**BOOK REVIEWS**


Libraries are in transition. They strive to meet current users’ needs, while adjusting to emerging technologies and integrating them into library processes in order to meet users’ needs in the future. The transformation in the access to and delivery of information in health sciences libraries has resulted in a realignment of traditional service units and the automation of processes, as emphasis has shifted from ownership to access to information.

*Information Access and Delivery in Health Sciences Libraries*, the third volume in the *Current Practice in Health Sciences Librarianship* series, addresses issues in information access and delivery related to circulation, interlibrary loan, document delivery, and fee-based services. The authors have succeeded in presenting current practice in a rapidly changing field, while describing future trends and discussing the many issues to be addressed as changes occur. The result is a practical guide for students and practitioners alike. Although all authors draw from their experiences in larger academic libraries, this volume provides many examples from the hospital library setting and will be useful to librarians in smaller libraries as well.

Susan R. Lessick provides an overview of the organization and administration of all access and delivery services. Implications of the emphasis on access and user-centered services are discussed in terms of changing organizational models and staff responsibilities. The lucid presentation of the major issues surrounding current and proposed copyright law provides valuable information for all librarians.

The theme of user-centered services continues in Valerie L. Su’s very practical description of current practice in circulation and stacks maintenance. Special attention is given to planning and implementing an automated circulation system. The requirements for providing services for persons with disabilities, as well as issues related to security, are discussed. The requirements for physical access to the library’s collection are presented with emphasis on the importance of efficient, well-trained, courteous staff.

While equitable access to the library’s collection for all users is the library’s goal, no modern library can acquire and maintain collections that meet all users’ needs. Gretchen N. Arnold and Martha R. Fishel examine current operations and trends in interlibrary borrowing, lending, and document delivery.

The role of the National Library of Medicine in developing a national network was critical to the development of automated procedures. The impact of automation and the development of front-end systems have greatly affected the borrowing process. The automation of delivery systems has progressed at a slower pace, and many libraries are also turning to a vast array of commercial document delivery systems and information brokers for the timely delivery of materials. The effects of this changing environment on library economics and staff performance and the resultant legal issues are discussed in detail.

With increased demand for services, libraries must face the financial realities of meeting these demands, and must also decide for whom services will be provided. Imposing charges for specific services is one way that some libraries have approached this dilemma. James Curtis and N. J. Wolfe review the issues and discuss the practical aspects of planning and implementing fee-based services, drawing examples from the business literature. Some librarians may not agree with this approach, and fee-based issues in libraries will continue to be controversial. This chapter is a useful addition to that continuing discussion.

In the final chapter, Beryl Glitz and Irene Lovas discuss future trends in access and delivery, noting changes in the traditional model that depended upon users coming to the library for materials. Recent advances are influenced by the development of client/server architecture and the development of a standard format, Z39.50. Electronic delivery of materials directly to users has been advanced by optical character recognition, image scanning, and mass-storage devices. These advances have improved the speed of delivery, and may in the future change the very nature of the information. Implications for the virtual library and the new (and old) economic, human, and legal issues provide many challenges for the future.

Readers should remember that this volume provides a snapshot of current practice. We live in interesting times, and many issues remain to be resolved. One hopes that the next revision of this text will present a resolution to the copyright and intellectual property discussions currently in progress, and a solution to problems associated with providing full-text online access to materials. New developments may lead to "seamless" patron-initiated requests, and to more efficient means for the delivery of information. The transition continues, and, as in the past, health sciences librarians will make significant contributions to future developments.

*Karen J. Graves*  
*Library of the Health Sciences*  
*University of Illinois at Chicago*