
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-
pecific information activity” (p. 19). The authors cover a wide range of topics, from designing workstations to designing computer screens, from the use of computers in school libraries to the development and use of community Fre-Nets. What they have in common is a forward-looking commitment to information access and management or, to cite one of Lucier’s guiding principles, “entrepreneurial responsiveness to environmental changes, opportunities, and emerging information technologies” (p. 15).

The collection balances theory and practice. Ruth Small, an educator, reviews current learning theory as it applies to the design of computer-mediated instruction. Joe Rader, a librarian, describes a successful computer-based training program for library staff. Ronnie Peters, a graphic designer, points out the principles of good screen design. Virginia Tiefel et al., librarians, discuss the design of screens for the extended OPACs at their respective institutions.

There is something of interest in this volume for all librarians. As Katharina Klemperer, another contributor, points out,

While libraries still provide the same service they always have—access to information—the tools and skills are entirely different from those that were taught in library schools a decade ago. The volume and variety of electronic information resources, the increase in desktop computing power, and the pervasiveness of networks have combined to challenge the resources of information providers [p. 178].

As a midcareer practitioner, I found reading this book a convenient way to measure my own knowledge and skills. I learned a few things and was inspired to learn more. Anyone contemplating a career in librarianship, or “informationship,” as a friend and colleague prefers to call it, would benefit from this sampling of what some librarians do now and many more will be doing soon. Other collections—yearbooks, annual reviews, conference proceedings—might serve the same purpose. The book is well written and edited. It combines scholarship and practice and could be used as a reader in an introductory course in library science.

All of the reasons to read this book have to do with it as a snapshot composite of very current practice. My chief criticism is that the book and review publishing process delays availability and reader awareness almost beyond the point of usefulness. The clinic was held in April 1992. The copyright date is 1993. MLA received the book for review in July 1993. This review was submitted in October, and it is scheduled for publication in April 1994. By publishing standards, this project was probably on the fast track, but, two years after the fact, when you read this, the snapshot is bound to be a little dated. It is ironic that the dissemination of timely material about designing new information systems depends on what Lucier points out as “the limitations of this prevailing model for scientific communication” (p. 7).

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Since the first published report appeared in the early 1980s, the body of literature on HIV and AIDS has grown dramatically. As more information was discovered and then disseminated, a new language developed to describe the myriad of medical, legal, social, psychological, and religious aspects of the pandemic. It is therefore not surprising to see the publication of the first dictionary to focus on the topic of AIDS. Author Jeffrey Huber has done an admirable job of compiling a guide to some of the most common terms to be encountered, but he has also acknowledged in the preface the importance of current information available from AIDS service providers.

The format of the work is alphabetical, with terms highlighted in bold print, and brief, concise entries. No illustrations or appendices accompany the text. Key words, names, and phrases are included with ample cross-references from abbreviations and acronyms. The most notable inclusions are the significant number of slang or alternative terms and concepts such as “freebasing,” “buyer's group,” “gay plague,” and “rimming.” Although the author has stated that the entries were written for a broad readership, the definitions for most medical and scientific terms still incorporate technical writing more appropriate for a professional audience than for the general public.

Information on individuals is sketchy and inconsistent. Factual data such as birth date, education, and position is included in some entries, but not all. One or two sentences describe the person's significance in the AIDS arena. However, the addresses (and indeed the inclusion of names in general) will prove to quickly outdate the dictionary. The information provided on organizations is similar to that found in other directories, but the coverage of specialty AIDS organizations and projects is not as comprehensive. For example, there are no entries for the Physicians As-