

on operations research and systems analysis, there is little in this book that is not presented better in *The Measurement and Evaluation of Library Services*.—Joe A. Hewitt, Associate University Librarian for Technical Services, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Wilson, Patrick. *Public Knowledge, Private Ignorance: Toward a Library and Information Policy*. Contributions in Librarianship and Information Science, no.10. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977. 156p. \$13.50. LC 76-52327. ISBN 0-8371-9485-7.

Dr. Wilson's tripartite essay will thrill librarians who have wandered bewildered in this sterile world thinking that the library, their institution, the institution in which they believe, is doomed to be devoured by the computer, the information network, the automated data base. At least it will thrill that portion of the group which reads it all the way through and does not read it carefully—or does not think about what it says. Wilson, formerly dean of the library school at the University of California, Berkeley, is a witty conversationalist, and in this small book his way with words shows itself. His method of reasoning is often like a pride of cats after one small mouse. Each cat seals off an exit until there is just one direction the mouse can take. The conclusions seem inevitable, but most readers should look further.

Of the three sections in this book, "public knowledge" is the shortest and most consistently reasoned. It will surprise many readers to discover that public knowledge is not after all knowledge that has been made available to the public by being published. This book makes a very neat distinction between what is published and stored someplace and what is actually available to people to use in solving problems or making decisions. Librarians who have never considered this dichotomy will do well to read part one with great care.

Where the definition of public knowledge may surprise readers, the second part of the book will frighten them. The depth of "private ignorance," as Wilson relates it, is like the Mariana Trench, virtually unplumbable, and while we might quibble with some of

the suppositions, the weight of the arguments leaves little room for doubt. We may wish that rational people made use of information systems that gave them precisely measured doses of information tailored to their individual information needs, but we know better.

Wilson is very convincing in arguing that people do not even care if their information gathering system is totally incompetent, so long as this does not cause them to make decisions that negatively affect their lives in a noticeable way. The key word here is "noticeable," and it is to be noted that election of public officials is not an area to which we can point as being conducted at a high level of public knowledge. The public (and that means all of us), according to Wilson's logic, is incredibly ill-informed, and even those poor souls who might take it upon themselves to improve their information systems find that access to knowledge is either so time-consuming or so complicated that it takes a massive effort to make even insignificant gains. The world abounds with private ignorance. Most of us will agree.

Finally we come around to libraries, and here Wilson and I part. There is no convenient way to simplify his arguments, but the reader will see that Wilson makes an almost invincible case for information experts. He even points out and argues quite successfully that since the function of the accumulation of knowledge is to make decision making of all kinds and at all levels easier, then the medium for conveying that knowledge should be experts, not bibliographical experts (librarians) but subject experts. Not persons who will help the public find an answer as supplied by other experts (usually in written form), but persons who will assimilate the relevant information and make specific recommendations. In other words, not persons who will say that Emily Post says that the proper place setting is thus-and-so, but rather persons who (having consulted all the relevant sources of information including Emily) will declare what the proper place setting should be.

Having convinced this reader that he is right and having shown that these experts need not be attached in any way to a library, Wilson cops out. Just when we can confidently predict that he is about to call

for the abolition of the library in favor of subject-specific information services, he does a toe dance, points out that most of public knowledge would not be useful even if available, notes that the vast majority of information gathering is done for interest rather than for problem-solving purposes, and finally suggests that the only thing we need do to make our present system of information dissemination perfect is to increase our reference staff so that there is a subject expert assigned to each and every subject in which we intend to offer information service. By my reckoning that means most general libraries would have to have several hundred experts, a rather massive increase in "reference librarians." I wonder if Wilson wrote this book while trying to figure out how to find jobs for all the library school students he was helping to train.—*W. David Laird, University Librarian, University of Arizona.*

Merrill, Irving R., and Drob, Harold A. *Criteria for Planning the College and University Learning Resources Center.* Washington, D.C.: Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1977. 117p. \$4.95 member; \$5.95 nonmember. LC 77-2612. ISBN 0-89240-003-X.

College Learning Resources Programs: A Book of Readings. Washington, D.C.: Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1977. 80p. \$4.50 member; \$5.50 nonmember. ISBN 0-89240-005-6.

Both these AECT books assume a learning resources complex administratively and physically separate from the library (Merrill and Drob, p.17, *College Learning Resources Programs*, p.71).

Merrill and Drob's volume, of which a 1974 version was published under the title *Criteria for Planning the University Learning Resources Center* (p.ii), is based on a 1969 study of nine campuses of the University of California, ranging in size from 1,000 to 27,500 students. The data gathered were projected to produce a matrix of 288 cells displayed in 17 pages of tables. "The datum entered for each cell is an estimate based on expert judgment. A tentative estimate was prepared for each cell. . . . Learning re-

sources personnel on the other campuses then reviewed the estimates on the basis of their experiences in their settings" (p.55).

The tables give recommended full-time-equivalent staff and assignable square feet of space for four levels of enrollment and four levels of scope or range of activities offered within each type of service. These are based on an overall estimate of 10 percent of "total student learning time during which the student is under the stimulus of learning resources" (p.54) for television production services, photography production services, graphic services, programmed instruction, television presentation services, self-instructional units, projection, audio, and film rental services, instructional development service, and internal planning and administration.

Although every reader may have some difference of opinion about what activity is assigned to what level of scope, the tables provide a useful checklist from which experienced administrators might derive their own priorities and, given an understanding of the limitations of the data presented, work out their own patterns and formulas. The text chapters appear to have been written in 1972, with very minor revisions that do not reflect the changes of the last five years or the current status and experience with implementation.

These chapters discuss the pre-1972 development of instructional resources, their relationship to teaching styles, centralization vs. decentralization, the nonrelationship of learning resources to libraries and librarians, instructional development, administration, evaluation and accountability, and budgeting.

College Learning Resources Programs: A Book of Readings consists of eight chapters by twelve authors, which appear to have been written between 1971 and 1974. Treatment of each topic is brief and the balance somewhat uneven.

"Technological Communications Services in Higher Education," including instructional development, production, and utilization, discusses administrative organization, functions, and personnel with five organizational charts. "Instructional Development Function" discusses levels of personnel, competencies needed for faculty develop-