

Book Reviews

Enough yesses and you'll want this book

KWOC indexing in secondary school libraries: an evaluation / Lois Jennings and Dagmar Schmidmaier. Sydney: Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education. 1983. 104pp. \$12.00. ISBN 0 909177 38 4.

This work, from the College's Centre for Library Systems, consists of Introduction, Conclusions, Recommendations and three Appendixes, wrapped round seven sections incorporating data from a survey of 11 libraries which 'contracted with the Centre for Library Systems during the period 1979-1980 to produce a KWOC index.'

Those of us long aware of the stake its promulgating institution has in KWOC for schools might pretend to believe the initials now stand for Kuring-gai Working Over the Converted, but this publication makes it perfectly clear that it really is Keyword-out-of-Context that is being used in these schools. It seems a voice from the past, now that natural language enhancement through on-line systems has pushed aside earlier attempts to do some of the same things. However outmoded, KWOC is carefully defined here, its origin in the need for quicker access to current scientific and technological serial articles is rehearsed, and its disadvantages are punctiliously listed to balance its virtues. There is no attempt to conceal the fact that its application in school libraries is local, and no suggestion that the rest of the world is taking note.

Still, there are some tiresome confusions and weighted comparisons. Although it is emphasised from time to time that the 'users' featured in the assessment are the librarians and not the students or other teachers, whose 'experiences' are indeed pinpointed as 'identifiable areas for further research', there is

some spill-over because the librarians' perceptions of their clients' needs also come into the story, and catalogue use studies, where the use is by those the librarians serve, are given space as though they were relevant.

There is a preoccupation with notoriously stultifying known-title searches, as though these were not only of the first importance in school libraries but also other than in conflict with the speedy information finding claimed for KWOC. The authors don't seem aware that, although studies show adults remember titles, or bits of them, better than authors' names, further studies tell us that it's the subjects of known books that are remembered best of all, an important finding in view of KWOC's dependence on the wording of titles and weakness in linking meanings. There is evasiveness about whether the KWOC index is best seen as a supplement to an ordinary catalogue or an alternative, and this is exacerbated by the wordy and repetitious presentation.

This matters too: who would refuse an extra something offering a different approach, in the best possible of worlds where you can afford both? But the implicit comparison is between a poor and neglected dictionary catalogue, with insufficient access points (no partial title entries, of course) resulting from a history of inadequate clerical support, and a bright new print-out whereby 'the only real involvement by the library staff occurs at the data encoding stage', all the rest being done by the Centre and its computer.

The comparison seems unfair, specially as you'll probably go on needing and paying for both — if you want to be able to teach the rudiments of in-depth searching to your more charismatic students. And, if any of the less talented are going out into the world of large-library catalogues, in whatever physical form, it's a pity to let them think they're as likely to find Adam Lindsay Gordon entered just thus

as under Gordon, A., but not under Gordon, Adam Lindsay at all.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the case study method can be both stimulating and productive. Contact with the people in the field leads to the answering of the right questions in advance and gives readers the chance to identify with other school librarians and decide whether the solutions match their own problems. Assuming *you* are a school librarian, do you think of yourself as working in a 'school library environment'? Do you want to earn the respect of (other) teaching staff by impressing them with your image as an innovative and capable manager? And maybe limit their visits to the library by providing them with multiple copies of the KWOC index? Do you feel the relative novelty of audiovisual/nonbook materials calls for a distinct kind of index with its own aura of new medium? Enough yesses and you'll undoubtedly want this nicely produced but somehow flaccid book, and Kuring-gai may have won itself another 'user'.

Janet D. Hine

A slide-tape that became a book

Understanding the Structure of Scientific and Technical Literature: a Case-study Approach Raymond V. Turley, London: Clive Bingley, 1983. 173pp. £12.50 ISBN 0 85157 368 1.

A book based on the film — yes, we're used to this phenomenon. But a book based on the slide-tape?

This volume grew out of a slide-tape program on finding and using information, produced for science and engineering students by the Southampton University Library. Conceived as a case study, the presentation is based on the literature related to the 'Talking Brooch', a communication aid for the dumb which was developed in the Electronics Department at Southampton.

Turley's main aim in the presentation is to demonstrate the structure of scientific and technical literature, as well as the problems of vocabulary which arise in various indexing and abstracting sources. Having given a lecture to first-year librarianship students on the repackaging of information in various formats immediately before reading this book for review, I was pleased to find his approach very similar to my own. In fact, I found his case study more interesting than the one I'd selected, and the sources slightly more detailed. Indeed, I wished I'd had his slide-tape program to use in the lecture.

And therein lies the problem: the format is true to the work's origin. The text, or script, is on the left hand page, with the corresponding two-colour illustration adapted from the slide on the right. As such, one-half to three-quarters of each page of text is blank. Furthermore, many of the illustrations, which were useful for building interest or for summarizing visually from time to time the points

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which had originally been conveyed primarily aurally, are redundant in a printed medium which can be referred to as often as necessary.

With a hard cover and a price tag of £12.50, this information package does not represent value for money.

Had I been the editor, I would have chosen a different package, almost a comic book format: soft cover, cheaper paper, with the text economically laid out and the accompanying illustrations prudently culled. And, a lower price to match. Then I, as a librarianship lecturer, would probably have ordered several copies to put on library reserve, and asked students to use it in lieu of my information repackaging lecture. As it is, I'm now off to the library to see whether the slide-tape program is available, and how much that costs.

Nancy D. Lane

Canberra College of Advanced Education

Two publications for local historians

Rotting History: A study of public library, local history society, and local history museum involvement in the collection, maintenance and organisation of local history materials in the Murray, Hunter and Central Metropolitan regions of NSW based on data collected 1979-80 by J. Barclay, L. Beauregard, M. Dryden and S. Martin. Published by Sydney Friends of the Library and N.S.W. Branch of the Library Association of Australia. 68 pp. ISBN 0 86804 417 2.

In 1979-80, the authors conducted a study of public libraries, local historical societies and museums in the Murray, Hunter and Central Metropolitan regions of NSW. The purpose was to obtain detailed information about the involvement at local level, of the institutions surveyed in the collection, preservation, organisation and use of local history materials.

The results were severely limited by the nature of the survey and the resultant poor response rates, thus little was gained in the way of adding new knowledge.

The main findings showed a general but varying level of involvement, lack of co-ordination, scarcity of resources devoted to the task, and some differences between the regions. The standards appeared to be highest in Hunter and lowest in Murray.

To the librarian, historian and archivist these results are not unexpected and are in harmony with advocacy for greater community support, coherent State programs, education and the like. But the fundamental objective is to detail and quantify the problems, then present the results in a way which would be meaningful to those in a position to influence public opinion and the allocation of community resources.

In that context, both the survey and the report can be criticised.

The questionnaire could have been greatly simplified with a view towards achieving better response. It might have been preferable to adopt a multi-stage approach by starting with a simple questionnaire then building up information by a carefully considered follow-up program.

The report itself is rather verbose and repetitive and could be condensed. Taking one instance, the tables and narrative spread over four pages (6 to 9) and could be reduced to less than a page without loss of meaning. In addition charts are called tables, graphical presentation does not serve to highlight salient features, and the reader is obliged to twist and turn the book to follow the message.

These shortcomings tend to confuse the

general reader or the official whom the authors are trying to impress. However, despite the hard work put into the project, the whole exercise is in danger of becoming counter-productive through the lack of constant attention to the need to keep the message crisp, concise and to the point.

Rex Harcourt

Research Consultant

The Convict Priests / Rev. Harold Perkins. Published by author n.d.; 100pp. ISBN 0 9591407 00

In my opinion, this is possibly a work of only limited appeal. Its highly specialized subject content is not alleviated or diluted in any way by either method or style, and its actual physical format is by no means conducive to a favourable impression. A combination of religious and family history, (the author is a descendant of one of the priests) the book deals with events surrounding the transportation of three Roman Catholic priests. The priests were 'transported to Australia under martial law for alleged complicity in the 1798 Irish Rebellion.' The work is indexed and contains a detailed bibliography.

In his preface the author comments that the stories contained in the book should 'add to our knowledge of the State of Ireland in 1798 and of some happenings in the colony . . .'. Having read the book, I felt the author had not achieved the aims inherent in this statement, although it seemed to me that not only the events themselves, but also the results of Perkin's research into these events certainly could contain the potential for an enlightening and successful piece of early Australian history.

However, the main faults of the book exist, I believe, in a disjointed writing style: insufficient explanatory text; and a somewhat disconcerting tendency to run text, notes and quotations together. For example, page 9 of the book contains the concluding part of the Introduction, notes which relate to the introduction and immediately beneath these, the first part of the textual section which follows the introduction.

Judicial editing and more attention to the setting out of chapters, notes and individual pages would, in my opinion, have greatly improved the work as a whole, and perhaps even more importantly may have given the reader greater faith in the authenticity of the text. In an historical context, scrappy production gives an impression of scrappy thought and logic, whether or not this is in fact the case. Perhaps the fact that titles in the bibliography are not differentiated in any way from the rest of the bibliographic information is not an horrendous fault, but I certainly find it annoying, both as an historian and also as a librarian.

Wendy E. Morris

Port Melbourne Library

A successful evaluation

The Library Workforce. Proceedings of a National Conference held in Melbourne, 22-24 November, 1982. Melbourne, LAA Education for Librarianship Section, Victorian Group, 1983. 233 p. ISBN D 86804 048 7.

The Library Workforce is a collection of 19 papers presented at a National Conference organised by the Victorian Group of the LAA Education for Librarianship Section. Over the 3 days of the Conference, various issues related to 'the library workforce' were discussed. Concrete resolutions listed at the end of the volume reflect positive reaction to the discussion.

The manpower study undertaken by Bourne, Hill and Mitcheson, *Library and Information work: the Employment Market, a Study of Supply and Demand*, LAA, 1982, was a major force behind this Conference. Much of the investigation for this study took place in Victoria, so the Committee saw this as an opportunity to develop some of the ideas presented in the study. They wished also to examine changes and needs of the library workforce; the effects of technological change and the response of organisations like the LAA to these changes. I believe the participants were largely successful not only in evaluating the manpower study, but also in establishing that issues confronting the workforce need to be faced squarely to allow planning for future developments.

In his paper on 'Trends and Issues facing the employer', Horton identifies the major factors discussed in several other papers; job-sharing and the need for this to be developed as opposed to part-time work which offers little security to the employee and often leads to exploitation; the increase in 'static' staff, which can lead to a decrease in morale unless stimulation and re-education or exchange schemes are instituted.

McIntyre explores the status of women in Australian librarianship, drawing the conclusion that it is time for the professional association to undertake research into the 'filtering mechanisms' which limit female access to senior positions.

It is easy to endorse Moore's comments in his paper on personnel planning, 'People are the most valuable resource we have, and personnel planning is quite simply an attempt to make the most out of that resource'. Reassuring in a time of changing technology when people are sometimes overlooked as librarians hasten to automate. Judith Hill supports these views and points out in her paper on 'Industrial Issues', 'long shifts on VDUs either for loans or for bibliographic checking with units often placed without regard to physical comfort of the operator or to proper lighting, are a source of stress.' Staff working in these uncomfortable conditions usually pass their disgruntlement on to the user or their unfortunate workmates.

Like Martin's book, *Issues in personnel management in academic libraries*, 1981, which researched vital issues in personnel management (at least for the 1980s), *The Library Workforce* acknowledges the need to develop and maintain sound personnel practice to make the most of that hefty portion of each budget which is allocated to staffing.

Participants in this Conference have been thorough. The implications of changing trends in the workforce have been extensively discussed and as an extension of the manpower study, it is a good beginning. I quote some of the resolutions formulated:

1. Establishment of a Committee to investigate the status of women in Librarianship.
2. Monitoring of gender-based differences in salaries, conditions and career advancements.
3. Policy clarification on the position of women in the information workforce.
4. Publicity in InCite of the above.
5. Further analysis and interpretation of the manpower study.

L.J. Hughes

Massey University Library NZ

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Two different views of the future

Information technology and the school library resource centre/James A. Gilman. (CET Occasional Paper 11). London: Council for Educational Technology for the United Kingdom. 1983. 289pp. £12.00.
Micro-computers in school library media centers/Inabeth Miller. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1984. 165p. US\$19.95. ISBN 0 918212 51 0.

The authors of both these books seek to prepare educators, librarians, parents, and community members for a future in which pupils and teachers will have access to a wide range of information and learning resources, both within the school itself, and in the wider world. They outline the possibilities for information storage, retrieval, and transfer which are being opened up by developments in microcomputers, and suggest the impact this is likely to have on curriculum content, instructional methods, and, indeed, on the structure of schools themselves.

Both writers postulate an expanded role for the school library or media centre in co-ordinating all the school's information resources, including computer resources, and as the point of access to wider information networks. However, their approaches are very different. Gilman presents a carefully-reasoned, balanced view of the implications for school libraries of current developments and future trends in computing and information technology; Miller, on the other hand, greets both the present and the future with something approaching hysteria.

Regular readers of *Orana* will already be familiar with Gilman's work through his article 'The Resourcerer's Apprentice', in the February 1983 issue. A former school librarian from Tasmania, he is now in charge of the County Curriculum Development Centre in Durham, England. His book is divided into three main sections. The first, on 'The Uses of Microresources in Schools', covers 'computer awareness' and 'computer studies' courses; computer-assisted instruction in a wide range of subject areas; the use of microcomputers in educational administration; computers and information retrieval; and the use of services like Teletext and Viewdata in schools. In the second section, titled 'The Organisation of Microresources in Schools', Gilman discusses the selection of computer hardware and software, and its management through the school library. The third section, 'The Implications of Microresources in Schools', is devoted to an analysis of the role of the school librarian and the school library resource centre in the years to come. A list of 'Sources of Further Information' is included, and an adequate index is provided. This book is highly recommended for school librarians, school administrators, and others interested in information technology in schools.

When compared with Gilman's carefully-documented work, Miller's book is a disappointment. A former school library media specialist and currently Director of the Gutman Library at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, Miller aims to present a vivid picture through several lenses of a new technology as it has been seen by media specialists, by educators, by the popular press . . . What actually emerges is a rather muddled and idiosyncratic view of the role of microcomputers in American education, presented in prose so convoluted as to be almost impenetrable. Miller deplors 'sloppiness and illiteracy' in the work of others, yet her own work abounds in literals (as many as three to a page), misplaced punctuation, and grammatical errors. The task of locating information

through the index is made more difficult by spelling errors — for instance, the versions of computer specialist Pat Konopatzke's name in the text and in the index, both of which are wrong; and the title of the software package *The Bank Street Writer*, correctly cited in the text, but mis-spelled in the index. The book certainly reflects badly on the editorial and production standards of the publishers, Neal-Schuman, and cannot be recommended.

Laurel Clyde

1 — Riverina College of Advanced Education

A practical introduction to microcomputers

Microcomputers: A planning and implementation guide for librarians and information professionals / by Robert A. Walton. Phoenix, Arizona: Oryx Press. 1983. 96pp. \$US18.50 ISBN 0-89774-097-1.

The author's goal is ' . . . to provide the fundamental concepts and practices to successfully acquire and use the first microcomputer system . . . ' Since he is aiming at the 'reasonably intelligent novice' he gives general explanations of technical concepts and emphasises practical details. Walton is consistent in this approach and resulting is a work which is very readable, if not exciting.

The work is organised in three sections: Hardware; Software; Procurement and management of a system. There is a thirty item bibliography in Appendix I and Appendix II lists Microcomputer journals — almost all originating in the USA and none of which is Australian.

Part I, Hardware, has excellent chapters on Mass storage and printers for microcomputers. The discussion is clear and comprehensive, covering the type of device available and capabilities and advantages of each. Other chapters are sound but much less comprehensive. The chapter on Keyboards and Displays does not cover ergonomic considerations. Similarly the chapter on Specialized Hardware merely mentions light wands and modems, both of which are crucial to many library applications.

Part II covers software and is worth reading for the non-technical explanation of what operating systems do, and the hardware resources they require. The chapter on programming languages has a clear discussion of Assembly and BASIC. However many other languages are now available on micros and COBOL and PASCAL certainly should have been discussed as they have excellent file and text manipulation capabilities so important to applications in information agencies. This section has several useful lists of software with prices (US) and names of suppliers (US).

Part III on Procurement and Management of micros is the best section in the work. The advice on buying, installing and maintaining a microcomputer is comprehensive, sound and practical. The section features a systematic approach to procurement and has practical advice on introducing a micro into existing workflows and on involving staff in the new system. There are useful checklists of hardware and software components as a guide in purchasing a system. I strongly recommend this section to the 'novice' buying a micro.

While the work has some orientation to the USA, it has many good general sections. For those who want a general, practical introduction to acquiring a microcomputer system, this book has a lot to offer.

Allen Hall

1 — Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education

Look hard before you buy

The Australian Dictionary of Quotations. Edited by Stephen Murray-Smith Melbourne, Heinemann, 1984, 464p. ISBN 0 85859 315 7.

'During the whole work of selection a great effort was made to restrict the entries to actual current quotations and not to include phrases which the various editors or contributors believed to be quotable or wanted to be quoted: the work is primarily intended to be a dictionary of *familiar* quotations and not an anthology of every author good or bad; popularity and not merit being the password to inclusion.'

It is perhaps not unreasonable to commence a review of a dictionary of quotations by a quotation. The words above have been taken from 'The Compilers to the Reader' of the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. They express to me what a dictionary of quotations should be — a book where familiar quotations may be found and verified. For me a dictionary of quotations is not an anthology of what is believed by its compilers to be quotable or what they would like to be quoted. Such a work is really a commonplace book or personal anthology; it has its place but I do not think it warrants the title of 'A Dictionary of Quotations'.

I found *The Dictionary of Australian Quotations* a disappointing work. It is not a satisfactory dictionary of quotations because of the very way it has been compiled.

'This collection consists of upwards of four thousand quotations. Many are "old favourites"; many are sayings that have circulated in specific areas — among poets or bushmen, for instance — without being available to a wider audience; and a great many, we hope, are statements which until now have remained hidden, but which now surface to delight or inform our readers'.

As Fougasse said 'You have been warned'.

The *Australian Dictionary of Quotations* is a book to be dipped into or even read through. In it you will find interesting comments on Australia and the Australian people and many which are not so interesting; you will find many stanzas from the best Australian poets; occasionally you will find a quotation which is familiar or even half familiar, however they are few and far between. It is difficult of course for a quotation from a private communication to an editor to be familiar to anyone. It may of course be worth preserving in an anthology but not in a dictionary of quotations.

If you are seeking a dictionary of Australian quotations look hard at this one before you buy. Look beyond the indexes which are impressive and work well, to that which is printed in the body of the work — you may then not be too disappointed as you will know what you are buying.

W. D. Thorn

1 — National Library of Australia

An edifying experience

Business Archives: Studies on International Practices/Committee on Business Archives of the International Council on Archives [Ed. board: Breandan MacGiolla Choille . . .]. Munchen: K.G. Saur. 1983. 167pp. DM56.

The authorship cited in the headnote to this review is that shown in the cataloguing information on the reverse of the title page but it is somewhat misleading. The persons responsible for the compilation are (to the best of my knowledge) Dr Otto Dascher, Chairman of the Committee on Business Archives, Mme Hilda Coppejans-Desmedt, the Committee's Secretary, and Mr Raymond Tonkin, the British representative on the Committee. All are eminent business archivists but of the three, Dr Dascher is probably the principal author.

The volume is based on a survey carried out by the Committee on Business Archives in 1978-79 and, as the title suggests, is a wide

ranging examination of the practices of responding nations in dealing with the preservation of business archives. In an introduction, Dr Dascher disclaims the status of 'text-book' for the volume. Nonetheless, it does contain a great deal of value for those who become involved for the first time with the administration of the archives of business enterprises and, since text-books on this special area of archival administration (as opposed to general texts) are rare to say the least, it deserves a place on the 'ready reference' bookshelf.

Part I deals with the legal status of business archives in the various nations responding to the questionnaire and the legislative framework (or absence thereof) in which they work. The preservation practices within the framework are dealt with and there is a chapter on the training of specialist archivists for the business area.

Part II is headed 'Records Management and the Creation of Archives' and is effectively a manual for setting up a system for the orderly identification and preservation of business archives in an ideal situation. Despite the fact that ideal situations tend to be as rare today as ever, it would be fair to say that every business archives would do well to reflect on these chapters and to consider whether the existing system could not be improved upon.

Part III is entitled 'The Scientific Uses of Business Archives' and deals with their exploitation for research.

There are also ten appendices which contain a great deal of valuable and thought-provoking information. In many ways these are the most valuable parts of the book for the practising archivist and for the unfortunate librarian or research officer who is told to 'do something about the records'.

Given the topic and the origin of the volume, most readers familiar with the genre will not be surprised to learn that the style is perhaps a shade less than scintillating — committee generated documents, particularly polyglot committees, have problems. But, if one is prepared to accept *Business Archives* on its own terms — that is, as an Edifying Experience rather than as a Good Read — I believe that it has a lot going for it.

Michael Saclier

ANU Archives of Business & Labour

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The esoteric aspects of information services . . .

Information Management Research in Europe — Proceedings of the EURIM 5 Conference, Versailles, France, May 1982 ed. Peter J. Taylor and Blaise Cronin. London: ASLIB. 1983 212pp ISBN 0 85142 171 7.

This volume contains the proceedings of a conference with a peculiarly 'European' flavour. In some ways it is similar to the biennial Cranfield conference, in that its orientation is more towards the esoteric than the practical aspects of information services.

The twenty-two papers are arranged in four sections, covering the following topics:

- (1) The management of information systems and libraries
- (2) Retrieval techniques
- (3) Information transfer and delivery
- (4) Multilingual and international systems

Each section also includes a (very) brief summary of discussion.

As an indication of the European orientation of the conference, three of the papers are in French and one in German. The balance, for those of us who find French treatises on automatic indexing a little too overwhelming, are in English.

I doubt if this is the volume to which one should refer to discover the latest in European practices in information delivery. It is rather a collection of papers and research and current thinking in some very select fields of study. If you need an up-to-date picture of the European Commission's plans and work in the area of machine translation, you will find the topic adequately covered in the proceedings of this Conference.

Similarly there are several papers on automatic indexing, including the latest offering from Gerald Salton. There is a paper by Werner Schuchow, one of the leading German researchers in the field of information economics. There is a report on the British Library's Research and Development Department's funding of research on the use of comparative techniques as management tools in British academic and public libraries.

As the title of the Proceedings of EURIM 5 suggests, the papers are in general research oriented. The volume is probably not everyone's idea of required professional reading, but will be of interest to those who wish to keep abreast with the latest research in some specialised fields.

. . . and now for the nuts and bolts

Creating an information service. Sylvia P. Webb. London: ASLIB. 1983. 101pp. £11 (overseas price to non-members) ISBN 0 85142186 5.

'Help! Where do I start?' is a thought which must have at least crossed the minds, if not escaped from the lips, of many librarians confronted with the establishment or upgrading of a library or information service.

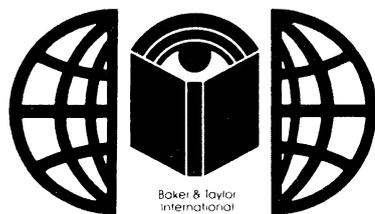
Creating an information service is designed as a practical guide to assist those faced with such a daunting task. The book approaches the task of establishing a library through a step by step approach: from surveying the organisation's information needs and existing resources, through methods of stock selection, acquisition and circulation, to staffing considerations and future developments. It contains nine checklists to assist in procedures such as selecting a classification scheme and what to include in a procedures manual.

Naturally enough, the book exhibits a British bias. Information on library suppliers, and organisations offering courses or information will be of little assistance to Australian readers. The general principles contained in the book should however prove useful to anyone involved in the creation of an information resource. The book has been written particularly with the special problems of the 'one man band' operation in mind.

Somewhat of a disappointment — or perhaps a reflection on the situation in British special libraries — is the approach to the use of online search services, and computers in general. Rather than being treated as integral parts of library operations today, they are given somewhat scant reference, largely in the final chapter entitled 'What Next? — Future Developments'. Having established the information service, acquired a clientele and got going 'now is the time' concluded the author 'to start looking at online services, including viewdata, and the possible use of computers and word processors in various library procedures'. I trust that Australian librarians would approach these issues as important ones to be addressed in the course of establishing an information service, rather than after the event.

Given the above misgivings, Sylvia Webb's book remains a useful 'nuts and bolts' aid to the most difficult part of any project — getting started.

Diana Killen Infoquest



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