

Letters

To the Editor:

In "Perceptions by Educators and Administrators of the Ranking of Library School Programs" (*C&RL*, May 1981), Herbert S. White mentions only in passing "vociferous objection to perception ranking studies" (p.192). But he provides no bibliographical citations to this body of literature as he does for articles favorable to such surveys. Critically interested readers can consult Serge Lang's *The File* (New York: Spring, 1981), especially Part Eleven, which criticizes the Ladd-Lipset survey of rankings of academic departments cited by Dean White.

On the question of response levels from library administrators, Dean White fails to indicate by whom "56.2 percent is considered an acceptable level of response" (p.195). In view of the continuing controversy over such questions as what constitutes a representative sample (see especially William Kruskal's and Tore Dalenius' contributions to *The File*), it is unfortunate Dean White did not address these philosophical and methodological concerns more directly by at least making specific reference to the critics' publications, some of which were published before Lang's 1981 compilation. —Jeffrey Larson, *Humanities Bibliographer, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut.*

To the Editor:

Mr. Larson is certainly correct when he points out that my article fails to provide evidence for the scientific justification of perception ranking studies. However, this is precisely because no such justification was intended. The article went to some pains to point out that perception of quality is not synonymous with quality. External factors can cause programs to be rated higher or lower than they "deserve," and changes in ranking over time are probably more significant as indicators than the rankings them-

selves. The article argued further that no generally accepted technique for qualitative ranking had been developed, whether based on perception or on hard data. I stressed that perhaps justification for perceptions are not really to the point, since in academia perception of quality forms the basis of decisions by students, faculty members, and employers, as if those perceptions were proofs.

Given the certainty that perception rankings will continue to be done and will continue to be used, it was my intent simply to update and broaden data for the library education field, and to provide better perception data for those who are interested in such rankings. As expressed in the article, it is also my hope that an analysis of the characteristics shared by highly perceived programs can lead to the development of more specific qualitative requirements than are presently found in the general expressions of the accreditation standards. —Herbert S. White, *Dean, School of Library and Information Science, Indiana University, Bloomington.*

To the Editor:

Nancy John's review of my textbook, *Introduction to Cataloging and Classification*, which appeared in the September 1981 issue of *College & Research Libraries*, contains errors, misquotations, and misinterpretations. Since you may not have the book at hand, I will list and comment upon typical examples of Ms. John's comments, quoting first from the review, and then from that portion of my text to which Ms. John refers.

John: "The ISBDs are referred to as manual (p.6)"
Downing, p.6: "Tendencies toward international standardization of cataloging codes and practices, as exemplified in manuals, the I.S.B.D.(M), (1974), I.S.B.D.(S) (1974) and I.S.B.D.(G), (1977) mean that future catalogers must remain aware of up-to-the-minute developments."

To refer to explanatory brochures as "manuals" is not to say that the codes are "manual." A major point of my explanation of ISBD was to discuss the role of automation in national and international cataloging.

John: "Two invalid Library of Congress subject headings are given: ARCHITECTURE IN ALBANIA and ALBANIA—ARCHITECTURE (p.55)"

Downing, p.55: "One particular instance of the failure to assign a necessary second heading occurs when a reversal of the word order may allow retrieval from an appropriate second point of view. For example, a book on architecture in Albania can be analyzed both as Architecture in Albania or Albania—Architecture"

At no point in my discussion of complementary subject headings do I state that the examples used are valid headings in *any* formal list.

John: (Speaking of my discussion of non-book materials, p.166-167) "First is the suggestion that the main entry and the statement of responsibility are always the same"

Downing, p.167: "The title main entry will occur much more often than for books and subsidiary contributionship to the 'creation' of the work is likely to be more extensive than for books . . . (examples given) The difficulty of pinning down 'authorship' for nonbook works may require a relatively lengthy statement of responsibility"

The point of the paragraph cited is that, since the most likely main entry for non-book materials is a *title* entry, careful attention must be paid to the statement of responsibility.

John: (Referring to "errors" in the appendix of ex-

hibits) "Nonstandard dates in headings (p.240 ff.)"

There are no "pages 240 ff." in the text. The "nonstandard dates" alluded to were purposely included among the exhibits as guides to students confronted with the problem.

In view of the representative errors cited above, it is not surprising that Ms. John failed to mention any of the particular strengths of the text, such as the extended discussion of authority control comprising Chapter 3.

A problem arises in the dissemination of a rebuttal to a review such as Ms. John's. Readers of the original review, not having access to the text for verification, may be dissuaded from examining the text at all.

I should therefore appreciate any efforts you may wish to make to rectify this situation.—Mildred H. Downing, Assistant Professor, School of Library Science, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

To the Editor:

Ms. Downing suggests that she has found "typical examples of errors." In fact, two errors cited are typographical. The word "manuals" appeared in my original review (the ISBDs are international cataloging *standards*), and p.240ff. should be p.204ff., as should be clear from the correct citing of example numbers.

I stand by the rest of the review as written.—Nancy R. John, Assistant University Librarian, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle.



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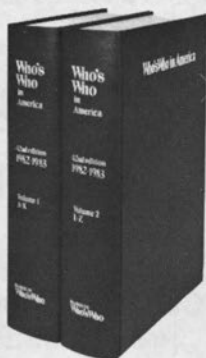
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