

# Recent Publications

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Milstead, Jessica L.** *Subject Access Systems: Alternatives in Design*. Library and Information Science Series. Orlando, Fla.: Academic, 1984. 212p. \$28 (ISBN 0-12-498120-8). LC 83-15721.

The author applies her many years of experience as a designer and teacher of document-based subject access systems to the description of the three principal components of such systems: file, collection, and terminology. She addresses issues concerning the file first and covers topics such as manual and computerized file organization; print, microform, and machine-readable storage media; alphabetical and classified file arrangement; and syndetic structure. The collection component is then discussed in terms of four variables: (1) the design of the collection of discrete documents to be indexed, (2) the parts of individual documents that are used as the sources of indexable matter, (3) the size of the unit of indexable information, and (4) the number of entries per document. The terminology component covers the selection of indexable subject terms from documents themselves, i.e., derivative and assigned indexing and policy decisions in the design of a controlled vocabulary for assigned indexing.

Milstead concludes each chapter with helpful chapter summaries and ends her monograph with a summary chapter that shows how the choices made for one component of a subject access system affect those in another. She includes a six-page case study of the design of a newspaper index for the *Washington Post* as an example that demonstrates how the principles she has discussed might be adopted. It is here, however, that the confusion in the

author's purpose becomes most evident: she notes in the introduction that the book is an intermediate-level manual in which the development of a subject access system is presented sequentially, but the book is not organized in a logical sequence. For example, Milstead begins the work with a discussion of file characteristics and then discusses the collection (the second component) to be indexed. In practice, however, designers ordinarily face these issues in the reverse order: they begin with the reality of the collection, and only afterward can they deal with issues that relate to file structure. She seems to confirm this herself; in fact, in her case study, the first issue broached is the description of the document collection.

The author assumes that readers already have a working knowledge of related concepts such as bibliographic description, Boolean-based online subject searching, and information retrieval systems. Her failure to provide figures and illustrations for most important characteristics of collection, subject terminologies, and files may have resulted from her expectation that this book's readers will already be knowledgeable of these three components. For example, the inclusion of figures and illustrations for such topics as alphabetical and classified arrangements, postcoordinate and precoordinate indexing, bibliographic description, and subject authority records bearing scope and history notes, could be helpful to system designers who must face decisions regarding these various characteristics when selecting an indexing technique. One of the few illustrations provided is that given for a comparison of derivative

index entries with and without subarrangement, which beautifully illustrates the author's discussion. Many more such illustrations would benefit the reader immeasurably.

Designers of subject access systems for material in historical societies, archives, libraries, and museums will find this book a valuable resource for general principles of subject access. Although the author limits her discussion to documentary (i.e., print) systems, designers of subject access systems for graphic material—for example, architectural drawings, political campaign buttons, and movie posters—will find Milstead's three components of subject access systems generalizable to their system development work.—Karen Markey, OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., Dublin, Ohio.

**White, Herbert S.** *Library Personnel Management*. Professional Librarian Series. White Plains, N.Y.: Knowledge Industry, 1985. 214p. \$36.50 (ISBN 0-86729-136-2). LC 84-26146.

"There are few professions as dependent on successful interpersonal communication and persuasion as ours. As practicing librarians know well, ours is not a book- or periodical-based profession; these are only tools of the trade. Librarianship is a people profession and we are only as successful as our ability to interact with others makes us." These words from Herbert White's introduction succinctly set the rationale and tone for his work on personnel management. I would classify this book as a "translator" volume. Part of the Professional Librarian Series from Knowledge Industry, it "translates" an important area of management study and practice into a book for librarians through the experience base of a well-known and respected professional.

As a professional summation, it is well to remember that the emphasis, bias, and strength of the work reflect one individual's analysis of the personnel field. This volume is not, by definition, a "scholarly" survey of the literature but an opinion statement. The author's note emphasizes that is not a how-to book: it "enables the reader to identify and analyze personnel

management problems and strives to contribute to the manager's ability to arrive at the correct solutions to specific problematic situations as they arise." The volume is compact and very readable, and its style and practical approach made me feel as if I were in conversation with the author.

Librarians look for several things from a professional review. They want a review so precise and insightful that the summary of contents could substitute for the actual book! It must have been difficult for White to synthesize and select from the large amount of literature and experience found on "personnel." For me as a reviewer to further reduce such a large body of management thought would be a disservice to the reader. A partial list of chapter headings demonstrates the currency and structure of the book: "Basic Concepts in Personnel Management," "Staff Functions in the Library Organizational Structure," "Adapting to Changes in Technology," "Employee Recruitment and Selection," "Wage and Salary Administration," "Present and Future Issues for Library Managers."

The author writes for several audiences and one is obviously the library school student. He offers several "Personnel Problem Exercises" that could be used in a case review. No longer a student, my first reaction to this section was skepticism; however, when I finished reading the exercises, I was hoping for more. I have met almost every one of those people and situations discussed somewhere in my career.

The bibliography is short but effective and primarily reviews library literature. White found three monographs especially useful and recommends them for those wishing more in-depth coverage: Dale S. Beach's *Personnel, The Management of People at Work*; Loren B. Belker's *First Time Manager* and Murray S. Martin's *Issues in Personnel Management in Academic Libraries*.

Although I am not willing to summarize this work, I am willing to suggest those who could benefit from reading it: (1) a graduate student in library school who has this book for a text and wants to complete the course; (2) a graduate student in library school, or a very recent graduate who was unable to take a specialized per-