



# Introduction

C. WALTER STONE

WHILE THE CASE IS NOT MADE in so many words, a strong negative impression might be gained from reading at one sitting the eleven articles which compose this issue of *Library Trends*. This impression would be that librarianship has completely "missed the boat" in developing newer media services; that necessary professional recruitment and training, both pre-service and in-service, are almost totally lacking; and that public library progress in the field is still "little by little and bit by bit." It would seem that the most significant work being done with new media on the college or university campus takes place outside libraries and that, when all types of libraries have been surveyed, only those school programs which have followed an instructional materials center philosophy are demonstrating any significant gains.

Aids for the selection of newer media are reported as inadequate. It is stated that the processing (including cataloging) of new instructional materials lacks basic standardization and that the rules set forth in the new *Anglo-American Code* do not much improve the situation. Research in the field is limited. Materials production service is "wide open" and requires management by a new breed of personnel not yet generally available. And also negative in its own way is a practical statement on physical quarters which advocates greater simplicity in the design of facilities and argues strongly against investing "too much" in audio-visual staffs and equipment for libraries.

Respecting library service generally, both professional association and government service agency programs concerned with newer media are either seriously deficient or wholly absent. And, to cite one special national problem, existing copyright regulations and those recommended in new legislative proposals impose too many restrictions on use of new media for educational purposes and, in particular, stand to block effective library applications of computer technology for information storage, retrieval, and transfer.

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Accepting, for the moment, the image of the field as depicted above, what should be done to remedy the situation? Almost uniformly the authors represented in this issue of *Library Trends* call for development of new service concepts; recruitment and training of new classes of professional as well as administrative service and technical personnel; inauguration of new methods of training and types of training activities; support of additional research, especially that which may eventually improve formal library science instruction; and, finally, identification of the responsibility for instruction materials or learning resources in formal education with a larger professional world than that represented solely by librarianship. Library service must be regarded as one part of a total program established for providing communication and information services. If, as some have suggested for education, a valid cutting line between library roles and those best assumed by other agencies lies at the point of defining individual versus group media service responsibilities, other disagreements arise when the various media are identified for use by both individuals and groups, e.g., films, radio and television, graphics, and computer service.

In short, it could be concluded from reading this issue of *Library Trends* that the newer media do not shine very brightly today in the professional skies of librarianship. They may be scattered, lost, or forgotten, and too frequently do not fit properly into the field at all except perhaps as noted in the case of some school libraries where there appears to be in progress an effective transition from administration of traditional book distribution service units to provision of a broad range of new learning resources in an instructional materials center environment.

Yet, despite these negative images, the chief message of the articles which follow is not that librarians have not done their job properly or that they should not be concerned with newer media; rather, it is positive and calls for both a basic reorganization or merger of the various professional fields involved, and a redefinition of library functions. The specific note intended to be struck urges the setting of new professional boundary lines without lamenting an apparent demise, or more likely, an evolutionary change through which performance of the library function must now pass.

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