

## Reviews

### **Bazillion, Richard J. and Braun, Connie**

Academic libraries as high-tech gateways: a guide to design and space decisions. Chicago: American Library Association, 1995. Price £31.95. ISBN (0-8389-0656-7).

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Surprisingly little has been written about how traditional academic library functions and electronic information services can be accommodated under the same roof. Not only have there been many new buildings and extensions developed on UK campuses over the last five years but also existing facilities have often had to be radically altered. This latter process invariably throws up different - and more taxing - problems than starting from scratch. In either case the detailed advice offered in this 180 page volume is most welcome. The experiences of the authors suggest that they are well-versed in the planning and construction of library buildings. Both have been through the process in American universities and have also visited a range of other academic libraries in transition in preparation for writing this book.

The six chapters comprise an interesting mix ranging from the traditional (how to measure study space, shelving etc) through the pedagogic (the library as a teaching instrument) to the futuristic (the role of a building in the era of distance learning). It has to be said at the outset that the authors are quite clear about the role of libraries as physical entities. "Our answer is that the library, as a building, will continue to be a central place on campus to which people will come in search of knowledge or to find a quiet place to study. They will arrive in person or through electronic link from a remote terminal" (p5). They are arguing for a more carefully considered approach to how buildings can be adapted for maximum flexibility. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the main issues of the book, eg computers and library design, IT and computer literacy, electronic publishing and the librarian's role in the electronic environment. This is followed by a brief look at the attributes of the future library including the use of computer-aided design for library buildings, the importance of flexibility, the modularity (as distinct from modularisation, which many of us are heartily sick of hearing about!) of the library's interior, the electronic infrastructure and, finally, convergence. Chapter 3 answers the question "What is an intelligent building?" Apparently, it's one in which computerised systems control security, lighting and air-handling functions. We are therefore offered advice on organising interior space in a secure, well-lit and comfortable environment. This includes measuring processes and colour schemes. The importance of furnishing, equipping and testing the building is emphasised in the next chapter. There is sometimes a tendency to skate over these matters having gone through the major trauma of planning a new building, seeing light at the end of the tunnel and then perhaps having to face the prospect of being overspent.. This, say the authors, would be a mistake. I like the

idea of dividing the process of testing the building into three categories: psychological, physical and environmental, with a rating scheme to evaluate the building's performance. The penultimate chapter - and, for me, the most interesting - looks at the library as a teaching instrument ie "a building that is wired and equipped to facilitate the learning of electronic research skills" (p129). The authors discuss academic library models, user instruction, the electronic classroom, the rationale for teaching electronic research skills and even give an example of a syllabus for such a programme. The short final chapter points ahead to the next Millenium and provides some alternative visions. In a book that is predominantly American it is interesting to note that in this chapter much reference is made to the work taking place at De Montfort University.

This is a well-researched book with numerous notes and references for those who want to pursue particular issues. Although copiously illustrated, they are by and large rather dull photographs or rudimentary diagrams. The book's readership would divide into two camps: those who are seeking up-to-date practical advice on library design and those in the profession (or planning to enter the profession) who want to stay alert to the issues at the confluence of IT, architecture and librarianship. Neither camp would be disappointed.

### **Brophy, Peter and Coulling, Kate**

Quality management for information and library managers. Aldershot: Aslib Gower. February 1996. £37.50 (ISBN 0 566 07725 6).

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By now this book will have received several reviews and should be well established as an essential text in university teaching departments. (There were already four copies in my nearest academic library when this review was put in hand and rumours of a reprint required to keep the book commercially in stock.) Such success is well deserved and it is rewarding to analyse the reasons for it.

First and foremost this is an incredibly useful book. Not only are almost all the important sources referenced; in most cases the authors provide an intelligent summary - so saving time and effort for student and researchers. For example, the essential features and lists in King's, Keys to success (for public libraries) are 'guttled' and reproduced in four condensed pages - along with Ian Bloor's perceptive critique of the terminology. Similar treatment is accorded to the van House series of American Library Association manuals and the later IFLA work on performance measures in academic libraries.

Then the authors have most sensibly decided against any demarcation between Quality and Performance Measurement. The relevant 'performance' texts are all included even if not anticipated in the title. We even find an exposition of the Pareto 80:20 concept normally avoided by LIS pundits! "Marketing" is not explicitly mentioned, but that does not preclude quite a lot on customer base, customer demand, customer expectations and user satisfaction. So the scope of the book is broad. Full marks for comprehensiveness, though not quite 100 per cent - as explained below.

As the reader would expect the differences in approach between ISO 9000, Total Quality Management, Charters, etc. are fully and clearly described and evaluated.

The quality of page layout is good; there are relevant graphics; there is a valuable bibliography; the index is somewhat short. The writing is lively and full of interesting sidelights. Altogether this is an excellent example of what a good book should contain. This is not original 'journal' material: it is very useful summary of the information most people need to have - both to bring themselves up to date in this important area and for reference.

Since this publishing enterprise is so good, let us hope for updated editions every four or five years. In that context there will be much development to cover in the years ahead, but there are also some omissions to be noted in the present work - which may amount to undue bias towards the academic rather than the public library. Nick Moore's Measuring the performance of public libraries, NESCO, 1989, must rank as one of the most influential texts never to have got beyond the draft publication stage! Sumsion's 1993 report Practical performance indicators 1992 gets a mention but not the much more complete and satisfactory Tool Box Study prepared for the European Commission and published in 1995 as Ward, S. et al Library performance indicators and library management tools. Nor does this text recognise the importance of the UK national user survey project undertaken by CIPFA and included - along with much else on public library performance - in England, L. and Sumsion, J. Perspectives of public library use, 1995. Perhaps these were too recent - or they may indicate the need for more on performance than the page ration allowed.

Some quality texts written for the LIS profession give the impression that quality management and quality control is a feature of the last two decades. Here the authors do not fall into this error and there are some interesting passages on the historical aspect. However, even here the perspective is somewhat shortened. As a postgraduate in the United States in the 1950s this reviewer was exposed to Statistical Quality Control as an established, if not old hat', discipline and was exposed as a matter of course to quality and market research concepts of the 'consumer as king'. Subsequently in British industry in the 1960s major efforts stressed the need to direct quality, product development and marketing to the consumer/user.

Were the librarians of the time so immune from what was being taken for granted in the rest of the world? These topics are not so recent as present day scholars suggest. The fact that Quality was not covered in professional librarians literature does not mean they did not exist. Or was it simply the case that library managers wanted to provide their users with books they wanted to borrow and to provide answers to reference questions that stood up to 'unobtrusive testing' as what was taken for granted without the 'quality' tag?

This may be a case of scholarship catching up with professional practice rather than providing the inspiration - an interesting speculation for the library historian to explore! Relevant reminiscences will be welcome for future issues of LIRN.

Such speculation reveals another virtue in this book. It may not claim originality in its approach, but its summary of what is known and what is uncertain will serve as an excellent base to map and plan the future research questions.

This book deserves to be widely read and used. It fills an important gap and has the potential to become the sort of classical text where the sixth edition of Brophy and Coulling, written - of course - by totally different people, will hit the bookstands and intranets in 2022!

## **Creaser, Claire**

A survey of library services to schools and children in the UK 1994-5. Loughborough, Library and Information Statistics Unit, Department of Information and Library Studies, Loughborough University, 1995. £19.50 (ISBN 0 948848 79 0).

## **Hanratty, Catherine and Sumsion, John**

International comparison of public library statistics. Loughborough, Library and Information Statistics Unit, Department of Information and Library Studies, Loughborough University. LISU Occasional paper no.12. May 1996. £20 (ISBN 0 948848).

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The two publications continue to report the excellent work that is carried out by LISU, and which sets a high standard for the important task of preparing statistical information concerning the development of library services. LISU has had a major influence on the preparation of statistics at an international level through the work of John Sumsion for the IFLA Section on Statistics.

Librarians are not necessarily known to have a high level of numeracy, but there is a need to further develop this skill in an age of competition for resources. Whilst it may not be able to make valid comparisons between library systems, there is nevertheless the possibility of developing cogent arguments when benchmarking. Such evidence may be persuasive to those who control the purse strings. Without the production of statistical data by an informed but disinterested organisation the information to develop an argument will not be available.

An international comparison of public library statistics holds the promise that very interesting data will emerge in the future. Whilst UNESCO collects and publishes international statistics on library activity, the collection of UK statistics is fragmented. There is a need to develop a coordinated and fundamental approach which will help government departments, funding agencies and managers of library services. For this reason LISU undertook a study to identify examples of good practice overseas which might be considered when seeking to improve UK practice. The examination covers statistical activity in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. A short introduction covers these points.

In the second chapter a description is provided for each country together with details of publications and sample pages. Thankfully translations into English have been provided for table headings. I turned with interest to look at the entry for Western Australia, one service known to me. Three pages of tables were provided which showed by service point: general and membership information, library stock and issues, and extension services; this was accompanied by a one page description of the Statistical bulletin for public libraries in Western Australia. This explained the content, the number of libraries covered and resident populations etc., together with some points that affect the statistics e.g. that the cut-off date for junior members is 12, and a brief description of the role of the Library Board of Western Australia. Sufficient information has been provided to understand the administration of the service which in turn affects the statistics.

The third chapter provides a comparison of statistical headings, giving clear tables and a commentary. The fourth chapter includes a comparison of CIPFA statistics against international standards, and here the problems of making international comparisons becomes clear. I liked the comment under electronic documents - "The whole audio-visual - other area needs updating and sorting" - but for other points eg service points questions are posed or suggestions made for the revision of UK statistics. Chapter 5 contains the conclusions and notes the "incredible variety in the size and thickness of public library statistics volumes". The authors set down legitimate objectives for collecting statistical information and discuss the common features. The common shortfalls are discussed - delays in their appearance, items not reported such as the number of OPACs, no data concerning stocktaking or levels of theft etc. Some examples of good practice are noted, such as the inclusion in the Danish and Finnish statistics of estimated expenditure for the coming year. Proposals are made for further research. Chapter 6 reviews output measures, and there is a set of appendices.

Although this is a review of international practice and will not provide information for benchmarking at this stage, it nevertheless should be read by middle and senior management in libraries, if only to gain a better understanding of what statistics are all about - and to do this in a painless way. This review does not do justice to the content of the volume which is a mine of information. It should make managers think about the way they report their annual statistics, and perhaps find ways to make them more useful to the decision-makers within their local authority. I also suspect that it may be of interest to members of local authority committees responsible for library matters. There is a new breed of councillors anxious to learn - and who know the value of statistics. It will also be of great value to those teaching management in the library schools around the globe - for here is real teaching material for a difficult topic, and the students will find it a gold mine for projects and dissertations. It is an excellent document and deserves to be widely read.

A survey of library services to schools and children in the UK 1994-5 illustrates well the value of time-series data which indicate changes in provision over time. This is the seventh in the series, published at a time when great interest is being expressed in services to young people at a time of financial cutbacks, and changes that will take place in the organisation of local government. The survey provides an introduction, sections on staffing, public library services to children, schools library services, and a series of appendices. It reveals the extent of the difficulties that the staff of these services faced in 1994-5. Only 17 of 124 local authorities met the LISC target for expenditure on materials. An increase in children's staff took place in the public libraries in the English counties, metropolitan districts and Scotland; elsewhere there were falls, notably in London of 30%. In the schools library services the falls recorded were over 20% for England. In terms of the total expenditure for the schools library services - the fall in England was 15% and Scotland 18%, with Wales recording an increase of 19% and Northern Ireland 14% in 1994/5 as compared with 1991/2. The information provided is detailed and presented very clearly. This is a management resource to be used by all schools librarians and public librarians in benchmarking their services. With the emphasis being placed on educational standards, the quality of teaching and learning and the need for school students to have places where they can do their homework, there is a strong argument for raising the level of expenditure on the schools library service and the public library service.

Both volumes are of considerable value, and also make interesting reading.

## Day, Abby

How to get research published in journals. Aldershot: Gower, 1996. £16.95. (ISBN 0-566-07767-1).

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The recent glut of books giving advice on the whole process of getting published is surely not unconnected to the increasing pressure being placed on academic and research staff to “publish or perish”. Since it is the results of any research that are the main point of focus, it is crucial that they are disseminated as widely as possible whether through books, chapters, journal articles, conference papers, bulletin boards or via some other formal or informal network. The high profile of the quadrennial Research Assessment Exercise has raised a number of issues surrounding scholarly publishing. These include the quantity versus quality of submissions, the comparability of types of publication (book v chapter v refereed article v conference paper etc), the portability of authors’ publications lists and the debatable practice of “salami-slicing” (extracting multiple articles from one piece of research). Against this background Dr. Day’s concise practical guide is very welcome. Through her extensive experience as a journal editor - she has edited six academic journals and is currently a freelance writer and editor - she is well-placed to offer valuable advice and guidance. Particularly insightful is her knowledge of the inside workings of the reviewing procedure which, to some writers, can seem arcane and full of mystery.

The book’s fourteen short chapters follow a traditional linear path from “Setting your objectives” (Part I - chapters 1-5) through “Think audience” (Part II - chapters 6-9) to “From draft to print” (Part III - chapters 10-14). This journey mirrors the stages authors go through as they work towards successful publication. In the first couple of chapters Day draws together the main reasons people give for why they should, or should not publish eg to gain feedback, to enhance self-worth and improve promotion prospects versus fear of judgement, the need for perfection and the recognition of its lower priority status. The rest of Part I is based on the research findings of the author and a colleague about academic publishing. Indeed, illustrative quotations taken from this research are helpfully scattered throughout the text. The areas covered include: how to give an article purpose and focus; how to step back and view from a distance; how to attend to the implications of research and where the literature review fits in. The middle chapters are concerned with the editorial boards as customers and readers as consumers. What are their needs? What constitutes a “quality” journal? We penetrate the journal to become acquainted with the work of editors and reviewers. For the latter the author provides a good test - the 5 minute test - to judge whether an article is worth reading. The test’s five criteria are purpose, key points, implications, readability and appeal. The centrality of Chapter 9 (Targeting journals) is evidenced by the fact that “editors reject up to half the articles they receive simply because they are not suited to that particular journal’s brief” (p57). The stages writers go through in order to select the most appropriate journal are discussed clearly and logically. The final forty-three pages offer guidance on writing an academic paper in a week including creating a plan, providing a detailed outline and, finally, the enjoyable part - the actual writing. Chapter 11 considers the article’s structure: the introduction (the potential reader’s questions are - what’s this about? is it interesting? should I read it? can I use it?), the background, the methods used, analysis of the data and the implications of the research results. This is followed by a chapter on writing style. Due to its inevitably subjective nature it can be a notoriously difficult area on which to offer advice. However, the author successfully avoids the patronising tone which such chapters can occasionally adopt. The penultimate chapter follows the finished article from word processor, through acceptance (rejection? revision?) and subediting to author’s proofs. Perhaps surprisingly in the summing-up

chapter, readers are recommended to look at the Sun newspaper to see examples of good practice: the distillation of the world news into a few paragraphs!

This is a gem of a book offering sound advice based on empirical research. Highly readable, it is aimed primarily at those submitting articles for the first time but the clarity of the text and diverse range of insights mean that the experienced writer will also gain much.

### **Wells, Marianna S, and Young, Rosemary**

Moving and reorganizing a library. Aldershot: Gower, 1997. £35.00. (ISBN 0-566-07701-9).

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Despite its title, this is definitely a book about moving libraries rather than reorganising them. It is based on experience in the academic sector in the United States, where the authors are both staff at the University of Cincinnati, although it claims to be a comprehensive do-it-yourself guide for any library move. It is structured in two parts, the first of which (“Planning a new facility”) comprises around 90% of the content while the remainder deals very briefly with “Alternatives to a new library facility”.

The processes of planning and implementing a library relocation are covered pretty logically (ie, more or less sequentially) in Part 1. However, much of the content consists essentially of practical tips and reminders, which while no doubt useful to the first time mover could actually have been condensed into quite a brief checklist. Setting out relatively mundane matters in a narrative, discursive format almost inevitably results in frequent lapses into stating the obvious. For example,

“If the assignment requires putting books in boxes, detailed packing instructions must be given to the staff”. (p36)

“A precise assessment of current collection size and a reliable estimate for future expansion are key elements in planning space reorganisations”. (p51)

“The placement of furniture and equipment should also be mapped out prior to the move”. (p72)

“...a complete shutdown of library access ... allows for a swift and focussed execution of the move”. (p85)

Statements like these more or less random examples abound, and although taken out of context they fairly reflect the rather trivial character of much of the text. Chapter 9, on “Using software for moving a journal collection”, is somewhat different and contains a case study of the use of project management software. The guidance on calculating space requirements and appropriate allowances for collection growth (Chapter 6) is also somewhat more illuminating. More detailed discussion of the merits and potential of less familiar techniques such as those suggested in these two chapters could have given the book an added dimension and an added value for the inexperienced.

Although the association of ideas (relocating and reorganising) implicit in the title appeared

interesting initially, ultimately it proved disappointing. While not exactly incompatible they do not sit very comfortably together ; moving a library inevitably involves elements of reorganisation, but the occasion of a move is not necessarily the ideal time for significant changes in procedure or policy unless these are directly related to or consequent on the move itself. This somewhat inappropriate linking of issues leads directly to the second obvious weakness of the book.

Reorganisation is potentially a huge topic, and the chapters which most directly focus on library reorganisation (as opposed to moving) are simply not substantial enough to do justice to the questions they raise. For example, Chapter 2 deals with principles of library design in 14 pages ; Chapter 5 (“Reviewing the collection” - which includes stock editing and reclassification) and Chapter 15 (“Collection management and document delivery”) both skate very lightly over major collection development matters with minimal discussion of alternative approaches. To be fair, there is a short bibliography of further references to facilitate access to further material on some of these issues, although it is a selective and unannotated list.

When I was asked to review this book I was preparing for a major library relocation myself, and most of it was read while the move was in progress. Although it was actually too late to influence the planning in any case, I think reading it before moving would have made little difference. My advice to those embarking on moving a library would be to discuss their plans with colleagues who have been through the experience, rather than read this or any other book about it. I suspect that printed guidelines can never really prepare the uninitiated for the challenge, the complexity, the trauma, the potential chaos, or the ultimate satisfaction of successfully undertaking a large scale library relocation.