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**Proceedings of the 1977 Clinic
on Library Applications
of Data Processing:
Negotiating for Computer Services**

Papers presented at the
1977 Clinic on Library Applications
of Data Processing, April 24-27, 1977

Negotiating for Computer Services

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INTRODUCTION

THE INCREASING USE OF automation in libraries has made many librarians painfully aware of the difficulty of negotiating for computer products and services. This is true for a wide range of situations, such as acquiring a turnkey system, joining a network, subscribing to an information retrieval service and many others. While negotiation should be a give-and-take process between parties on an equal footing, librarians often see themselves as being at a disadvantage. The product or service is technically complex, the legal instruments are mysterious, and the other party has greater experience with the technology, the law and the art of negotiating. The purpose of the 1977 clinic was to enable librarians to be stronger, more knowledgeable negotiators. Some of the papers printed here present negotiation from the librarian's viewpoint; other papers deal with the special needs and concerns of the vendor. In every case, the intent is to make negotiation a rational and orderly process. In their complementary papers, Boss and Gurr show that differing interests need not result in an adversary relationship between vendor and librarian. In his paper, Corey examines in some detail the special problems of negotiating when legally enforceable contracts are not possible. This paper includes several specific suggestions that prove extremely helpful for libraries that obtain data processing from a parent organization.

Three sessions of the clinic were devoted to explaining the basics of data processing contracts and conducting simulated negotiating sessions. The material used in the role-playing sessions is included here so that readers may practice negotiating in a risk-free setting.

J.L. DIVILBISS
Editor

