

Reviews

MORT, David and WILKINS, Wendy
SOURCES OF UNOFFICIAL UK STATISTICS
Fourth edition 2000 Aldershot, Gower. 353
pages, hardback, 24 cms. ISBN: 0 566 08236 5.
Price: £65.00

Sources of unofficial UK statistics is the established reference work for this subject area. The work's *raison d'être* is to describe sources of unofficial statistics issued in the UK or Great Britain which are produced at least once every six years. Unofficial statistics are defined as those produced by non-governmental organisations such as professional bodies, commercial publishers and trade associations as opposed to the official statistics produced by Central Government. The sources included here are predominantly of interest to business and industry for which they are a unique resource, but will also appeal to those undertaking economic analysis and related academic or other research. However, the inclusion of entries from fields of study other than business and industry, so that this work more strongly resembles the very well respected *Guide to Official Statistics* (published by the Office for National Statistics), would be very welcome. Such diversification could only broaden this popular book's appeal further.

This fourth edition draws together details of almost 900 printed and electronic publications and services, produced by around 460 organisations. Entries were correct as of mid-1999. The majority of sources included are straightforward statistical publications, for example forecasts and trend surveys, but the compilers have also included non-statistical sources which contain a recurrent statistical article or series. The most important addition is the inclusion of URLs related to the entries and an accompanying statement providing information on whether statistics are actually available from these sites. This is a very useful addition and will be gratefully received by those in the library and information community, although in time the unstable nature of URLs will diminish the relevance of this feature unless updated regularly.

The directory is organised into 3 Parts, preceded by an excellent introduction which concisely describes the variety and context of unofficial statistics and states exactly what the book includes and excludes.

Part 1 consists of the entries which are organised alphabetically by publishing body. Each entry is also given a consecutive entry number. Each entry consists of a common set of headings which provide users with the information necessary to answer most queries and contact details, if further clarification is required. An entry will usually include the name of the publisher (including full contact details), the title of the source(s), coverage including details of accompanying commentary or analysis and the source(s) of the statistics, the frequency of publication, availability, cost and comments concerning the source. The entries offer concise and informative descriptions in a well spaced format.

Parts 2 and 3 consist of a Title Index and a Subject Index respectively. The Title Index alphabetically lists all the specific titles described in Part 1 and cites the relevant entry number for easy access. The Subject Index records broad areas of interest and also cites the relevant entry number, but this Index is not as useful for more focused queries and could be improved by including more detailed entries.

This book should still be considered as a key resource for librarians and information officers as it provides effective and efficient access to detailed business and industry related information. The overwhelming strength of this book is that it provides access to important resources which are often hard to discover independently.

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**ALLCOCK, Sheila (ed.) INFORMATION
SOURCES IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES.**

London, Bowker Saur, 1999. 239 pages, hardback,
24 cms. ISBN: 1 85739 276 0 Price: £45

Development studies is a difficult discipline to define; this volume wastes no time in defining it and rightly excludes all but the social sciences. Nevertheless, many of the sources quoted would lead to agricultural science, medicine, meteorology, and other scientific areas of study applicable to developing countries, if that is what the reader were looking for. The volume is much more than a guide to information sources, it is a worthy introduction to

the subject written by specialists, mostly librarians who are also experts in their respective fields. So you get the best of both worlds, the chapter on international financial institutions being particularly notable for its completeness, its depth, its coverage of the problems of bibliographical control, and yet all achieved in 10 pages!

Development studies is a very extensive field and the book cannot hope to cover in depth all the different areas it might have covered. I was a little disappointed to find that food security, food aid and the World Food Programme did not seem to be included at all even though WFP is in the list of acronyms. The World Food Programme could have been included in the chapter entitled 'Disasters' where you do find OXFAM. The WFP is the United Nations' OXFAM and has an excellent website at www.wfp.org leading to its useful reports series.

Though there may be omissions, there is no painful overlap between chapters, as one sometimes finds in a volume of this kind.

Such a collection is sure to include websites and some of these will doubtless change their URLs, but those I checked were still current. Interestingly, as indeed is stated in the first chapter of the volume, most chapters point to ELDIS (Electronic Development and Environment Information), so this could be a reliable source for updating in the future. Whilst it is to be hoped that organisations do not change their URLs too often, this field is heavily populated with *ad hoc* umbrella groups such as the Sphere project at www.sphereproject.org which do have a tendency to come and go and might well actually be hosted on a sponsor's website which can make them all the more elusive.

The book is well produced, though the address of the IEC in Cambridge is given as 'Tension Rd' (it should be 'Tenison'). 'DGVIII' should be 'DG VIII' (i.e. Directorate General 8) and could be in the list of acronyms. Lastly, but a small quibble, a paragraph on the European Union on p.19 comes in a section entitled United Nations.

But these are minor errors and do not detract from an excellent wide-ranging volume, which is marred only by its price. This might put it out of the reach of many of the potential audience in small institutions in the UK in the charity sector and in

institutions in developing countries. The publisher may have tried hard to take this into account, as it is less expensive than most others in the series. It would seem to be an essential buy for an academic library in an institution which includes development studies or Third World studies in its curriculum.

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MARCELLA, Rita and MALTBY, Arthur THE FUTURE OF CLASSIFICATION Aldershot, Gower, 2000. 144 pages, hardback, 24 cms. ISBN 0 566 07992 5 Price: £55

Marcella and Maltby's volume, which was originally to have been titled *Classification in the 21st century*, comes as a long-awaited sequel to *Classification in the 70s* (a work which I personally found invaluable as a source of reference for the state-of-the-art at that time).

The change in title is intended to reflect the late twentieth century challenge to conventional subject indexing and classification techniques by systems and search engines based on unstructured, word-based methods of search and retrieval, and to restate the case for systems constructed on logical principles of subject analysis and organization. This objective is certainly achieved.

In addition to reviewing the state of play for the major general classifications (Dewey Decimal Classification, the Universal Decimal Classification, and the Library of Congress Classification), various contributors consider the relevance of classification, the value of the systematic approach, the future of facet analysis, and the role of classification in and for the electronic environment. It encompasses both current practice and current theory in classification, and addresses both the conventional library uses and the wider applications of the subject approach to information.

The treatments of the general schemes deal with recent developments and changes to schedules, but also look beyond mere housekeeping issues. For the Library of Congress Classification, Lois Mai Chan

and Theodora Hodges consider not only the major programmes of editorial work (aimed at achieving greater uniformity of presentation, and systematizing the pattern of schedule revision), but also applications of LCC in organizing Internet resources. Joan Mitchell writing on Dewey looks at the classification in machine format (Electronic Dewey and Dewey for Windows), DDC's potential as a multilingual tool, and the increased use of facet analysis and notational synthesis in newly revised schedules. These areas are also covered in respect of UDC by Ian McIlwaine, who additionally writes of the importance of contact and co-operation between the editors of the general classification schemes, and sees much merit in collaborative ventures.

The uses of classificatory theory and techniques in a wider environment are addressed in two chapters on Information Technology and new directions, and Classification and the Internet, by Robert Newton and Alan MacLennan respectively. Both provide excellent surveys of recent research in these fields, and stress clearly the ways in which the discipline of classification and the skills of librarians can contribute to developing technologies. Both also offer a very lucid exposition and analysis of the ways in which modern electronic technologies operate, and how traditional methods can enhance them.

With the exception of Julian Warner's contribution, which I feel would prove challenging to the non-specialist, the book is extremely readable. It provides an excellent general introduction to contemporary issues in classification, and is worthwhile reading for anyone who wishes to familiarize him or herself with current developments. It is already on the classification module reading list for students at UCL, and is particularly appropriate for that purpose, covering as it does the major part of the post-graduate syllabus for classification. But it also serves as a guide to practitioners in the field, and to those non-specialists who wish to update their awareness of knowledge organization matters, or who wonder whether classification really is an out-dated method of handling information. The lists of references supporting each chapter are extensive, and again provide an excellent guide to the literature of the field.

One minor quibble concerns a number of factual inaccuracies occasioned by the book's long time in press (for example the UDC web-site given has now been superseded). I also think it a pity that there is nowhere a fuller discussion of the Bliss Bibliographic Classification, the development of which has informed much classification theory over the last 30 years. The UDC is already in process of publishing schedules the revision of which is based on BC2 structure (as described in the chapter on UDC), and BC2 itself has been adopted by a number of libraries within the University of Cambridge in recent years (the consequences of which are considerable for the future of the scheme).

But these criticisms should not detract from the value of this excellent work. Overall the book gives a very clear, comprehensive, and accurate picture of the state of play in the field of Classification. It confirms the notion that Classification does indeed have a future, and must be essential reading for all who have an interest in this subject.

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QIN, Jian and NORTON, Jay (eds.)
KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERY IN
BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATABASES - special issue
of *Library Trends* 48 (1), Summer 1999. Price:
\$18.50

In recent years a number of authors, most notably Brian Vickery in *Journal of Documentation*, have published excellent reviews on Knowledge Discovery in Databases (KDD). Essentially, this phrase encompasses a variety of techniques for not simply retrieving information but adding some intelligence and retrieving knowledge from databases. The research community has reason to be grateful for the existence of special issues of *Library Trends*. It is by far the closest this profession has to the high quality review journals in other disciplines characterised by *Chemical Reviews*. This special issue, however, provides a curious mixture of genuine review articles covering certain KDD

methodologies and papers reporting primary research results. Nonetheless, it will be of value to anyone interested in this new field.

The 300 page paperback in familiar *Library Trends* format comprises an introduction and 13 articles. Norton provides a good introductory overview; Kwasnik provides a fascinating article on the philosophy and practice of different classification systems. This article should be made compulsory reading for all those interested in, or studying classification, but does contain some errors. It is not true that faceted classification systems "continue to flourish", as their labour-intensive nature means that it is systems such as Dewey, relying on shared catalogue resources that dominate more and more. In addition, the discussion on Mendeleev and the Periodic Table is inaccurate in its history. For example, the Periodic Table was used for predicting as then unknown elements at its inception in 1869 and not, as is claimed, only when atomic theory was developed 50 years later. There then follow two articles based upon Swanson's pioneering work on finding linkages between articles that have no citations in common. The first is by Swanson and Smalheier and discusses the use of Swanson's "Arrowsmith" software in medical databases; the other by Cory uses analogous techniques in the humanities literature. Both articles show the power of Swanson's methodology, though I was disappointed that Cory did not see fit to promote his student collaborators to co-authors. Henry Small then provides a typical lengthy complex article on pathways and linkages between disciplines using novel co-citation based techniques. For mere mortals like me the problem with all of Small's work is that he has access to a wealth of ISI data and to programming effort that most of us can only dream of!

This article is followed by further research articles on semantic patterns in bibliographically coupled documents, and on knowledge discovery by co-word analysis, and by frequent word sequence analysis. Chowdhury then provides an article describing his research on what he calls "template mining", for example, from Web sites. This article skips from one research report to another. This is followed by an article describing CINDI, an indexing system for a so called virtual library. Pinto and Lancaster then provide an excellent article on quality in abstracts and abstracting. This article

should be required reading for those studying quality issues in abstracts. Yu then provides a short article on knowledge discovery in Geographic Information Systems.

The collection ends with a bizarre essay by Herbert White entitled "Librarians and IT: which is the tail and which is the dog?" The essay does not fit into the theme of the issue. It is a polemic against librarians who believe IT is a panacea. It makes unsustainable claims, for example, that librarians do not want to be bothered by patrons and refuse to help a confused patron. The essay gives the appearance of being a list of the complaints of an embittered and frustrated individual. I do not know White but this is the image he presents. Whilst this essay would not be out of place in, say, a book edited by Gorman or by Walt Crawford, it is inappropriate here.

Overall, the volume can be warmly recommended to those with an active interest in research in KDD; to those with an interest in bibliometrics and text analysis; and to those who are studying or teaching classification, or abstracting. *Library Trends* has done it again.

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BROPHY, Peter and CRAVEN, Jenny THE INTEGRATED ACCESSIBLE LIBRARY: a model of service development for the 21st century [British Library Research and Innovation Report 168] Manchester, CERLIM. 1999. 115 pages, paperback, 30 cms. ISBN: 0 9535343 1 6. Price: £18.

This is the final report of the REVEL (Resources for visually impaired users of the electronic library) project funded jointly by BLRIC and JISC. The aim of the project was to promote the development of a national networked virtual library of resources accessible to visually impaired people. The report starts with a detailed proposal for a National Accessible Library Service, which goes much wider than the aims of the project would suggest, but does not direct its recommendations at any specific body

or bodies. The remainder of the report gives the background to the work and the rationale for the main recommendation.

There is a useful explanation of the background to the project, and a good summary of the definitions of visual impairment and the organisations that exist to meet the needs of visually impaired people. A section on alternative formats is somewhat dismissive of the traditional, particularly audio, alternatives to print. The report is stronger on accessibility of electronic formats and particularly the world-wide-web. A number of tools are evaluated, but it is disappointing that the project's "20 Golden Rules for Web Page Design" are relegated to an appendix.

REVIEL undertook two surveys of library service development for visually impaired people in higher education libraries, but only very brief findings are reported here, with no reference to where else the results might be found. There is no indication of sample sizes or response rates for the first survey, and while the results presented are of considerable interest, there is no way to judge their significance. The second survey examined a sample of HE web sites for information on the support offered by institutions to visually impaired students, finding that "*information on services for blind and visually impaired users is not given a high priority*". A selection of sites were also examined for accessibility, some by visually impaired volunteers, others by members of the project staff. Again the results are rather sketchily reported; more background and more detail, or reference to a fuller report, would have been helpful.

Part III of the report discusses building the National Accessible Library Service. This has its main emphasis on electronic materials, and the issues addressed are relevant to resources in all types of library, whether designed for visually impaired users or not. Of particular relevance to the needs of visually impaired users is the section on staff training. The authors comment on the apparent lack of training in academic libraries; this parallels similar findings in a recent survey of public libraries*, and points to a wider malaise which the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act may go some way towards alleviating. This is an important piece of research, which deserves wide dissemination. The report has an

academic library focus which is perhaps unfortunate in the age of the People's Network, but there is much of interest for library managers in all sectors, and for web page designers in any field.

*Margaret Kinnell, Claire Creaser & Liangzhi Yu, *Public Library Services for Visually Impaired People*, Loughborough: LISU, 2000 (in press)

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STURGES, Paul and ROSENBERG, Diana (eds.)
DISASTER AND AFTER: the practicalities of information service in times of war and other catastrophes. London, Taylor Graham Publishing, 1999. 175 pages, paperback, 23 cms. ISBN: 0947568778

This book brings together papers presented at an international conference sponsored by IGLA (The International Group of the Library Association) which was held at the University of Bristol, 4-6 September 1998. Eleven papers are covered along with an introduction by Derek Law and the final thoughts from the conference chair and one of the editors of the book, Paul Sturges. The whole issue of disaster management has become increasingly important and these papers cover in some detail a wide range of catastrophes from war to fire and flood all over the world.

Paper 1 contains examples from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Africa. An overview of the problems and issues including definitions of disaster management and how crisis managers can cope with these challenges are put forward. It goes through the different stages of response to disasters and the role of technology in disseminating disaster management information. In Paper 2 Southeast Asia is discussed in the context of collection damage and neglect due to war and civil unrest. Four countries are examined - Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam - and also the setting up of a regional Preservation Centre for Southeast Asia in 1991.

The Linköping fire in Sweden that had been started by a pyromaniac is discussed in the third contribution, with specific mention of the

psychological effects of the fire. A huge event was going on in the library when it started and although no one was killed, the fire spread quickly and the library was ablaze within 10 minutes. The paper discusses the events after the fire including debriefing sessions and staff interviews. It contains quotes from people who were there such as "For the first time in my life I felt Evil come close". Outside the library a billboard was erected for people to write notes on and these make poignant reading. The paper includes a short chronology as an appendix. Papers 4 and 5 consider the Polish floods of 1997. They are described firstly from the perspective of staff in the Information Department at the University Library who co-ordinated help for libraries affected and, secondly, from the perspective of the inhabitants of one town – Pozan – who responded to the tragedy and who dealt with the water-damaged books.

Paper 6 discusses the archive in Linen Hall, Belfast, covering 30 years of conflict in Northern Ireland and which is described as "the most heavily used research collection in what is otherwise an historic library." In Paper 7 information services during the war in Eritrea 1961-91, with reference to the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front are considered. The role of the media, as well as library services in disseminating information during this time, are considered as they were the main channels of communication.

Paper 8 looks at the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip that has denied Palestinians the access to information networks. However, the paper also discusses many human rights issues which do not fit into the context of this book. Information about Chernobyl-related scientific information in Belarus is examined in Paper 9. Belarus was one of the countries most affected by the nuclear catastrophe and yet it was denied access to information. However, enthusiasts worked hard on local databases but there is still a need for international co-operation. The war in Bosnia – Herzegovina caused major damage to the National and University Library in Sarajevo with 90% of its stock lost in bombardments. This penultimate and sad contribution offers some terrible recollections of 1992, including the largest single act of book burning in modern history and the shooting of a librarian by a sniper. The people of Sarajevo have improvised and some help has been forthcoming

from libraries in other countries e.g. British Library. The final paper discusses the role of IFLA and, in particular, the Programme of Preservation and Conservation which operates throughout the world. The objectives of the International Committee of the Blue Shield, which aims to provide authorities and professionals with expertise and networks in the case of armed conflict or natural disasters that could affect cultural heritage, are discussed.

On the one hand, this collection makes depressing reading, given the sad tales of what has been lost in these natural and unnatural disasters. On the other hand, however, the book does give practical case studies and fresh approaches on how to deal in positive ways with catastrophes such as those described. Anyone in this field will find the book rewarding and managers who are concerned with disaster management will find useful examples for future collaborative planning whether regionally, nationally or internationally.

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READING THE SITUATION: Book reading, buying & borrowing habits in Britain Written and published by *Book Marketing Ltd & The Reading Partnership* ISBN 1 873517 76 9 pp. 180, A4 spiral bound. From Book Marketing Ltd, London, Price £ 37 to book trade & public sector; £75 to others.

This important research report was launched in May 2000. It covers research sponsored by the Library & Information Commission (now Re:source) and carried out principally by Steve Bohme (BML) and Debbie Hicks (Reading Partnership). The absence of their personal names on the title page is understandable but presents unnecessary problems for cataloguers and authors wanting to cite the work!

The Reading Partnership, directed by Miranda McKearney, has funding support from the Arts Council and the Library Association to do training, advocacy and survey work to promote and encourage the development of reading.

Book Marketing Ltd, the successor organisation to the Book Marketing Council, has been active in public library research now for almost a decade. Lengthy questionnaire interviews are held with a large sample representative of the population. Their clients – many of whom are big commercial publishers and booksellers – commission particular market research questions and reap the benefit in detailed survey information, much of which never gets into the public domain. The BML methodology has been modified recently to focus on households rather than on individuals, but it has otherwise remained unchanged.

Over the years questions on library use have been, in effect, commissioned from BML, and paid for, by the research funding organisation [BLRDD, BLRIC, LIC]. All the results have got into the public domain through the medium of research reports. The main topics and findings substantiated in this way have been:

- book buying and book borrowing are complementary not competitive
- on a broad definition of 'books' only 20 per cent (or so) of the population are not book buyers
- 56 – 58 per cent of the population hold public library borrowing tickets
- heavy buyers and frequent borrowers form a minority of users but their activity accounts for 70 – 80 per cent of the 'traffic'
- many people use more than one library, particularly among the young

[These findings are reported in several separate reports by Len England and summarised in *Perspectives of Public Library Use* – see LIRN 76 page 51]

The importance of this new research, and in the new association of BML with The Reading Partnership, is the extension of questions from the mainly factual and socio-economic into the habits and motivations of those who read books. This new survey is full of data that goes beyond the WHAT? to cover the WHY? and WHAT FOR? How much time are people willing and able to devote to reading? What is its value to them? Are they reading more or less now than previously, and why?

The main reasons for reading books are formulated as

- For pleasure / entertainment
- To get information / find things out
- Curiosity / general interest
- Knowledge / self improvement
- School / study
- To use imagination
- Escapism
- A special activity unlike others
- For business / work

There is statistical data to show the relative importance of these factors, how they split between the opulent and deprived in society, how they split by gender, how they break down between library use and book purchase. The differences that people recognise between Fiction and Non-Fiction are much less than anticipated.

There are perceptive comments in the analysis – such as this, which is highly relevant to the 'Future of Networking' debate:

"And for readers of non-fiction, the particular value of reading books is the convenient and easily-absorbable way that knowledge is made available, allowing them to obtain information as and when it suits them."

It would be unfair to the publishers to give much more than this away in a mere review. To find out more you will have to get hold of 'the real McCoy'. Suffice it to say that the presentation is meticulous and the scope is wide.

The material here is essential for anyone wanting to understand the continuing importance of reading and to appreciate the value of reading schemes and initiatives now springing up all over the country. It is essential background to most public library research. There is a lot here too that librarians would find valuable when making the case for maintaining rather than cutting the level of traditional resources.

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