The editors successfully blend both theory and practice; they have done an impressive job of selecting and annotating their chosen resources to capture the essence of their subjects. For example, Marcia Tuttle's chapter on serials management includes an overview that begins with a brief history of the serials management function and various organizational contexts for serials management. She identifies current concerns including serials publishing trends, electronic publishing, serials automation, the changing role of subscription agents, the journal marketplace, serials pricing and subscription cancellations, resource sharing, serials holdings lists and union lists, journal article access versus journal subscriptions, and the future role of the serials specialist. Resources selected support all of the above topics. The result is a guide that is useful to students, practitioners, and administrators.

Currency is a major concern for any resource guide. It is critical in an area as dynamic as technical services. Because the editors regard currency as a primary consideration, they plan to publish regular periodic supplements and cumulative editions. Date was also a criterion for the selection of resources. "The Guide contains few works published before 1985" (p. 1). "A few older resources are included when they are important for understanding current practice or for solving problems with older formats, policies, and procedures" (p. 2). An even more important aspect of currency is the editors' understanding of trends, developments, and the evolutionary nature of technical services organization. This is evidenced not only by the resources selected and their annotations and overview comments but also by the attention given to management issues of changing staff and professional roles and to the role of technical services within the total library organization. A listing of selected subsections from a few of the chapters illustrates the currency of the editors' perspectives: CD-ROM cataloging copy resources (descriptive cataloging chapter); electronic serials, copyright and licensing, subscription agents' databases (serials management chapter); and ANSI/NISO Z39.50 and the current state of record transport (database management chapter). The recognition and inclusion of electronic discussion groups as sources of expertise and professional support and the inclusion of the access services chapter are other positive indications of both the currency of perspective and practical knowledge of the editors.

Given that the volume earns high marks for quality and practical usefulness, the question still remains, What value does a broad-based general technical services guide have for medical libraries? The Guide actually does mention the standard MeSH tools in the chapter on subject analysis systems and includes resources on the indexing of medical literature in the chapter on filing and indexing but in many areas reflects the "Library of Congress (LC) bias" that technical services staff in medical libraries know well. However, our differences have become far less important over the last fifteen years, and most technical services practitioners will acknowledge that they depend heavily on LC and ALA information to stay current in technical services information and developments. This is an indication of the actual progress that has been made through standardization and cooperative ventures that were founded on the recognition of the commonality of our concerns. The quality, usefulness, and reasonable price should earn this guide a place in all but the smallest health sciences collections. Any serious technical services practitioner should have a copy close at hand.

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Reference


Medical librarians could easily dismiss the thirty papers presented in The Sixth Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings as relevant only to extension services librarians at university libraries. That would be a mistake. Based on a quick citation analysis, it appears that the proceedings of this conference series (first published in 1982), along with the ARL Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services [1], represent both the guiding principles and the cutting edge of library planning for extended education programs. Furthermore, the conference encourages a global sharing of experiences, including papers from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Britain, and the West Indies.

The disciplines and the library clients requiring information services are different, but the problems faced by someone designing distance support for an M.B.A. program are very similar to academic or hospital libraries providing distance information support. Many medical libraries will identify with the value of detailing costs to provide interlibrary loan services, cre-
ating a clear memorandum of understanding, developing the surveys to determine both faculty and student perceptions of library services, and combating the misunderstanding that technology will address all remote information needs at a low cost. Papers frequently deal with concerns common to libraries serving rural and geographically distant users. But there is also an account of an urban campus with a separate central-city program, as well as descriptions of sophisticated statewide and interstate networks.

One of the most valuable features of this compilation is the inclusion of appendices with each article that replicate survey forms, cost studies, checklists, questionnaires, agreements, and other precise descriptions of the equipment and staff required to provide distance services. These details are frequently desired for local planning and budgeting but are often left out in the final article found in peer-reviewed publications. The best of the papers in this proceedings are practical, with sufficient detail to help someone charged with expanding library services beyond a traditional central library.

Given the wide range of topics, it was a little surprising that no medical libraries were included, because many are on the leading edge in the use of electronic technology to support distant users. Perhaps the reason is that our end users are often physicians, nurses, and postgraduate students instead of undergraduate or graduate liberal arts and business students. There would appear to be value in collaboration between librarians who support distance learning and medical libraries charged with meeting the extended professional and continuing education needs of health care providers.

There are also some rough edges in this compilation. The quality of papers varies considerably, and some contain an annoying number of typographical errors. One paper was obviously re-edited for this conference and contained cited references in the text that did not match the appended bibliography. These occasional lapses do not distract from the overall value of the publication. Concern with editing is quickly forgotten after reading the superbly written paper by Whyte and Wolfe (p. 301), which discusses the value of effective bibliographic instruction and the librarian’s role in teaching the process of critical thinking to students.

The Off-Campus Library Services Directory lists 176 educational institutions in the United States and Canada with off-campus library services. It is divided into three sections: a short-entry alphabetized listing by institution; an institution profile section, arranged alphabetically by state or province; and an index of services, arranged by subject.

Originally produced at the request of participants in the Fourth Off-Campus Library Services Conference, this directory still relies on responses to a survey sent to institutions defined as offering off-campus library services. Based on the definition employed for distance information support, most medical libraries are missing, because they frequently provide extended learning and clinical information support for a different clientele and through an established biomedical network. To date, nearly all medical schools with distant branch campuses provide a full range of local library support (one exception is South Dakota). The directory would probably be of little value to medical librarians with its present emphasis. An exception would be medical libraries that are intrigued by similarities between their distance library support projects and the programs offered by universities with established off-campus services.

Both books reviewed were available for purchase from Park Library 207, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48859.

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