

different values and with differing information systems. While chronological in terms of new emphases, all three "eras" actually operate concurrently, a factor somewhat obscured by choice of the term. A new springboard for national commitment "to make information work better for our society" is projected for era III, emphasizing the role of scientific, technical, and societal information (STSI) in addressing current problems of economic well-being, environmental protection, energy availability/use, public health/safety, etc.

Implications for action are set forth for "readers who are in a position to make information-related policy decisions." No specific solutions are proposed (library resource sharing is specifically discredited), but rather a "framework for understanding" for senior policy makers, agency executives, R & D managers, congressional staff, and senior scientists. Change is expected to stem primarily from congressional action rather than from the executive branch; however, support is expressed for the 1976 NCLIS call for a White House office of information policy and a representative advisory committee.

Running through the report is the information-as-commodity principle: In the future, change will depend on two "dynamics"—"a market-oriented dynamic, involving private sector ventures of both for-profit firms and not-for-profit organizations, like professional associations [, and] a central-planning dynamic, largely focused around the federal role in STSI transfer."

Questionable to many in a democratic society will be the marketplace philosophy applied to information access, leading, as it will, to the rich getting richer and the poor poorer. Others will feel it misused unless a similar market dynamic is methodically applied in government decisions for support of the research itself (now more than \$22 billion per year). Still others will hold that, government-generated STSI having already been paid for, support of its primary and secondary dissemination is also in order, thereby setting in place the infrastructure for the entire knowledge base essential to era III problem solving.

The report concludes with a useful annotated bibliography of the principal govern-

ment and quasi-government studies from Baker (1958) through NCLIS (1976). Doubtless *Giuliano/Little* will now join them. An articulate, thoughtful, provocative discussion, this report deserves careful reading by all its intended recipients, including librarians. The issue is pressing: how the knowledge base, on which all our institutions depend, shall be managed, and for whom.—*Irma Y. Johnson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge.*

Adkinson, Burton W. *Two Centuries of Federal Information*. Publications in the Information Sciences. Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1978 235p. \$26. LC 78-7294. ISBN 0-87933-269-7. (Dist. by Academic Press).

"Government and scientific and technical information" as an alternate title would better explain the scope and focus of *Two Centuries of Federal Information*, for if one is expecting a developmental history of the Government Printing Office and the depository library system or an overview of all federal information activities, this is not the book. With this caveat in mind, Burton W. Adkinson still set out to do a big job, namely to present the federal government's scientific and technical information (STI) policies and programs from 1790 to 1972, and he admirably accomplished his goal.

The author successfully designates four periods within the two-century span and weaves four chapters around significant STI characteristics for each period, concentrating especially on the intensity of the 1942-72 years. Next, he interprets and assesses the general developments affecting this later period, reviewing the many recommendatory studies of STI, the federal-private sectors' relations, international cooperation, and trends, people, and future directions. The result is a cogent text comprising the agencies, the activities, the policies as manifested for the various periods, the personalities, and those events auguring change and future directions. Here, then, is a book well suited to a course in STI that emphasizes the official role, or one that could well ground the newly interested in federal policy for science information.

Coverage of scientific and technical activities is quite extensive. Adkinson at times

excuses his inroads into the fringes of federal STI activities. For instance, he qualifies the limited discussion of federal libraries by revealing that a separate study of federal science libraries is under way. But the coverage of these libraries, particularly their historical development, is rather extensive. Toward the end of the book the author apologizes for the incursion into international involvements, demonstrating that the UNISIST flexibility concept endorses the decentralized policy approach of United States STI activities, and logically develops the discussion progressively from domestic activities.

Organization, particularly the author's ability to conceptualize each period of STI development under dominant policy themes, is the strong point of the book. The reader is given a sense of direction and can find his or her way through the myriad names, agencies, reports, and programs. Adkinson's statements are clear, but his style is at times torpid, particularly the chapter on federal programs and studies, where the reader plows through a heavily quoted overview of R & D studies from 1942 to 1971. It would appear that that section could better have been blended with the final discussion of future directions so as to signify the importance and impact of some of the studies.

Adkinson sparingly makes known his views and only infrequently injects an editorial comment. Since he has been closely involved with federal science information for many years and certainly was "present at the creation" of the postwar thrust of STI activity, this reviewer sees his restraint as unfortunate, for the views of a knowledgeable and experienced commentator capable of leading one through the dynamism of STI plans, policies, and programs would be welcomed.

It is revealing that Adkinson does not see federal STI policy "overstudied" as many commentators do. And unlike many of those he does not depict the Weinberg report as a turning point for federal policy. In fact, he does not attribute the appearance of information analysis centers (IACs) directly to the Weinberg study. The author sees many advantages in the decentralization of federal STI and urges that policies be de-

veloped toward greater coordination, but not just through agency or departmental reorganization.

Perhaps the largest omission is political analysis for policy shifts; for instance, what is the political significance of the increasing role of the private sector and the cost recovery authorization of the National Technical Information Service, with the resulting dilemma for its public responsibilities? And is there irony in the absence of mention of either the Information Industry Association or the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science when the 1975 Kennedy report is excerpted?

In spite of these shortcomings and oversights, Adkinson has competently given us what up until this time has not existed—an extended historical and interpretive account of federal actions in the dynamic area of scientific and technical information—and consequently closed an existing void.—*Harry Welsh, University of Washington, Seattle.*

**Douglas C. McMurtrie: *Bibliographer and Historian of Printing.*** Compiled by Scott Bruntjen and Melissa L. Young. The Great Bibliographers Series, no.4. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1979. 206p. \$9. LC 78-25682. ISBN 0-8108-1188-X.

An interesting question is posed by the appearance of this slim volume: What does it take to be regarded as a great bibliographer, one able to join the ranks of McKerrow, Pollard, and Dibdin? To answer this question, one must know what McMurtrie produced, his activities, and the events surrounding them. Consequently, the compilers Scott Bruntjen and Melissa L. Young have assembled a "representative collection" (p.xiv) of sixteen works by and about McMurtrie with the assumption that his material will reveal his greatness.

If greatness means being prolific, McMurtrie was surely that. His biobibliography reprinted here and based mainly on Charles F. Heartman's 1942 bibliography includes more than 780 items; much of it is related to the 1930s WPA American Imprints Inventory—a project that ultimately provided bibliographic control of 8,000,000 discrete items of early printing within each state.

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