

strategy that reads as if it were originally written for a class of eighth-graders ("First, find a topic you find interesting and would like to learn more about. . ."). The content and quality of the chapter are reflected quite nicely in its final sentence: "By undertaking LIS research, librarians can assure for the future of being a vital and socially responsible profession [sic]."

Fortunately, the book also contains an excellent chapter by Joe Hewitt on "The Role of the Library Administrator in Improving LIS Research" that is particularly applicable to academic libraries and that most academic librarians will probably find to be the most informative and useful chapter in the volume. Hewitt acknowledges how difficult it is for the current practitioner to undertake research and how little help research now provides for library decision making. He, nevertheless, makes a number of credible and practicable suggestions for integrating research into the real world of librarianship.

The book appears to have been hastily edited and contains, as can be seen from the above quoted final sentence from the chapter on academic libraries, an unusually large number of typographical oversights. In the "Contributors" section at the end of the book, to cite another especially unfortunate example, the first lines of two of the paragraphs containing biographical information have been deleted, so that the names of the authors to whom the biographical information refers are missing. At \$69.50 for 400 pages, one expects a more professional job.

The book clearly does achieve its objective of providing, from a wide variety of perspectives, some useful insights into the presumed purposes and present state of LIS research. While many of the chapters skillfully describe some of the fundamental weaknesses of LIS research, a few—perhaps rather more eloquently—actually show us those weaknesses through the self-important triviality of their own content. In either case, academic librarians concerned about the health and future of LIS research will find much in this book to think about.—*Ross Atkinson, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.*

**Peters, Thomas A.** *The Online Catalog: A Critical Examination of Public Use.* Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1991. 266p. alk. paper, \$36.50 (ISBN 0-89950-600-3). LC 90-53602.

Thomas Peters's stated goal is to "focus on actual user behavior and [on] the theoretical implications of online catalogs, especially regarding the use of remote access." The goal is an ambitious one. Peters undertakes a review of the literature in the first eight chapters of the book, citing much of what has been published on online catalogs. Topics include the history of online catalogs, their purposes and traits, the flow of information from producers through middlemen to consumers, the philosophy of OPACs, and the problems with these catalogs, and possible solutions. In other sections, Peters reviews methodologies for evaluating online catalogs and their use. Emphasis is given to transaction log studies, the approach Peters used in conducting his analysis of remote access use. Several chapters are then devoted to reporting the results of the study Peters undertook of dial-up use of the online catalog at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. The final chapters relate online catalogs to the academic and information environments in which they exist.

Although the bibliography and bibliographic references are useful, the individual arguments frequently interesting, and the study of dial-up access a contribution to what is known about online catalog use, the purpose of the book as a whole remains unclear. The literature review, in particular, poses serious problems. The style in which it is presented makes it difficult to sort out the arguments used in the works being cited from Peters's own arguments. Paraphrasing—where, in many cases, more obvious direct citation might have been better—makes it difficult to determine where one author's ideas begin and end. In a number of cases, difficult conceptual issues are presented with too little explanation, particularly in Peters's references to the nonlibrary literature relating to philosophy and technology. In some of

the references to actual research studies on the online catalog, the inclusion of more data would have been useful. In some controversial areas, Peters makes rather opinionated statements without providing balancing arguments, as in his condemnation (or is it the source's?) of the use of icons. In short, to make substantive use of the literature review, it would be necessary to return to the sources listed to understand their arguments and intentions.

One point, in particular, that is not well documented and that needs more discussion is Peters's statement, repeated in one way or another several times, that "... online catalogs do not fulfill specific needs and ends. They are systems that were designed without specific needs and uses in mind." Part of his argument, and a theme throughout the book, is that designers of catalogs do not know from the outset all of the uses to which the catalog will be put and that the notion of the catalog is changing. It does not, however, necessarily follow that librarians did not have any "specific needs and uses in mind" as they developed the catalog.

Peters's discussion of remote access is well done. Certainly, this area deserves significant attention as librarians move into the future of network information use. Remote access use of libraries and library catalogs will have a significant impact on libraries and their traditional role. These potential effects are well identified. Because much of Peters's book builds to this discussion, and because the research effort explored relates to this topic as well, it might have been more explicitly identified in the title, purpose, and focus of the earlier parts of the book. Another useful part of this study is the summary of methods for examining public use of catalogs. Peters identifies the advantages and disadvantages of these methods, transaction logs in particular, for getting at the use that actually is made of the catalog. He emphasizes the importance of considering the search session rather than individual search statements as the study element.

With the tools available, then, Peters's

study of remote access search sessions is limited to dial access in order to be able to identify a session with a discrete beginning and end. Unfortunately, as Peters notes, this probably skews the results because of the nature of the population making use of the catalog by dial access. Peters looks at search type, zero-hit rates, likely causes of problems, and temporal patterns of dial access use and relates these to findings of previous studies not limited to dial access. He also undertakes a description of the broader contents of those search sessions that include subject searches. Our knowledge of catalog use will be enhanced by the accumulation of more studies of this type, particularly those that examine all remote use, including that over local, campus- or universitywide, and national networks—presumably each used by quite different populations.

In the final two chapters of the book, Peters helpfully summarizes his arguments and addresses the future of libraries and library catalogs as they are affected by technological and environmental developments. Librarians with some familiarity with the literature on online catalogs and their public use will want to focus on these latter sections and the dial access transaction log study. Those librarians seeking more background on the literature might delve into the items listed in the bibliography.—*Flo Wilson, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.*

**Lillet, Rémy.** *Pour une Europe du livre, rapport a secrétaire d'Etat aux Relations culturelles internationales.* Paris: La Documentation Française, 1990. 158p. FF75.00. (ISBN 2-11-002319-8).

It is refreshing these days to read a book about business that concludes that the United States is more of a threat than Japan. The growing importance of English-language publishing in Europe and U.S. dominance in electronic information causes French publisher Rémy Lillet to reach just this conclusion. The French foreign ministry commissioned his book as part of its planning for the European single market, which, by the end of 1992, will remove all trade barriers between