coverage.

The statistics make fascinating reading, and this review does not do full justice to their detail and excellent presentation. They will be invaluable for benchmarking. The forward notes - quite rightly - that we are not good at lobbying. With current government education policies firmly results-oriented for both pupils and schools, this is the raw material for lobbying at the local and national levels. If the government really intends to improve educational standards then it needs to focus attention on the vital role that libraries play in the educational process. I hope that chief librarians will have ensured that the comparative

statistics concerning their service are in the hands of councillors, taechers, MPs and the local community leaders.

Modelling use at individual service points has much to offer the practitioner and the researcher. It presents a study of the application of statistical methods to public library branch data across a selection of English service points. It yields a series of models which can provide a means of benchmarking levels of performance, and comparing the expected with the actual performance. This is a major contribution to the development of performance measures. The methodology is clearly described, and a glossary of statistical terms is provided for those whose statistics may have become rusty. A set of scatter diagrams helps to interpret the data. It is user friendly.

The project built on an earlier study which considered the statistical relationship between deprivation and library performance based on data from English authorities. It examines: demographic factors including employment levels; age and ethnicity; library inputs and library use, measured in terms of the individual service point. The aim was to identify the elements that have a statistically significant impact as predictors of use, and to create a weighting formula which would allow prediction of the probable use of a service point.

The conclusions are interesting. The model developed for book issues per capita included stock and additions per capita, opening hours per week and the percentages of pensioners, children and ethnic minority in the catchment area population. The model for audiovisual issues per capita was of less value for benchmarking as the spread of data was very wide, partly due to rapid developments and the wide discrepancy in provision. A number of models were developed for visits per capita and there was little to choose between them, but there may be factors affecting the level of visits which have not been considered in the analysis. No acceptable model could be derived for enquiries per capita. The results for stock turnaround were disappointing. In terms of inputs one aim had been to identify the elements

of census data that had an impact on library use. Unemployment, ethnic minority groups and the age profile percentages of the community were incorporated into the analyses, and the only element not to feature as being statistically significant in at least one of the models was the unemployment rate.

The report concludes with suggestions for further research which includes a hope that the authorities which contributed data will follow up the findings. A second topic concerns the enquiry count and the stock turn. Both need some qualitative research to be able to refine the quantitative models.

This is a very stimulating report which demonstrates how the profession needs to deepen its understanding of the application of statistical techniques to the management of services. It is another example of the way in which fashions in research change. One thinks back to the excellent work in the late 1960s and early 1970s on statistical modelling. Perhaps some of this needs to be revisited.

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Beaulieu, Micheline; Davenport, Elisabeth and Pors Nils Ole (eds.) LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES: RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (Proceedings of the 2nd British-Nordic Conference on Library and Information Studies, Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh 1997) London, Taylor Graham. 1997. 258 pages, paperback. ISBN 0 947568 73 5. £45.00.

In the early 1990s the Nordic schools of librarianship and information studies suggested that their British colleagues might be invited to join in their annual conference to extend the perspectives. The invitation was taken up by BAILER: the British Association for Information and Library Education and Research, and a joint conference was held in Copenhagen in 1995. The success of that Conference led to an invitation from Queen Margaret College to host a reciprocal event. The 19 papers in this volume are those selected by the joint organising committee from a significantly larger number of proposals.

The papers are wide ranging, but adhere to a series of themes. Four deal with education and training issues, reflecting the need for evaluated approaches to teaching new subjects and for controlled experiments in using new teaching methods. Buckner and Davenport from the host institution reported on their work towards creating a networked learning environment for their own students, considering its impact on learning and the development of students' critical skills. This account of the development of two Computer Based Learning packages needs to be read not only by other teachers to improve their skills, but also by practitioners to understand and appreciate the efforts required. Similarly valuable is a paper by Brandt, Johannsen and Skov from the Royal Danish School on the problems of integrating new concepts into teaching, challenging the traditional compartmentalisation of the curriculum. Pors and Schreiber briefly report the results of a European Commission funded overview of training needs in the area of IT. Shoolbred, Chivers and Nankivell outline a study of the current use in Britain of mentoring techniques as a means of staff development, and identify some guidelines for practitioners derived from the project.

Interestingly this project was conceived by and executed in close cooperation with one of the Library Association's professional groups, and the authors attribute much of the project's success to the practitioner commitment - an object lesson, perhaps, for other researchers.

Four papers focus on the challenges of indexing and information retrieval, particularly from non-book media. This is not a new problem, but received little attention until the recent rapid growth of new media forced it back onto the research agenda. Burke reviewed various philosophical approaches to understanding meaning and discusses the implications of variations in understanding. Hyldegaard examines the problems of browsing in virtual reality, while Hidderley and Rafferty examine similar problems in the area of film. A paper by Malmsjo compares the development of two database services, and posits some general guidelines for information service designers.

Public librarians often claim that their area is neglected in terms of research activities, but four of the papers in these proceedings address explicitly relevant issues. Two examine public libraries as centres for information, with Hoivik providing more evidence of the high level of failures of existing public reference services (in this case in Norway), and Nankivell and Kayam pointing out the need to train staff and users if the potential of networked information is to be successfully exploited. These papers should prove of interest to public libraries who are facing challenges which threaten their extinction, and who need a more solid evidential grounding as a basis for proposing future development. Those operating in environments more controlled by political forces will find much stimulation in Black and Muddiman's discussion of public library research in a post-modernist society, and in Torstensson's review of the history of some early public libraries in Sweden. Both offer much stimulation for a reconsideration of the underlying philosophy of the public library service.

A number of other papers are also on themes of particular interest to public librarians. Green and Higgins examine the impact of Information and

Communication Technologies on young people in their homes, whilst Banwell and Dixon examine information provision for school governors. The latter project is the only one reported here which appears to be potentially capable of having a high political impact when the final report is published. Talja and others report on work undertaken to provide a regional networked information system with more user friendly interface, whilst Milner and Bystrom separately discuss the significance of information management in government and its impact on professional education.

The last two papers address the central theme of the conference - the link between research and professional practice. Cornelius argues convincingly that being a professional in practice implicitly involves a process which is research. Secker, Stoker and Tedd report on the challenges of ensuring that professionals receive an adequate and appropriate supply of information to keep them abreast of developments to underpin that process.

The papers presented in this volume range from 6 to 22 pages in length. All are accessible in style and stimulating to read. There are a few typographical errors; surprisingly many in an era in which most papers are supplied on disk by the authors. More infuriating is the use of the volume's sub-title as the running heading on each page, rather than some identification of individual papers. This makes it more difficult to locate the paper, and especially the end of each paper to find the references to verify the source of a comment. It is to be hoped that the publishers have recognised that the profession's abstracting and indexing services do include the contents of conference proceedings - when they receive them. They certainly should not be allowed to be lost sight of in the same way as these citations.

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Aitchison, Jean; Gilchrist, Alan and Bawden,David THESAURUS CONSTRUCTION AND USE:A PRACTICAL MANUAL. London, Aslib. Third edition 1997. 212 pages, paperback. ISBN: 0 85142 390 6 Price: £35.00 (Members of Aslib £29.75)

The aim of this book is "to provide a practical, concise and handy guide to the construction of thesauri for use in information retrieval". At over two hundred pages, it is by no means concise but, given the subject matter, concise is a relative term. The manual outlines the purpose and use of thesauri, their planning and design, standards for their construction and development, vocabulary control, specificity and compound terms, structure and relationships, auxiliary retrieval devices, thesaurus displays, multilingual thesauri, construction techniques, thesaurus management and thesaurus reconciliation and integration.

I have to confess that the lectures at library school on faceted and non-faceted thesauri tended to produce a glazed expression. When called upon to advise on the construction of a classification scheme and thesaurus for a small library of leaflets for a disability information service, a great deal of soul searching led to the decision that a thesaurus would be inappropriate for the needs of the users in such a small system. A happy natural language medium of catalogue records with keywords and shelves of boxes in alphabetical order was reached. It worked well. The niggling feeling that "proper librarianship" had been abandonned remained with me. It was therefore with some relief that I read in this manual that "before starting work on the construction of a thesaurus, it is necessary to establish whether a thesaurus is in fact needed". This practical approach is repeated throughout.

The mechanisms for constructing and maintaining a thesaurus are dealt with clearly and methodically, with minimal use of jargon. Examples are given from many existing the sauri, and a step-by-step approach to their construction using a hypothetical thesaurus is very useful. The book can be read sequentially or dipped into as a reference work.

This third edition has been revised to include advances in information retrieval and software development. One slight criticism would be that I came to this book looking for an acknowledgement of the place of thesauri in relation to a Web environment. Although the relationship between thesauri and full-text searching is mentioned in the introduction, there is no mention of how the developing information architectures such as XML and RDF will affect the organisation of information and knowledge. However, I found this a useful, comprehensive and authoritative manual which is both an introduction and a solid practical guide to thesaurus construction and use. Thesauri have been eclipsed recently by the more glamorous search engines but the necessity for handling language intelligently in text-based systems is more pertinent than ever.

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Bradley, Phil GOING ONLINE, CD-ROM AND THE INTERNET. London, Aslib. Tenth edition 1997. 182 pages, paperback, 23 cms. ISBN: 0 85142 391 4 Price: £30.00 (Members of Aslib £24.00)

Any book which goes through 10 editions in 17 years and is found on the shelves of most large libraries must be meeting the demands of its intended audience. Indeed, the value of this book is shown by the fact that my own library's reference copy was missing from the shelves when I looked. No doubt it was being used by a member of staff either for its clear explanations of online, CD-ROM and Internet technology or for its valuable list of suppliers. Each edition of the book has changed significantly and this is no exception. Terry Hanson has disappeared as a credited author and the title has grown to reflect the inclusion of a longer discussion of the implications of the Internet.

Bradley sets out to give a broad outline of the subject aiming at information professionals - either those starting out at Library School or those who are adding these skills to their existing portfolio. He succeeds in packing a great deal into the book largely by avoiding the padding that other books often err towards although he does include a useful illustrative case study at Harris Research. The regular revisions of the book have helped to keep it up to date and this edition has extra sections on Internet use in information work. Perhaps the next edition which the author promises several times will further reflect the convergence of online and Internet databases. The text does, however, show signs of its frequent updates. Some chapters have been less closely revised than others. You therefore get the occasional anachronism such as a recommendation for dBase 4 (now sadly outmoded) as a good database package, or for V.28 modems (now bargain basement). Nevertheless, other sections of the book such as his discussion of DVD, are fully up-to-date. Particularly valuable to the user is the wealth of experience which the author has gathered in his career - his work at Silverplatter and later his consultancy work as "web guru" for the UK information world. Hence his chapter on choosing the most effective source from which to obtain access to a database, either online, CD-ROM or the World Wide Web, deserves study by anybody making this difficult decision. The small details are also useful: how many amongst us 10 years ago would not have benefited from the advice not to buy a public CD-ROM workstation with a 5.25" disk drive and have instead learned from the experience of removing a scratched disk from the wrong slot?

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Dawson, Andy **THE INTERNET FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE PROFESSIONALS.** London, Aslib. Second edition 1997. 80 pages, paperback, 24 cms. ISBN: 0 85142 400 7 Price: £12.50 (Members of Aslib £10.00)

Andy Dawson's aim of writing something about the Internet which will not be "out of date before the book hits the streets" is put to an acid test by a review such as this appearing over a year after publication. He has been successful in producing a usable text which maintains its relevance and value in the ever-changing environment of networking technologies and electronic information production. This is a concise, informative, readable and occasionally thought-provoking work which remains sharply focussed on its intended readership.

Information professionals who want to get more out of using the Internet will appreciate Dawson's ability to explain difficult technical concepts in clear language without being patronising. Those with some experience of the shortcomings of the internet will welcome his healthy scepticism which makes a refreshing change from the blasé triumphalism of computer science texts and media hype. The author's instinctive feel for the LIS professional's way of thinking about information management and his ability to pinpoint the disjunctures between that mindset and the nature of the Internet is one of the underlying strengths of the book.

The discussion on the nature of the Internet, with its useful explanations of the principles of communications networking and the problems of data organisation, remains Dawson's starting point for coming to terms with using the Net. Interestingly, these essential features have changed little since the first edition of this book in 1995 and seem likely to persist for some time. The first half of the book is concerned with the older technologies such as e-mail, telnet, FTP, Archie, Gopher, Veronica and WAIS. Although an account of these is essential to gaining a clear picture of the whole Internet environment, these are becoming more marginal. In practice, I doubt whether many information professionals really use a range of these tools in the information-seeking process other than seamlessly via a Web browser. The reader may be forgiven for skipping on to the World Wide Web section which has warranted the most revision since the earlier edition.

Here once more the approach is to raise awareness of the inherent shortcomings of the Web as an information source and information retrieval system, and to capitalise on its strengths and benefits. Search tools are categorised as machine-generated indexes, human-generated indexes, metasearch tools and specialist indexes. This conceptual map of the environment has become a standard way of understanding the Internet for professionals and a common way for them to explain it to users. The section on Web developments is rightly sensitive to the danger of becoming dated. The author's doubts about the future of Java have proved shrewd whilst metadata is likely to merit more than a paragraph in future editions. However, in general this book is not faddish and cleverly avoids references to ephemeral or specific resources (except for a short, helpful list as an appendix).

The aims of this book are modest. It is a pragmatic attempt to provide an understanding of the Internet and offer some practical strategies (epitomised by the end-of-chapter "key tips") for coping with the anarchy. Along the way there are stimulating thoughts on broader issues: the evolution of the Internet into a "mainstream communications medium" or the long-run diminishing of the information rich/information poor dichotomy. From a higher education perspective I think there is much to be written on the way in which LIS professionals could engage with academic colleagues in craeting new modes of learning. But that, as Andy Dawson is fond of saying, is another book.

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