

Book Reviews

PUGH, Lyndon, *Change management in information services.* Aldershot, Gower Publishing, 2000. 216 pages, hardback. ISBN: 0566 08253 5. Price:£45.00

The acid test of any textbook is its practicability in the front-line of the profession. On picking up Pugh's book I was very eager to see if I could learn anything that I could implement in my own professional duties. As an employee of a library service that is currently undergoing a restructuring due to Best Value, I found the book to be immensely useful.

Pugh sets the context of change management in an engaging and accessible way. Rather than seeing change management as a reactionary science, he highlights the need for organisations to become one with change, in essence able to react to anything that comes along, be it a year or five years down the line.

The book also covers the area of cooperation very succinctly. Pugh pulls no punches in suggesting that, as a profession, we have been too eager to tell customers what we think the service should be, rather than ask them their needs and deliver. Part of a sustainable change management process is listening to people to find out what they want, and placing a structure that supports this.

No book on change management would be complete without an analysis of all the relevant theories, and in this area the book also delivers very well. Moving from the standard theories espoused by the likes of Handy, it talks in great detail of the more recent knowledge-based theories, promoting the development of learning organisations that will constantly evolve and re-evaluate what they do, placing people, both customers and staff, at the heart of their management philosophy.

It is in the area of people management that the book really delivers. Its emphasis on team working in its very real sense, people with different specialities learning from each other, in areas where in the past

never the twain would meet, is a theory that might be problematic for some staff but is, nevertheless, essential. What comes across is that the idea that specialities are precious and to be protected is anathema to the effective twenty-first century organisation. This is not merely an attitude to be fostered by middle managers, but all management need to be open to comments and suggestions from all staff with regards to how the service works as, in essence, we can all learn from each other.

As a focus for re-evaluating your management style and structure in an era of change, Pugh's book is highly recommended. The use of case studies to show how his theories work in the real world is immensely useful, as is a full bibliography for further reading and a checklist for managers implementing change in their organisation. This work is a very welcome and timely addition to the professional literature.

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CHAPMAN, Ann and SPILLER, David *Trend analysis of monograph acquisitions in public and university libraries in the UK.* [LISU Occasional Paper no. 25] Loughborough: Library & Information Statistics Unit (LISU) and UK Office for Library and Information Networking (UKOLN). March, 2000. 66 pages, A4 wiro bound. ISBN 1 901786 29 3. Price £17.50 - post paid UK. [also Library & Information Commission Report 47 and British National Bibliography Research Fund Report 100.] [Also available at [http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/bib-man/surveys/acquis/.](http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/bib-man/surveys/acquis/)]

This is an important report in that it breaks new ground and will, hopefully, open up fresh directions for research effort. It is particularly commended to LIS students and their tutors as a spring board for likely dissertation topics.

Since 1980 UKOLN has collected records of books awaiting local cataloguing in public and academic libraries. The objective was to monitor the spread and timeliness of the various bibliographic utilities - principally BNB MARC records - and to improve hit rates from what was then a situation of alarming backlog. How speedily and completely this condition was improved is important historically but is not even hinted at in this research. Rather the combined forces of LISU and UKOLN are marshalled here to explore and analyse the time series of data for purposes quite unconnected with the original intent. The result reveals trends over two decades; it points to important stock management questions; and it establishes some fundamental contrasts between academic and public libraries.

Regular monthly samples of titles acquired provide the base data. Libraries in the sample rotate every six months. Both the ten titles per month and the libraries in the sample "are selected randomly". (Explanation in detail of the random selection methods would have been helpful.) There is clearly sampling error involved, and the annual trend lines have very sensibly been smoothed by a simple moving average procedure. The reader needs to be careful to remember, as a 'health warning', that when the authors say "the percentage of books acquired" what they mean is "the percentage of titles catalogued".

There are five analyses - carried out separately first for public libraries and then for academic.

Subject The subject analysis employs the BIC Standard Subject Categories - Level 2 - as used by Book Data Ltd., and these seem to work as well as any. Among others the main trend in public libraries is toward family/health/practical interests at the expense of more intellectual non-fiction, while in academic libraries titles in the social sciences are increasing at the expense of science and technology. The apparent discrepancy in providing many more books per student in some subjects than in others needs fuller analysis.

Acquisition Date This analysis shows 84% of public library acquisitions within a calendar year of publication year: the authors suspect far too little stock revision is taking place.

Likely explanations for the comparable university library figure of 68% include the slow appearance of reviews and the acquisition 'trigger' of citations rather than publishers' marketing. This analysis should interest publishers even more than librarians!

Format There is surprising lack of trend in the hardback:paperback ratios which seem to have settled. However, here as elsewhere, it is not clear how much this reflects publishers' decisions and how much librarians'.

Price The authors compare the median prices in the Acquisitions sample with the Averages prices in the *Bookseller* annual indexes and find some surprising results. The ratio of a median with an arithmetic mean has to be suspect. Then the exploration of some peculiar results for Fiction and Children's books has perverse value in highlighting some limitations in the methodology. It appears that some short entry cataloguing and some externally supplied records escape the sampling procedure altogether. Multiple copy orders are under represented in the random selection process. In consequence what we have is not a sample of total books acquired but rather a sample of titles requiring cataloguers' effort. This is admitted, but it makes some of the generalisations unconvincing.

Stock retention As an extra feature some of the libraries were asked what proportion of acquisitions from previous periods were still in stock. It is not easy to differentiate, in the results, between physical deterioration, loss through pilferage and lack of intellectual currency. However, there are enough surprises in the data to make the likely explanations quite fascinating.

This report is a good read - with commendably few editing errors. There are meaningful figures to supplement the statistical tables, and Appendices not to be missed. David Spiller has integrated these findings with other recent LISU sponsored research results.

While the principal objectives are well covered, that cannot be the end of the story. The authors' speculation on likely explanations of the phenomena

point to areas needing more work. As with much good research this report points to associated questions and hypotheses that are the more clearly seen to need research.

First, there is the cataloguing process itself. How much has it improved technically and in value for money over these twenty years? If only these UKOLN data could have done something to illuminate what to the outsider is possibly the great unsung success story of the profession - one catalogue record networked for all to use!

Second, some questioning of the results indicates that the actual data collection procedures and definitions need checking or updating (viz. Page 13,14).

Third, there is the multiple copy aspect already referred to. The extent to which literary spread is maintained or sacrificed on the altar of mass market readership is clearly in the minds of the authors. Statistically some progress could surely be made here by interrogating the PLR database and by comparing these 'title' results with the overall statistics produced by CIPFA, SCONUL and PLR. The PLR data, for instance, showed clearly in the 1980s a pattern of 'big name' fiction as: bought/issued 55% hardback, 25% paperback, 20% large print. In another instance SCONUL data (as used in the CVCP photocopying negotiations for example) showed the average prices of books actually bought to be much lower than the average price of titles published. These UKOLN results need to be integrated with the rest of our statistical information.

Fourth, a simple extension of the university data collected by UKOLN could give a lead on which books were bought for researchers, which for teaching, and which for both.

In short this report starts by analysing specialist catalogue data but finishes by uncovering several really promising avenues for researchers to pursue.

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URGO, Marisa *Developing information leaders: harnessing the talents of Generation X.* London: Bowker Saur, 2000. 221 pages. ISBN 1 85739 253 1. Price £35.00

This is an interesting addition to the excellent *Information Services Management Series* (under the editorship of Guy St Clair). The aim of this wide ranging series is to address the need for developing management skills among the members of the information services community whether in the public, academic or corporate sectors. Areas covered by the series include entrepreneurial librarianship, change management (naturally!), TQM and organisational power and influence. *Developing information leaders* is the first, however, that really puts the information professional (or, at least, a group of them) under the microscope and, in so doing, challenges the reader to face some uncomfortable ideas about the current state of the profession and also about its future.

For those unfamiliar with the generation referred to in the book's title, these are the information staff who were born between the early 1960s and 1977 – the so called Generation Xers – and who, according to the author, are “the children of the information revolution” (p.3). For Generation Xers the likes of calculators, digital watches, cable TV, video games, special film effects, personal computers, the Internet and mobile phones all came on the scene between early childhood and young adulthood. Indeed, the first chapter spends some time clarifying the nature of this generation and why they are so different from the Baby Boomers (born during the decade after the Second World War) and the generation that will follow.

Chapter 2 provides a technological and societal backdrop with a wide discussion about global telecommunications and the “death of distance” (p.17). The process of challenging the reader begins early, for example, referring to the librarian as “an overpriced search engine” (p.27) in an age when people feel completely empowered to find their own information. This paradigm shift from obsolescent library to virtual library will be driven by the Generation Xers.

Chapter 3 looks at the characteristics of the new workplace at a time when a job for life no longer applies and explores the nature of the bargain which

characterises the relationship between employee and employer. Covered here are flexibility, home versus work, contracts, short term skills acquisition and lifelong learning.

Communication in the workplace is the topic of Chapter 4 in which the reader is treated to nine factors for better communication and five things you can do to foster better communication. I know they are very fashionable, particularly in the business and management books found in airport bookshops, but I am beginning to tire of these lists of "How to do XYZ in 123 ways". Some of them end up sounding rather banal, for example: rely on brevity and clarity, build friendships, keep doors open, provide context.

After the lull of Chapter 4 we are back in the groove with *Creating a culture of risk*. This could be an eye-opening chapter for some UK readers, less so to an American audience. The author argues that, in order to remain relevant, libraries must adapt and the ability to adapt only comes with risk. This topic flows seamlessly into the next chapter relating to rewards and the balance between home-life and work-life. These are two areas where, in comparative terms, we in the UK are still in the Dark Ages. It's not just about paying decent salaries (although that would be an excellent starting point!) but about finding more imaginative ways of rewarding success, for example, time-off for initiative, cash rewards for new services, gift certificates (even, plane tickets!). A recognition of the importance of leading a fulfilling life outside of the workplace and the benefits that such a life can bring to the organisation are woefully under explored generally.

The author helps to redress the balance here. Chapters 7 and 8 address the issue --particularly important to Generation Xers -- of staff development. It is less about attending courses to upskill the individual, it is more about a way of life -- creating a learning philosophy. It is important to realise that Generation Xers have come to accept change as an integral part of their lives and they are comfortable with change because it is all they have known. Will we see a slowing down of the veritable conveyor belt of books on "how to adapt to/manage change"?

The Generation Xers themselves get to talk in Chapter 9. We hear the views of 24 of them on issues such as careers, managers, being managers, the profession's image, the profession's future and Library Schools. The argument surrounding the dichotomy of the end of librarianship or just a new beginning is a compelling one. The same forces that are changing the profession will work to destroy it or provide it with new opportunities.

Recruitment is the subject of Chapter 10 and offers some thought-provoking ideas, particularly about separating the profession from its bad image. The author is undoubtedly right when she says that "the identity of library professionals is for many laymen intricately woven into the physical space called a library" (p.164) and this leads to a discussion about what new recruits themselves are looking for -- flexibility, challenge and a sense of purpose. There is some helpful advice on interviewing techniques -- from both sides of the desk. The penultimate chapter is also about recruitment but of minority groups, specifically. And finally, we see some future scenarios beyond Generation X to round off the book -- and the emphasis is on a "human-centred" future.

This is a truly stimulating read in which the author asks serious questions about the future of the profession and its whole direction. It left me with two overriding thoughts: firstly, that the skills of the information professional will be in demand for some time to come, but only as long as they adapt to the changing environment. Secondly, that these skills will be increasingly utilised in environments other than physical buildings called libraries. Who said we don't live in exciting times?

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KEENAN, Stella and JOHNSTON, Colin
Concise dictionary of library and information science. London, Bowker Saur. Second edition 2000. 265 pages, 21 cms. ISBN: 1 85739 251 5
Price: £30.00

How does one review a dictionary? A number of criteria spring to mind. Are the entries up to date? Are the definitions accurate? Are there out of date entries? Are there items missing that should be present? Are there items present that should not be? Is there a general consistency of style and content? I examined this new volume, a competitor (albeit with 5,000 entries, half the size) to *Harrod's Librarians' Glossary*, with these criteria in mind. What I found was a conveniently sized, but flawed dictionary. I did not read the dictionary cover to cover, but dipped into it at semi random. So how did it shape up?

Are the entries up to date? Virtually all the latest buzzwords are there, though I was surprised not to find an entry for Linux.

Are the definitions accurate? Generally, the entries are brief, typically less than 20 words, so are often only indicative of the meaning of the term. Even bearing that in mind, there are too many errors. *ADONIS* is not simply a service offered by BLDSC (a term, incidentally, not given an entry of its own), but by many document supply centres. *Bradford-Zipf distribution* does not refer, as claimed, to studies that compare (my emphasis) Bradford distributions to Zipf distributions. The definition of *cache* incorrectly states it only applies to the Internet. The definition of *copy protection* incorrectly restricts itself to programs, when it is also used to protect databases. The suggestion that a *digital library* "looks and feels like a paper-based library" is laughable, and the definition given for electronic library could be applied to traditional libraries. The entry for *false drop* incorrectly states that it is always due to an error in the search statement, when it could be due to an error in the indexing of the item in the database.

The entry for *Freedom of Information* is totally inaccurate, whilst that for *information policy* incorrectly states this is Government-led. Have the authors not heard of corporate information policies? The entries for *Lotka's law*, *recall* and *precision* should have been made mathematically precise.

Mirror sites are not necessarily in another country. The entry for *online catalogue* naively claims that they are always up to date, and that for *patent* fails to point out that these are only awarded for inventions. The entry for *relevance feedback* incorrectly states this technique is only used on WAIS systems. The entry for *trade mark* says it applies to a design, whereas registered designs are a different class of intellectual property from trademarks. The definition for *workstation* is too broad – many workstations do not have access to viewdata, for example. The term *Zipf-Bradford distribution* is never used, so why include it?

Are the entries out of date? Whilst it is right and proper that some terms that were used in the past should be defined, should a reader come across them and not know what they mean, I was worried by the large number of such entries. Furthermore, in every case, it was not indicated that the term was archaic or that the technology had moved on since. Such terms include *acoustic coupler*, *daisywheel printer*, *line printer*, *edge notch card*, *Hollerith card*, *International Packet Switching Service*, *optical coincidence card*, *peek-a-boo*, *Wiswesser Line Notation*, *pyramid coding* and *Uniterm*. The entry for *laser disc* states it is the "size of a long playing gramophone record", something many readers would not understand.

Are there entries missing that should be present? I thought up a few items that were not included. There should have been entries for British Library, electronic copyright management systems, electronic rights management system, DIALOG, document supply, eLib, fragmentation coding, IFLA, FID, National Library, Markush and special collection. Other readers would no doubt be able to create their own list.

Is the style and content consistent? Generally, yes, but there are some oddities. *Geek* is there, but not *nerd*. One individual, *Babbage*, has an entry of his own. Others, such as *Batten*, *de Solla Price*, *Ranganathan* and *Austin*, are mentioned in definitions but get no entries of their own. Others, such as *Foskett*, *Garfield* and *Farradane*, get no mention at all.

Curiously, for a book that is clearly aimed at the UK market, the term *fair use* is defined, but not *fair dealing*. Similarly, there is an entry for the US term

first sale doctrine, but not one for the European equivalent exhaustion of rights, and there are entries for the US terms *offprint* and *separate*, but not for the UK equivalent, reprint. A few entries have definitions so obscure it is difficult to know what is meant by them. These include *case sensitive*, *worker's knowledge*, *paradigm* and *Venn diagram*. Some entries are for names subject to Registered Trade Marks or Service marks. This should have been indicated.

Are there items there that should not be?

Inevitably, the choice of entries is very much the authors' own, but some of the entries bear no relationship, it seems to me, to LIS. These include *breakdown*, *cliometrics*, *collective bargaining*, *decibel*, *elegant programming*, *intelligent till*, *kilowatt*, *lithium ion battery*, *Ohm's law* (whose definition in any case is so vague as to be useless), and *proforma invoice*. I was astonished to find an entry for Userkit – this was the name of a commercial product that had a few sales in the 1970s and then vanished.

These extra items are not a problem as such, though they do imply the authors have wasted some time on preparing such entries. More worrying is where a definition for a term is given, but the definition is incomplete. For example, the definition for *connection table* omits its use in chemical information handling, and that for *watermark* omits its use regarding digital documents.

Overall, then, this is a handy-sized dictionary, but has too many errors to be recommended. Stick to *Harrod's* for the time being.

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ENNIS, Kathy (ed.) Guidelines for Learning Resource Services in Further and Higher Education. London, Library Association Publishing. Sixth edition 2000. 70 pages, paperback, 30 cms. ISBN 1-85604-245-6 Price: £15.95.

The first edition of these guidelines was published long before many of the present generation of academic librarians were even born. At the time, there were 24 Universities in the UK and they were largely for the elite. The Robbins Report (1963) and the Parry Report (1967) were, in higher education and library terms respectively, to change all that. Polytechnics were about to come on the scene, as was the Open University. At least, we can thank a Labour Government for something. The intervening thirty-plus years have seen a plethora of changes affecting the Further and Higher Education sectors. A massive injection of students, a quantum leap from manual to electronic services and the overarching importance of quality issues have all had a dynamic effect on academic libraries. The longevity of these guidelines is therefore surely testament to their usefulness, a sentiment acknowledged in the Foreword by the Chief Executive of the Library Association.

The main purpose of this document is to act as a manual for those managing academic library and learning resources. In doing so, it also conveys a set of values about the role and responsibilities of such services. However, the idea of a manual often conjures up the image of turgid tomes, full of boring (check)lists, specifications and other routine data. Thankfully, these guidelines do not live up to this stereotype. Why? Firstly, unlike some manuals I know, this one is fairly concise (50 pages of text, 20 pages of appendices). And secondly, it is very readable and focuses largely on the expectation of providing high quality services in challenging times.

Although split into four parts, the meat of the publication is contained in Part 2 (Performance) and Part 3 (Resourcing). Part 1 is simply a two-page definition of the academic library and the role of a learning resource service. In this brief introduction is an indication of a potential problem which the editor has succeeded in avoiding i.e. the difficulty of offering guidelines to those working in libraries that have a range of different structural models to service a range of different user groups. Clearly, convergence has taken many forms in both Further

and Higher Education institutions. Indeed, deconvergence is in danger of further complicating matters. Therefore, the guidelines have taken into account the various scenarios to be found in these institutions and have managed to remain flexible and steer clear of bland generalisations. Part 4 is simply a five-paragraph conclusion.

The ten pages of Part 2 focus on a quality framework for service provision. This includes the usual suspects – mission, aims and objectives; targets, performance measurement and benchmarking; user satisfaction; inspection and assessment. The benefits of the framework lie in its conciseness, with the option of following up some issues of interest via Appendix 7 (Useful publications). Reams and reams could have been written on each of these topics but, instead, the essence of each has been extracted and clearly articulated. On either side of this framework we are given short items covering strategic management (9 lines!) and promotion (two-thirds of a page). Although I'm an advocate of conciseness wherever possible, this is perhaps taking the concept too far in relation to managing and providing services. A little more elaboration in these important areas would have been welcome.

Part 3 is by far the longest and most detailed section of the guidelines. The six areas covered here are the learning environment, staff, finance, access, stock and services. In the learning environment we look at the allocation and use of space, in particular, concentrating on equipment and health and safety issues. Perhaps more consideration could have been given to the need for flexibility of use, given IT-related and other changes. The staff and finance sections consist of, respectively, a series of bullet points cataloguing the responsibilities and functions of various types of staff and the financial and budgetary responsibilities of librarians/managers. The latter section probably doesn't do justice to the complexities of resource management and, unfortunately, there's only the one relevant title in Appendix 7 to enable the interested reader to navigate through the maze.

The short section on access acknowledges the different types of access available to different categories of user but omits the increasing number of cooperative schemes which operate within and between sectors. The stock and services sections are fairly comprehensive in their coverage.

I'm not entirely convinced about the need to include all eight appendices. Appendix 1 (Glossary) and Appendix 8 (Useful websites) could have been amalgamated into one. The three Appendices covering the role of the Library Association, the role of the Professional Adviser (Academic) and the LA's Code of Professional Conduct could probably have been cited rather than laid out in full. Appendix 3 (Management data checklist) is an excellent summary of performance measures. Given the conciseness of the main body of text, it would have been helpful to include a wider range of publications in the list of useful publications.

In conclusion, this slim volume is a welcome publication. It can be dipped into to give the practising librarian/manager some service expectations in particular areas or it can be read comfortably in one sitting to provide an overall picture. As the number of years between each of the editions decreases in reverse proportion to the increasing number of changes in academic libraries, I think we'll probably be seeing the seventh edition in about 18 months time!

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KINNELL, Margaret, YU, Liangzhi and CREASER, Claire **Public library services for visually impaired people.** [LISU Occasional Paper no. 26] [Library and Information Commission Research Report 71] Loughborough, Library and Information Statistics Unit (LISU), 2000. 64 pages, paperback, 30cms. ISBN: 1 901786 38 2. Price: £17.50

The report begins by affirming the fact that visually impaired people read a great deal and for a variety of purposes – not just for leisure, as it is sometimes assumed – and that there is a general dissatisfaction with the range and delivery of information material.

Chapters one to three are scene setting and focus on the theme of the survey: public library services for visually impaired people. Much emphasis is placed on the work of the RNIB although other organisations are mentioned such as the National Library for the Blind (NLB), Calibre, Talking Newspaper Association UK (TNAUK) and ClearVision. The context for public libraries covers areas of general support to visually impaired people, provision of accessible information, and current issues such as the possible impact of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), as well as technological developments including a number of research and development initiatives such as the European Telematics for the Integration of Disabled and Elderly People (TIDE).

Chapter 3 is a useful overview of public library service provision to visually impaired people covering years 1970 – 1997. It puts the current research into perspective by showing how findings from previous surveys conducted in 1983/4, 1991 and 1997 have influenced this most recent one. A comparison of major findings of these three national surveys shows how public library services to visually impaired people have (or in some cases, have not) developed. Unfortunately, because questions used in each survey have been worded differently this is not, as the authors point out, 'strictly comparable'. It makes interesting reading nonetheless and may prompt consistency in the design of future surveys. An overview of public library provision to visually impaired people in other countries follows, which, particularly in the case of Denmark, shows what can be achieved.

Chapters 4 and 5 report on the findings of the 1999 survey with 35 graphical presentations and explanatory text comparing the current findings with those of the previous surveys, in particular the 1997 survey. Reference is also made to the National Guidelines for library and information services for visually impaired people which provides a useful insight into whether these have been met and if so, how this has been achieved.

Conclusions and recommendations sum up the 1997 and 1999 surveys, covering each area (policy statements, budgetary provision, levels of service etc). It is rather depressing to read that little seems to have improved since the 1997 survey and that it has taken legislation such as the DDA to force libraries to change. Positive advances can be seen, however, such as the work of Share the Vision, the RNIB/NLB partnership and the funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). A set of recommendations are given for each area and are directed toward relevant bodies such as the DCMS, Public Library Authorities and specific national agencies. One concern is the lack of adequate monitoring activities, something which was recommended in the National Guidelines in 1996 but in general does not appear to have been taken up. Without reliable statistics it will be hard to ascertain the take up of services to visually impaired people and thus hard to be able to plan ahead.

This report makes very interesting reading and provides service developers with useful facts and figures to aid future planning. It also highlights the need for future surveys, perhaps based on the framework of this 1999 survey (which is included as an appendix), to provide valid comparisons for the future - particularly in light of the DDA provisions, the impact of which is hard to judge at this early stage.

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THE NEW REVIEW OF INFORMATION AND LIBRARY RESEARCH.

Volume 5, 1999. London: Taylor Graham. 159 pages, 23cms. ISSN 1361-445X. Price: £70.50 p.a.

What might someone expect of an annual journal called *The New Review of Information and Library Research*? The title suggests a full and informative account of the state of research in the LIS field for the year concerned. In fact, the journal makes no claim to provide a review of this type. What it offers is 'a variety of papers which offer important perspectives on research within the field'. This is a worthwhile aim and offers something potentially much more lively than the kind of comprehensive review that would be forced to try to cover everything, good or bad, interesting or tedious, timely or irrelevant. A journal of the type that is offered would be open to new thinking and fresh approaches, and would have the stimulation of research as a major aim. The question the reviewer has to ask is - how far does it succeed in such an aim? The answer is that it succeeds quite well in some ways.

The 1999 issue begins with four articles with broad aims. The first is a very timely exploration by Lorcan Dempsey of the implications of the idea of digital culture, in terms of research in libraries, museums and archives. Although the paper responds to the EU Framework Five 'Information Society Technologies' programme, its local significance in the light of the creation of Resource in 2000 is considerable and obvious. To have such an article as the first in the issue is quite a coup for the editors and should guarantee at least one well discussed and cited contribution. Next, a methodological article by Christine Bruce presents a phenomenographical approach to LIS, and does so in convincing manner.

In the third article, Frances Johnson also performs an appropriate task in reviewing automated abstracting research. Here, however, a question mark is introduced. The article covers only one or two publications with a post-1995 publication date, suggesting that work was mainly done in 1996. The question is - has the field stood still since then, or have author and editors not given sufficient thought to the matter of currency? Unfortunately, the same problem is there in the fourth of the general articles, in which Jennifer Rowley examines the vexed

question of the identity of information management. The references only include three post 1995, two of which are by the author herself. Also, whilst the topic undoubtedly has important research implications, these are mostly left for the reader to identify.

The rest of the issue consists of six articles in the area of hybrid libraries. In his Editorial, Peter Brophy points out that the previous (1998) issue concentrated on hybrid libraries. No doubt the authors of these six articles were attracted to the journal by that, but it is worth asking whether it doesn't diminish the impact of the journal as a review of research for it to concentrate for two annual issues on even such an important topic as this.

The articles all have something interesting to tell us. Most are from funded projects and have results to report, but none of them actually present the main body of results from a particular project. Also some of them also have very little to say about matters of methodological interest. Whilst none is a bad article, as a group they are not especially impressive, and overall it could be said that they do not contribute very strongly to a journal intended to be of general research interest.

So, the impression created by this issue of the journal is mixed. Judged as material to appeal to the LIS researcher, the content varies from the very impressive to the rather marginal. At a cost of £70.50 (not £705.00 as printed on the inside cover) the journal is clearly too expensive for the individual subscriber, but libraries are more likely to feel that it is worth the expenditure. The editors are clearly in the process of building up the quality of the journal and they should be wished well, because a successful journal of this type would make a very worthwhile contribution towards strengthening research in the discipline.

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