

SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND TECHNOLOGY: A SOURCEBOOK/ed Marianne Broadbent and Dagmar Schmidmaier. Kuring-gai: Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education Centre for Library Systems. 1981. 160pp ISBN 0 909177 24 4. \$11.00.

As stated in the introduction, this book is a collection of articles, addresses, workshop outlines and teaching materials prepared for or in relation to the continuing education course *School Library and Information Needs - A Systems Approach* first offered at Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education in March 1979, and repeated several times since both locally and interstate. The publication as a whole provides a general introductory overview of computer and communication technology, systems analysis and networking, and in particular postulates KWIC/KWOC indexing (but no mention of KWAC be it remarked) as the most cost effective computerised information retrieval system for school library collections.

Supported by evidence culled from a study related to the course sessions, Dagmar Schmidmaier argues strongly against the standard research library oriented model of bibliographic control as being unsuitable for the school library by causing files to 'be cluttered up with bibliographic details that will never be used' (p27).

The KWOC index is, however, seen as only one index to the collection, supplementing 'any central bibliographic service provided by say a system such as SAERIS or ASCIS' (p112). The libraries experimenting with KWOC in the Kuring-gai study have produced a number of computerised files including union lists of periodicals, lists of video tape holdings, slide collections and audiovisual holdings. KWOC catalogues for entire library holdings have also been produced.

The weaknesses of KWIC/KWOC for subject analysis, subject access and subject display are obliquely acknowledged, but the gains in terms of quick and easy access to resources, efficient dissemination and exchange of information with the objective of promoting wide use of materials, may be considered to more than offset any negative aspects.

Taking up the co-operative networking focus of school library services Marianne Broadbent repeats that 'in the working environments of school and special librarians . . . emphasis should be on the storage and retrieval of information rather than on things bibliographical' (p46), and stresses that 'Technology should be used to *improve* services, not just do more of the same or simply automate accepted manual procedures. The linking of computer and communications technology with the development of library networks should be used as a stimulus for a more *effective* response to the needs of students and teachers' (p75). This use/user orientation is taken further by Robert Broadbent in an overview of the SAERIS/ASCIS model, which he criticises as 'essentially computer-assisted card reproduction services', falling short 'in providing a flexible basis for network participation or resource sharing' (p84).

What Broadbent overlooks in his appraisal is that card and fiche outputs are only two of the applications of the SAERIS/ASCIS master tapes. As TASCIS exemplifies, given ade-

quate computer facilities to run and manipulate the master tape, the data can be manipulated in a variety of ways and at different bibliographic levels, additional local data can be introduced for local library catalogues or for regional union catalogues, and special subject bibliographies can be compiled.

Marianne Broadbent gives a detailed simple costing for original cataloguing at the school level arriving at \$5.25 per item. No attempt at costing is made, however, for KWIC/KWOC catalogues or indexes, and the matter of cost benefit/cost effectiveness is obviously left aside as either too difficult or beyond the scope of the study. The general tone of the study certainly assumes cost effectiveness and the words are sprinkled through various papers but without any weight of evidence.

The Kuring-gai experiment can be summarised as achieving three things in particular. It focuses attention on the fact that bibliographic control of materials in school libraries is not an end in itself, and that one standard model does not meet all user/resources needs and may even be an inhibiting factor in the development of information services and wider use of resources. It also demonstrates that given an Apple (or similar ingredient) together with an understanding of the principles and techniques of systems analysis, teacher librarians have the initiative and expertise to develop computerised data bases relevant to local information needs. Finally this experiment provides conclusive evidence of the effective use of microcomputers for information dissemination and library co-operation.

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ABSTRACTING AND INDEXING/Jennifer E. Rowley. London: Clive Bingley. 1982. 155p. £8.75 ISBN 0 85157 336 3.

It is not uncommon for the titles of books of this kind to be misleading in their 'active' grammatical form; but this particular one is a remarkable example. Of nine chapters, one (on post coordinate indexing systems) is very largely about retrieval methods, one (on Title indexes) is devoted to systems whose very essence is that they do not require indexing activities, and one ('The use of abstracting and indexing data') is quite openly beyond the promised scope. The bulk of the remainder comprises descriptive accounts of kinds of abstract, forms of bibliographic citation, thesaurus construction and use, and formal indexing 'systems'.

It would be merely foolish to contend that document analysis should - or could - be discussed in isolation from its purposes and from the formal context in which it is conducted. However, this book is one of a series that presumably covers related matters; and, moreover, it repeatedly offers phrases like 'space dictates that it be selected'; hence it cannot be unreasonable to expect a much greater emphasis on central issues.

As an indexer and abstractor with an occasional need to train others, one yearns on reading this book to find, say, a good and bad abstract juxtaposed with detailed notes on their differences, or a substantial extract of a typical document, together with a blow-by-blow account of how it might be indexed. Such things would take up space, to be sure, particularly if in the latter case comparisons between different indexing systems were to be contemplated; but would be space better used than in generalised discussions of peripheral matters.

On its own terms, however, and considered as the upper-level textbook it is clearly intended to be, there is much sound advice and

information to be found in this book. It is written in a style notable for clarity and careful exposition of distinctions not easily (or always) observed. (Ms Rowley does, however, sometimes allow herself a lapse into aphorism: my opening paragraph will indicate my reaction to 'Practice is paramount [in this book]' (p.7); while 'Abstracting is the process of abstraction' (p.19) is wrong, or vacuous, depending upon one's interpretation of 'abstraction'.) A helpful appendix on editing and proofreading might well have been expanded and elevated to the status of a chapter; the index, though accurate and well set out, would also have benefited had more space been allocated for the provision of detail.

On reflection, it seems only fair to say that had this book been entitled 'Abstracts and Indexes', I would have been able to treat it a good deal more favourably. In case the nicety of that distinction should make some of the foregoing seem uncharitable, I hasten to point out that the accurate description of the contents of documents is just what the book is ostensibly about.

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PUBLIC LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN CANADA: A REVIEW AND EVALUATION/Lois M. Bewley. Halifax: Dalhousie University Libraries and Dalhousie University School of Library Service. 1981. 43pp. C\$6.00. ISBN 0 7703 0166 5.

As plain, honest and straightforward a work as I have come across for some time, this might well be one of those books enjoyed mainly by those who enjoy this kind of book. A 44-page review and evaluation of the legislation is followed by perhaps three times as many facsimile pages of the current statutes, the whole held together by one of those villainous plastic spirals that must tear at the sensibility, if not the gut, of any bibliophile.

Although the title does not say so, this seems to be restricted to 'English-speaking Canada', and a mention of '... the very brief Quebec statute . . .' does not make it clear to the outsider the extent of Francophone legislation, if any, on the topic.

Professor Bewley runs quickly through the background to the legislation, comments briefly on the areas covered, and has some very interesting pages on measures of adequacy for public library legislation. She covers in some detail a set of criteria for such legislation, but at this stage the level-headed and practical approach gives ground, and the rose-coloured spectacles make their appearance; in the terms of her earlier definition of a statute as a '... scheme of orders and rules aimed at the carrying out of government policy or intent . . .' it is surely too much to suggest that '... library statutes have quietly governed and shaped public libraries and their services.' Men, not statutes, govern and shape. To ask that a statute be '... both stimulative and prescriptive . . .' is to ask too much; stimulation, like morality, seems pretty difficult to legislate.

Professor Bewley's academic affiliations are not mentioned and one is left to assume this work is directly related to her teaching - it is none the worse for that, although it is thus odd that she refers several times to the *British North America Act* without citing it, even briefly.

Nevertheless, this seems a useful, if not wildly exciting, book and should find a place in all but the most impecunious libraries with collections in the area. It could even stimulate some badly needed work along similar lines in Australia, where as far as I can tell, my own minuscule efforts in the field stand alone.

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