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## Book Reviews

**Barton, Jane and Blagden, John** **ACADEMIC LIBRARY EFFECTIVENESS: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH** British Library Research and Innovation Report 120; 1998. A4 paperback, 146 pages. ISBN 0 7123 9723X. Price £12 from British Thesis Service, BLDSC, Boston Spa, Yorks. LS23 7BQ, UK.

Under pressure from the Funding Councils in the heady days of the Follett Report a document was rather hastily put together in 1995 entitled *The Effective Academic Library*. Many of the items were not performance measures in the accepted sense but more general management goals and processes. 21 'true' indicators were classified under Delivery, Efficiency and Economy. They were mostly drawn from international texts and were related to the SCONUL Statistics. While the value of some items in this short selection was obvious, in other cases there were idiosyncrasies difficult to fathom.

The "consultative" aspect in its title recognised the need for testing and refinement which started formally in 1997. Prospects for the research project were good. The bulk of the work was to be done by Jane Barton - already thoroughly familiar with the state of SCONUL statistics through detailed work on them at LISU - while John Blagden had many years of distinguished performance measurement research under his belt. Moreover the work was not to be rushed: a full year was allocated.

The principal objective of the exercise was to produce a small set of indicators - say, between five and ten - which would indicate the health of a university's library operation to Vice Chancellors and to those responsible for funding. Both the small target number of indicators and the focus on the funding stakeholders distinguish this from more general work on library performance. However, the authors have stretched their terms of reference so that many more than the chosen nine receive thoughtful consideration.

To arrive at the target there were three main areas of study.

First there was a great deal of consultation, formal and informal, with all sorts of experts and stakeholders. This began with fully documented reactions to *The Effective Academic Library*.

Then there was a study of the (international) literature. The review sections of this report provide an excellent summary of the latest texts and developments. There are full and useful bibliographies.

Finally it was important that the recommendations were demonstrably feasible, and - for this purpose - the background of the SCONUL Annual Statistics was thoroughly examined and explained. Some otherwise promising ideas were dropped on the pragmatic grounds that adequate statistical data was not available. In the course of this exercise the many qualities of this statistical series - built up over many years by SCONUL and by COPOL - are reviewed and illustrated with extracts from the statistical tables. Their potential for ranked displays under many variables and ratios is explored along with some 'fun' correlations and scatter graphs. Appendix G gives forty tables compiled from the 1995 - 96 SCONUL *Statistics* in a particularly readable format.

One original proposal is to include Items on Loan (and In Use) - a statistic easily obtained and where the advantages over a straight Issue count are becoming ever more apparent. It would be giving the game away to disclose here more of the nine recommended 'core indicators'! But we can hope for at least two developments in the immediate future. First, there is a recommendation that the Higher Education Statistics Agency publishes a set of library statistics - to make up for those it discontinued when it was set up! Second, there are prospects for a more complete dataset of SCONUL statistics to be held at LISU and to be available for benchmarking activity. This report is invaluable in pointing to the advantages of such developments.

The authors cover management statistics and quality management issues as well as performance indicators proper. But pioneering is outside the scope of this project. The gaps in information on functional costs and the problems of quantifying In-House Use are recognised - as are the problems posed by electronic networked developments and converged services. Developments abroad do not



figure to any degree. Focus is on what is feasible here and now in the United Kingdom.

So, in summary, we have here a carefully reasoned set of recommendations based on sound analysis, good judgement and consensus support. There is a wealth of hints and suggestions for improving library management through imaginative analysis of available statistics. We have a review of the development of statistical practice in UK Higher Education Libraries pointing the way ahead and demonstrating how well advanced this is.

Altogether this report cannot be too highly commended. Paradoxically the decision of BLRIC to cease its formal publication programme has the result, in this case, of minimising marketing effort and publicity for the report. But for those 'in the know' the price of £ 12 represents excellent value: editing is to a high standard and the utilitarian canvas spine photocopied printing is well turned out and entirely adequate.

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**Lancaster, F. W. INDEXING AND ABSTRACTING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE. Second edition**, 1998. London, Library Association Publishing. 412 pages, hardback, 24cm. ISBN: 1 85604 268 5. Price: £39.95

Published in 1991, the first edition of F.W. Lancaster's book was welcomed as a clear presentation of subject indexing and abstracting. This 2nd edition has been updated and expanded to include chapters on the indexing and abstracting of multimedia resources and indexing on the Internet. The chapters on automatic processing methods have been substantially revised, as has the final chapter on the future of indexing and abstracting. Examples, citations and references have been updated in all chapters.

The strength of this book is that the author writes about the principles governing indexing and

abstracting as well as the practice. The text is supplemented with real exercises in indexing and abstracting. A constant theme throughout the text is the author's re-iteration that indexing and abstracting are not activities which are ends in themselves but must be evaluated according to the criteria of coverage, retrievability, predictability and timeliness.

The organisation of the text has changed little from the first edition although the content has been significantly updated. It is divided into two sections: Theory, Principles and Applications; and Practice.

The 17 chapters comprising the first section cover a wide spectrum of topics relating to the principles, practice and quality of indexing and abstracting. Individual chapters deal with indexing principles and practice, pre-co-ordinate indexes, consistency and quality of indexing, the types and functions of abstracts, writing the abstract, evaluation aspects, approaches used in indexing and abstracting services, ways of enhancing indexing, the indexing and abstracting of imaginative works, indexing multimedia sources, text (natural language) searching, automatic indexing and abstracting, indexing and the Internet - with a final chapter looking to the future. The chapters on text searching and automatic indexing and abstracting have been substantially rewritten and, with the added chapter on indexing and the Internet, deal with various aspects of text processing in an automated environment. Given the growth of the Internet during this decade, the final chapter on the future of indexing and abstracting has clearly had to be completely revised. The author concludes that the continued growth of network-accessible information resources will make subject analysis activities more important than ever.

The section presents an excellent overview of the subject with an emphasis on the disciplines of indexing and abstracting as complementary activities, leavened with Professor Lancaster's own comments and reviews of the literature.

The 'Practice' section consists of exercises (together with solutions) which illustrate and apply the principles of indexing and abstracting covered in the first section. These are particularly useful to the library/information student and are well chosen and wide-ranging. The author's comments are



particularly helpful. As with Part 1 there has been some updating of the practical exercises.

The main text is supplemented by three appendices: a summary of abstracting principles, a cautionary tale entitled 'The Fatal Abstract' (a tutorial farce in one act), and modular contents analysis with subject modules. However, it is a pity that the glossary appendix from the first edition has been dropped.

The text is supported by many illustrations of the various types of indexes and abstracts described throughout. A minor irritation is that a few of these examples are on succeeding pages to the text they illustrate. There is an excellent and extensive bibliography.

Professor Lancaster is to be congratulated on the second edition of an excellent work which should be part of every library science collection, especially in an era when the amount of full text that is becoming accessible is growing exponentially. As with the first edition, the author intended this as an introductory text to what can be a complex topic aimed at library/information students. However, its potential audience is far wider. This book will be invaluable to information professionals - whether novice or experienced - who wish to update their knowledge of indexing, abstracting and information retrieval.

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**MURPHY, Alison STATISTICS FROM THE NHS REGIONAL LIBRARIANS GROUP 1996-97.** Loughborough University, Library and Information Statistics Unit. 1998. 356 pages, covered spiral bound, A4. ISBN: 1 901 786 07 2. Price: £25.00

This is the second published survey of the operations and performance of the National Health Service libraries. The information was collected and made available by the NHS Regional Librarians Group to LISU, which has produced another high quality report. It demonstrates the value of objective statistical data at a time when considerable emphasis is being placed on accountability.

The report is arranged in two parts. The first provides a summary and analysis section, and the second, regional data tables for each library that took part in the survey. Information is provided on: expenditure on staff and materials; sources of funding; provision of services; resources and their use; breakdowns of potential and actual users populations; floor space; staffed opening hours; and study space.

The NHS librarians have had the benefit of several reports about the value and impact of information in clinical decision-making and the contribution that libraries make to that process.

The NHS libraries vary considerably in their size and the services that can be offered, so making comparisons between regions and individual services has to be approached with considerable caution. The response rate to the survey was 85% which is high, but that for Wales was only 76% and Scotland 65%, although Northern Ireland scored 100%. Problems were encountered in estimating the numbers of potential users, for some libraries are open to the public and do not have a closed community of users. The provision of services to the public is to be welcomed if patients and their families are to be fully informed. Nurses made up the highest percentage of potential users at 42%, medical and clinical staff 23%, managerial and administrative staff 25%, 10% students and 1% teaching staff. The numbers of actual users were difficult to quantify for some libraries do not have membership records, as for example, some allow reference use only for certain categories of user.



Difficulties also emerged in gathering comparable data concerning expenditure on materials. Record keeping categories and accounting practices varied between the regions and the libraries. For the 56% of the libraries which could provide a full response, 51% of the total expenditure was for staff, 22% for journals, 12% for books, 11% for services and 5% for electronic information. If the materials expenditure is analysed, then 57% was spent on journals, 31% on books and 12% on electronic information. There was considerable variation in expenditure on materials across the regions. The highest expenditure on electronic information, as a percentage of the total materials expenditure, was recorded in the Oxford and North-West Thames Regions. This is probably partly explained by the range of funding sources since some libraries receive their income from up to ten sources.

The NHS libraries employ some 1,000 staff and about half have a professional qualification. NW Thames and Oxford employ more staff than any other region.

This is another valuable compendium of statistics. The NHS librarians, in gathering information for this second survey, have achieved a great deal. It is to be hoped that non-contributing libraries will be encouraged to provide 100% coverage for the next survey.

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Creaser, Claire and Murphy, Alison **A SURVEY OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN IN THE UK 1997-98**. Loughborough University, Library and Information Statistics Unit. 1998. 266 pages, A4 half Canadian bound. ISBN 1 901768 11 0. Price: £22.50

This is the ninth in a series of annual reports, which provides a picture of services to children by public and school library services in the UK. In a political context it covers the first year of the New Labour Government and the reorganisation of local government in England. The report continues the high standards that have been set by LISU for the reporting of statistical data by describing the situation in detail and by providing a commentary. With increasing interest in benchmarking and accountability, it provides objective information for each library service. The principal indicators are shown as per head of the population to aid comparison.

There has been a welcome increase in the numbers of librarians in schools — a rise of 12% in 1997-98 - and this follows trends elsewhere. The situation, however, has not been mirrored in the public library service. The best provision was in London with one professional specialist librarian to 7,000 children, but the average was only 1 per 16,000 with lower figures recorded in Wales and the English Unitary authorities. At the time of writing this review it does not appear that the situation will improve - as closures of public libraries are being reported, even in local authorities that were once noted for the qu Camden.

In terms of overall expenditure on school libraries Northern Ireland has the highest expenditure per capita, and the metropolitan districts the lowest. There was an increased spending in the English counties from 1996-7 probably due partly to the removal of the unitary authorities. There has been a significant fall in real spending in Scotland, particularly following reorganisation in 1996 - 34% over a five-year period. In Wales spending fell slightly in 1996-7 and has risen in 1997-98, an increase of 23% in real terms. In London the fall is 23%, the metropolitan districts 24%, in Northern Ireland 26%.

Of special interest is spending on materials, given a focus on literacy, the National Year of Reading, and



campaigns to put more books in school libraries. The pattern of expenditure on materials in school libraries almost mirrors that of overall expenditure. Wales had an increase of 75% over a five-year period, notably since local government reorganisation. In terms of the public library spending on materials the metropolitan districts have preserved the value of spending, with Scotland showing significant falls since reorganisation, and Wales a steady fall over the past five years. In all sectors except for the metropolitan districts, the materials spending per capita in cash terms was lower in 1997-98 than in 1992-2. When the range of formats is considered, then the amount spent on books has reduced even further.

The trends are worrying. Given the need for a greater focus on IT in the public library, then we must be concerned about books and reading for children. Not that we shouldn't pay more attention to other sources of information, but rather that books are also important.

Important too is the role of the children's library specialist in the public library who has a vital role to play in encouraging children to read - through the selection of stock, providing advice, and running promotional activities. If the government's aim is to encourage a rise in literacy, bring meaning to equality, and raise educational standards, then local authorities should take this responsibility more seriously. It will be interesting to see if action is taken in the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly.

Without the investment in LISU, libraries would not have the tools for benchmarking and lobbying - it is excellent value for money.

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**Stueart, R. D. and Moran, B. B. LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTER MANAGEMENT.** Englewood, Colo., Libraries Unlimited. 5th edition 1998. 450 pages, ISBN: 1 56308 5933. Price: £52.95

The first edition of this enduring textbook entitled *Library Management* appeared over 20 years ago. The basic format has remained much the same although clearly the content has changed radically. Over the years the four previous editions have broadened their scope and this is reflected in the current title. The statement in the Preface that the latest edition has become more international in scope is debatable given the overwhelmingly North American bias. This should not, however, detract from the fact that this remains an excellent textbook aimed at LIS teaching staff and students, practising librarians and other information managers. The authors also make the important point that the book is aimed at those being managed as well as those doing the managing.

Stueart and Moran address established management theories and try to relate them to contemporary practice. In fact, they offer support to library managers who want to adopt proven principles from the non-library world that they think will contribute to the successful operation of their organisations. The seven chapters deal with the complex and interrelated functions common to all organisations and their current and future managers. The authors emphasise that each chapter covers a particular function although in practice management is likely to involve simultaneous use of a range of different elements.

After the introductory chapter on the historical development of management theory each is devoted to a particular function - planning, organising, staffing, directing, control and, lastly, changing systems. Chapter 2 covers the techniques of planning and, in particular, strategic planning (including visions, missions and goals) and policy making. Following on logically from strategic planning, Chapter 3 considers the best organisational structures with which to achieve institutional objectives. Topics covered include organisational culture, departmentalisation (and the seminal work of Mintzberg), hierarchical versus flatter structures, bureaucratic versus organic structures and organisation charts.

The central and largest chapter (over 100 pages) is about staffing. Managing human resources - as it continues to call itself - has become a lot more complex in the last decade or so. The reasons for this include the speed and depth of technological development, moves to greater flexibility, higher expectations of employees, more team working, casualisation of the workforce, legislation etc. This complexity is reflected in this excellent chapter which stresses the key point that human resource issues, if they are to be addressed properly, take up enormous amounts of staff time. Recruitment and selection, staff development and training, performance appraisal and salaries and other benefits are all dealt with in some detail. "Getting things done through people" is one common definition of management.

"Directing" which is the subject of Chapter 5 is the managerial function that enables this to happen. Some old friends are revisited here - the Hawthorne studies, McGregor's Theories X and Y, Maslow and Herzberg, Likert and Vroom's Expectancy Theory. The chapter revolves around motivation, leadership and communication with discussion of some modern methods towards the end. These include participative management, TQM and contingency management.

The penultimate chapter considers the importance of control, viewed as a progressive element, with techniques being applied towards achieving success rather than a more negative view of stifling initiative. Included here are performance measures and evaluation systems, developing techniques for allocating resources and budgetary control. "Changing Library and Information Systems" covers the management of change and how to make it work for you.

Like any good textbook this one is generous with its references and provides plenty of further readings at the end of each chapter. I would like to have seen more examples to illustrate the translation of theory into practice, perhaps in terms of case studies. These would help to break up the text which in parts borders on the over-theoretical. Overall, good value for money.

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