
Most librarians would concur that CD-ROM has utility as a source of database information with the benefit of predictable costs and that it is quickly gaining utility as a medium for full-text journals and multimedia applications. Chapter 1 begins, “How many years ago did information professionals hear of ‘CD-ROM’? Its usage has grown so rapidly that the acronym has become part of standard library jargon” (p. 3). This opener echoed my own initial question about whether CD-ROM implementation had already been documented sufficiently in the literature. However, this well-formed compilation quickly convinced me of its relevance and value.

CD-ROM Implementation and Networking in Health Sciences Libraries neatly compacts information about the history, selection, and management of CD-ROM technology in libraries. It will be most useful to libraries that have not yet installed CD-ROM systems or that have stand-alone workstations and are planning a network. Yet, this book has something to offer even libraries with fully installed and networked CD-ROM systems, by way of case studies of successful programs that describe financing, networking problems, training and staffing issues, and future developments. Libraries at all levels of CD-ROM implementation can benefit from the solutions and ideas presented.

Editor M. Sandra Wood has divided the book into two parts. Part 1, “CD-ROM Implementation and Issues,” offers four chapters that provide a foundation for understanding the technology: what it is, how it works, how to manage it effectively, and what to expect in the future. Part 2, “Description of Programs and Networking,” presents seven case studies that describe successful programs and installations including stand-alone, local-area network, and wide-area network systems.

While some themes, such as education and staffing, are repeated in more than one chapter, each discussion contributes unique observations. The reader could use this text as a reference, gleaning from the abstracts those papers that seem most beneficial. However, the editor has arranged the chapters in such a logical progression that the book is also easily read straight through.

Part 1 begins with an introduction by Elizabeth H. Wood, who describes CD-ROM in all its technical glory. This introduction provides an excellent physical description, followed by a past, present, and future look at the application of this technology. The evaluation and selection criteria for CD-ROM products is comprehensively discussed by Virginia A. Lingle and Eric P. Delozier. The authors have included a checklist of noteworthy selection criteria and a selected bibliography. Duade Chiang and Elizabeth H. Wood depict seven management issues: equipment requirements, physical location, access and security, policies and procedures, staffing, training and documentation, and copyright and site licensing. To know where we are going, it is instructive to study the past, and, in a most interesting chapter, Paul W. Kittle and Elizabeth H. Wood write about the history and future of CD-ROM.

Pricing and site licensing is a recurring topic throughout part 1 and a topic generally acknowledged to be a major stumbling block in the advancement of CD-ROM use. It would have been helpful to have included a paper on this subject alone, which could provide more information about electronic copyright issues, current pricing trends, and suggestions for negotiating license agreements. Chiang and Wood maintain that librarians play a role in licensing issues and offer the following words of encouragement: “Librarians can assist in the development process by avoiding an adversarial approach to producers and by making suggestions on what real usage is, how it can be monitored and assessed, and how librarians can work together with producers to maximize the benefits to all of the immense potential of information sources on CD-ROM” (p. 43).

The first case study in part 2 is by Howard Silver and Judy Gelzinis Donovan, who describe their migration at Hahnemann University from one end-user MEDLINE system to another. They present a thoughtful discussion about the steps to follow to ensure success that could easily be applied to making any technological change. Instructional implications are discussed by A. Janet Lamki and Patricia G. Hinagaider from the University of Maryland. The authors describe the evolution of a robust educational program, including point-of-use instruction, seminars, course-related instruction, and consultation services. Ann S. Nista, Karen M. Albert, and Beth M. Lewis narrate the development of a CD-ROM cost-recov-
The next three chapters characterize specific site installations. Francis A. Brahmi describes the implementation of a CD-ROM local-area network at Indiana University and provides an honest description of some networking problems. Paul W. Kittle and Gilbert V. Abella describe the development of a wide-area network CD-ROM system as part of Loma Linda University’s Integrated Advanced Information Management System (IAIMS) implementation. A discussion about creative financing and a list of lessons learned from this experience are meaningful inclusions. The CD-ROM network that is part of an overall medical informatics library network at the University of Florida is outlined in detail by John C. Sanderlin, Susan E. Woods, and Janet M. Coggin. This paper clearly depicts several technical challenges that will undoubtedly confront other libraries planning an installation. The discussion of future plans is noteworthy also.

CD-ROM Implementation and Networking concludes with Alan C. Simon’s description of the Health Sciences Libraries Consortium (HSLC) database retrieval system. Based on the CD Plus PlusNet2 system, the HSLC system uses magnetic disk storage rather than CD-ROM storage. HSLC staff further modified the hardware configuration to include distributed servers, which allow access to the database system from a variety of devices. This paper sets forth a unique solution to providing access to databases over a wide-area network. This book does not purport to be the definitive CD-ROM implementation resource, but it succeeds admirably in fulfilling M. Sandra Wood’s hope “that the papers which are included will prove useful to those individuals who are investigating the implementation or expansion of CD-ROM-based systems . . .” (p. xiv). Used in conjunction with other resources, this book will help librarians plan new installations and networks while avoiding pitfalls.

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This volume consists of twelve papers, an introduction, and a summary of the 1992 Annual Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing, sponsored by the University of Illinois School of Library and Information Science. To quote the summary abstract,

The focus of the clinic was designing information, and topics discussed include design principles, knowledge management, applications of technology to information workstations, graphical interfaces, public library use of the Internet, electronic information in school libraries, computer-mediated instruction, computer-based staff training, design techniques, hypertext, information delivery in a networked environment, and the Cleveland Free-Net (p. 204).

Missing from the clinic’s record are the keynote speech by Edward Tufte (too bad!), the text of an illustrated talk about graphical user interfaces, and detailed information about a poster session and three preconference workshops. Otherwise, the book is an edited conference proceedings, something many librarians would not buy. This is regrettable, because the collection is an excellent reader in leading-edge library practice.

The authors are among the early adopters of new information technologies. They integrate technology into library services: Jean Polly describes how her library became “the nation’s smallest public library with Internet connectivity” (p. 78) and provides useful appendices for information about Internet resources. They create electronic information access tools: Peter Scott discusses the development of HYTELNET and gives advice about what librarians can do with hypertext. They examine the goals of libraries and propose new roles: Richard Lucier presents a conceptual overview of what he calls the “Knowledge Management Environment,” defined as “an integration of knowledge sources, access and delivery systems, education and training programs, and personalized services” (p. 6). They advocate collaboration with other information specialists and suggest a new relationship to users: Carolyn Gray describes “a joint project between Brandeis University Libraries and Digital Equipment Corporation’s Cambridge Research Laboratory . . . that seeks to understand the changing nature of scholarly research and to develop computer-based tools to assist scholars in their research activities” (p. 25). She does this within the context of models of the information cycle and theories of knowledge work, but also includes an ethnographic case study that depicts the research habits of the Brandeis Radio Astronomy Group. Her point is that instead of studying what users are doing in the library, librarians should work to understand “what the needs of end-users are in relation to a spe-