

Book Reviews

Directory of Electronic Journals, Newsletters and Academic Discussion Lists. Ann Okerson, ed. Washington, D.C.: Assn. of Research Libraries, 1991. 173p. printed; 3.5" IBM diskette (WordPerfect version), or 3.5" Macintosh diskette (Microsoft Word version). ARL libraries: \$10; Other U.S. customers: \$20; Foreign customers: \$25. (ISSN 1057-1337).

In the second half of the 1980s, scholarly communication began to flourish on noncommercial international computer networks like BITNET and Internet. Person-to-person e-mail and file transfers gave the "invisible college" new tools for exchanging preprints and other information. Computer conferences, which are typically called "lists," significantly opened up the scholarly dialogue to include a much larger and more diverse group of participants. Open subscription lists allowed anyone to contribute to ongoing discussions. Well-known and unknown scholars suddenly found themselves exchanging information and engaging in sometimes heated debate about the issues of the day. Information flowed freely and, in large lists, abundantly. As time passed, this collective effort produced both invaluable new information sources and information overload. The role of the "moderator," a person who could control information distribution on a list, gained importance.

As lists grew more numerous, some scholars began to see the possibility of using the "Net" for more formal types of communication, and network-based electronic serials were born. Electronic newsletters and special interest magazines appeared. More significantly, a handful of electronic journals emerged. Although the definitive history of network-based e-journals remains to be written, it is likely that *New Horizons in Adult Educa-*

tion was the first refereed e-journal on the Net. This publication was followed by other e-journals, such as *EJournal*, the *Journal of the International Academy of Hospitality Research*, *Postmodern Culture*, *Psychology*, and the *Public-Access Computer Systems Review*.

Some of these e-journals emulated traditional print journals. Others created new journal conventions like single-article issues. Most of them were distributed in electronic form for free. All of them benefitted from the strengths of network-based electronic publishing, such as low production costs and rapid on-demand information delivery, and they suffered from its weaknesses, such as an inability to replicate the information richness of the printed page with its color, illustrations, and typographical sophistication. As e-serials and lists on the Net proliferated, it became increasingly difficult for users to keep track of them. There were a few electronic resources and services on the Net that provided limited directory information for users who knew how to ferret out and access them; however, coverage of e-serials was very incomplete and usually outdated.

As is characteristic of the Net, two individuals, Diane Kovacs and Michael Strangelove, volunteered their services to remedy this problem. Kovacs produced a selective directory of academic lists. The directory classified them by their primary subject and provided, if available, brief descriptive information about them. Strangelove created a directory of e-serials that grouped them into three categories: electronic journals, electronic newsletters, and HyperCard stacks, digest newsletters, and others. Editors of the e-serials listed in the directory usually wrote or reviewed the descriptions of their publications.

Recognizing the importance of these efforts to the scholarly community, Ann Okerson, director of the Association of Research Libraries' Office of Scientific and Academic Publishing, edited these two contributions into a low-cost directory. (Kovacs and Stangelove's directories are also available as free files on the Net.)

The *Directory of Electronic Journals, Newsletters and Academic Discussion Lists* is currently the best source of information about network-based e-serials and lists. But it has some minor flaws. E-serials could be classified into more meaningful and discrete categories (e.g., scholarly journals could be separated from special interest magazines). Lists that are not "open" for user-initiated subscription could be identified as such. The list directory does not include a number of computer-oriented lists. Nevertheless, the compilers should be commended for creating this directory, and ARL should be commended for publishing it. It most usefully simplifies the process of identifying and accessing appropriate e-serials and lists, thereby helping to open the frontiers of electronic information.—Charles W. Bailey, Jr., University of Houston, Texas.

LOGOS: The Professional Journal for the Book World. London: Whurr Publications, 1990-. Individuals: \$52/year; Institutions: \$80/year (ISSN 0957-9656).

The contents page of each *LOGOS* quarterly issue carries a message from the publisher that begins: "LOGOS is written and read by book people in twenty-nine countries. It offers to the world book community a forum in which it can debate the issues which concern it and which both unite and divide it. LOGOS subscribers include librarians, booksellers, publishers, literary agents, authors, printers, designers and bibliophiles—all who are in some way involved in the writing, production, distribution and reading of books."

Certainly the journal's geographic coverage is impressive. Of the thirty-six articles published in the initial volume, for example, only one-third focus on specific aspects of Anglo-American publishing; another third cover developments in

non-European countries; and the remaining articles feature topics such as the effects of technology, the author/editor interview, and preservation. Contributions range from Hans Zell's explanation of the crisis in book publishing in Africa to John Sumsion's analysis of Public Lending Right, with views from publishers regularly included (e.g., Frances Pinter's "The Independent Publisher" and Christopher Hurst's "On Being Small, Commercial, and Scholarly"). In his column, publisher Colin Whurr describes accurately the elements he seeks for articles in the journal: "A typical LOGOS contribution mingles history, personal experience, contemporary analysis and a view of the future on its chosen topic. The focus is on meanings, not views. Experiences are interpreted, not merely reported."

Carrying no news or advertising, this journal also avoids footnotes, academic jargon, book reviews, and single-theme issues, although contrasting views on a subject are occasionally juxtaposed in one issue (the second issue for 1991 includes two articles on the Net Book Agreement, for example). Readers thus are free to concentrate on the eight or nine contributions in each issue, as well as an occasional editorial and an opinion column, including Martyn Goff's perspective on the Nobel Prize for Literature and Piers Paul Read's definition of the enemies of literature.

More eclectic in content than *Publishing Research Quarterly*, *LOGOS* is also less academic; most articles are rooted in the contributors' experience, rather than in statistics or documented research. Yet the result is definitely not the typical "how we do it good" potpourri found in too many specialist periodicals. The authors try to place their views in the context of the universe of contemporary publishing and more often than not succeed in tying a specific issue to a wider problem. Vic Gray's "Preservation vs. Use: The Archivist's Dilemma," for example, manages to tie local problems in Essex County, England, to the global scene with authority, clarity, and humor.

If *LOGOS* is not a vital purchase for academic libraries—it is not scholarly, is