A Symposium of a Different Kind

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On October 28, 1983, members of the academic and research library communities fron New York, New Jersey, and the Delaware Valley will examine the structure, processes, and control of technology by studying a library-oriented case study with social scientists and their colleagues. The symposium, "Life on the Technology Express," is sponsored by ACRL chapters in those areas. Princeton University is the setting for the symposium, and the mythical Garfield University is the setting for the case study.

Why is Garfield University Library's fate at stake? And what does that have to do with you and your library?

Garfield University's new president, Wiley Dyer, has recently had a paper accepted for publication in *Future Trends*. This paper, "Rethinking the University Library," has been widely circulated on campus. Garfield University librarians are familiar with the fact that Dyer is a futurist, but his opinion that the university's social function is that of an information processor has caused murmurs and raised eyebrows.

Dyer contends that as an information processor, the university performs the same essential functions as all processors, whether brains, bureaucracies, or computers. These include: input, storage, processing, control, and output. Within this context, Dyer believes that the library fulfills a major part of the university's information storage function. Comparing the library to the university's computer system, Dyer questions the library's purpose, proper functions, and reason for existing. As a cost-conscious administrator, he predicts that emerging technologies such as microcomputers, interactive networks, and storage devices, promise to change drastically if not eliminate the justification for the library.

As a librarian at Garfield, you are aware that your major constituencies—university faculty, administrators, and students—have been forced to rethink basic questions concerning the library. Must the library be a building or a place? If it is a place, is it one place, several places, or many? Should these places be differentiated among input/output, storage and processing functions, in some other way, or not at all? If it is not a place, should the identification of "library" be retained? Whom should the library serve? Why does the university have a library?

As this background reveals, the case is complex and the issues it raises have implications for all academic and research library staff who are affected by the forces of technology. The case will be highlighted during the symposium and used as a vehicle for group discussion.

The symposium will also include a keynote address by Irving Louis Horowitz, Hannah Arendt Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Political Science, Rutgers University; an overview of the case study by Karin Trainer, Associate Librarian, Yale University Library; general analysis of the case in small group discussions with library leaders; functional analysis of the case in similar groups; and reflections on the case and a closing address by James Beniger, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Program in Science and Human Affairs, Princeton University. The symposium schedule also allows for self-guided tours of the Princeton campus, libraries and museums, and includes a reception at Prospect House.

October 28 marks an exciting departure in the design and structure of library-oriented programs, conferences, or workshops. A run-of-the-mill day for symposium participants? Hardly! The case is purposely designed to stir up participants, and the symposium promises to be provocative, exciting, and stimulating. ■■

PIERCY AWARD

The Esther J. Piercy Awards Committee of ALA's Resources and Technical Services Division is accepting nominations for the 1984 citation.

The candidates for the award can be nominated by anyone who is well acquainted with the candidate's contribution to librarianship in the field of technical services. The award will be given to a librarian with not more than 10 years of professional experience who has shown outstanding promise for continuing contributions and leadership in any of the fields comprising technical services by such means as: 1) leadership in professional associations at local, state, regional, or national levels; 2) contribution to the development, application, or utilization of new or improved methods, techniques, and routines; 3) a significant contribution to professional literature; or 4) conduct of studies or research in technical services.

Each nomination shall consist of a cover form, a resume, a statement of qualifications and accomplishments of the nominee, and appropriate supporting evidence. Nominations should be submitted no later than December 1, 1983.

Nomination forms may be obtained from: Don Lanier, Chair, Esther J. Piercy Award Jury, 613 Ball Avenue, DeKalb, IL 60115. ■■

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For more information on any aspect of our program, please contact Susan McDonald, Director of Communications.

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