

# Recent Publications

## BOOK REVIEWS

Markuson, Barbara Evans, et al., *Guidelines for Library Automation*, Santa Monica, Calif.: System Development Corporation, 1972.

This book is one of the products of a contract initiated by the Automation Task Force of the Federal Library Committee, sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education, and carried out by the System Development Corporation. It presents the results from a questionnaire survey made in 1970 to identify those federal libraries with operational automated systems or with plans to create one. In addition to that data, the book provides descriptive material and guidelines for evaluation and development of automated library systems.

Turning first to the results of the questionnaire survey, a total of 67 libraries out of the worldwide community of over 2,100 federal libraries reported that automation projects were either operational or planned. Of those, 59 provided sufficient detail in response to the questionnaire to be described in the book and, of those, 33 were in the Department of Defense. The description in each case includes the following data: person to contact for information, functions automated and the current status of them, background to establish context, description of system materials and parameters, equipment hardware and software, documentation, references, and future plans. These data are presented on pages 157 to 288 in a sequence roughly by major federal agency (Agriculture, DoD, HEW, HUD, etc.). Special attention is paid to the three national libraries on pages 289 to 293. Summary tables give the reader an overview of locations, agencies, applications, and parameters. Indexes are provided to the detailed listing which serve for access by type of system and equipment, and systems with special features. As a comprehensive summary of specific library automation efforts, this portion of the book serves as a useful reference.

The guidelines for evaluation include a "guide to feasibility assessment" which discusses the general evaluation of need, of equipment availability and suitability, of personnel resources, of budget, of local attitudes, of file conversion, of planning needs. More specific guidelines are presented for each of the major functional areas of application—cataloging, acquisitions, serials, circulation, reference and bibliography, administration. "System development guidelines" present issues in system planning and management, systems analysis and design, and system implementation.

The descriptive material covers a potpourri of topics: automation programs in nonfederal libraries, machine-readable data bases, commercial services, use of microforms, input/output hardware, recommended reading.

The unique contribution of the volume would seem to lie in its summary of automation projects in federal libraries since the other material, on system evaluation and on topics peripheral to the primary discussion, seems to duplicate what has been covered in several other monographs. It will, therefore, have primary value to those who are reviewing the overall progress of library automation and to those looking for examples comparable to their own situation.  
—Robert M. Hayes, Becker & Hayes, Inc.

King, Donald, and Bryant, Edward C. *The Evaluation of Information Services and Products*. Washington, DC: Information Resources Press, 1971. \$15.00 ISBN 0-87815-003-X.

This reviewer's reaction to the book was one of ambivalence and, in some ways, disappointment. King and Bryant have made an impressive effort to delineate both a model and a methodology for the evaluation (including experimentation) of information transfer systems which "... record and transmit scientific and technical knowledge by means of documents. . . ." Such