

Book Reviews

Gregory H. Leazer, Editor

Planning Global Information Infrastructure. Ed. Ching-chih Chen. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1995. 547p. (ISBN 0-56750-200-8).

Although not apparent from the title, this volume is the proceedings of the 7th *International Conference on New Information Technology, NIT '94*, held in Alexandria, Virginia, in November 1994. Ching-chih Chen has organized these meetings annually or biannually throughout the developing world with the assistance of various funding agencies; the 1994 conference was the first one held in the United States. Prior conferences were held in Bangkok, Singapore, Guadalajara, Mexico, Budapest, Hong Kong, and Puerto Rico. An eighth conference has since been held in Riga, Latvia, in November, 1995. The material in the proceedings is timely and was published in a timely manner—a note in the acknowledgments indicates that 550 pages of camera-ready copy were produced in a week! However, the tradeoff for timeliness comes in the quality of the editing. Most of the volume is an unedited transcript of the proceedings, including unnecessary details of question-and-answer sessions, introductions of speakers, coffee breaks, stage directions, etc. Many of the presentations appear not as coherent essays but as abstracts, outlines (taken from overhead projections), and transcripts. Grammatical and typographical errors and randomly placed hyphens abound. The exceptions are several polished papers submitted by speakers and a summary statement (The Alexandria Declaration of Principles) prepared by Robert M. Hayes and Ching-chih Chen. About 150 pages of appendixes are reprints of National Information

Infrastructure (NII) and Global Information Infrastructure (GII) documents; some are government documents, others are policy statements by public interest groups and professional organizations; most are available on the World Wide Web (WWW).

The NIT conferences are invitational meetings, each of which has attracted 175 to 375 participants from at least fifteen countries. The meetings have been successful in bringing together people from countries at various stages of development to discuss information technology and policy issues. Participants in the 1994 meeting represented major policy organizations, public and private funding agencies, professional societies, industry associations, major national or research libraries from many countries, and university faculty. Most were executive officers or senior staff of these organizations. The NIT conferences are effective mechanisms for convening an illustrious group of representatives to discuss critical matters of the day, gain consensus where possible and mutual understanding where not, and enable them to contribute to policy discussions in their respective organizations and countries. The success of the conferences is a tribute to Dr. Chen's energetic commitment to global cooperation in information systems and services. What is most notable about the NIT meetings is their international representation and the global nature of discussion topics. Too much of the NII policy discussion in the United States assumes that the NII ends at U.S. borders; it is the global nature of the network that raises the most pressing technical and political issues.

While scholarly conferences are designed around a *product*—usually a formal proceedings that consists of peer-

reviewed papers representing the best new work of the year—working conferences such as the NIT are designed around a *process*—face-to-face discussions among a diverse group of opinion leaders. Presentations are intended to provoke discussion, not to serve as a formal record of the meeting. The process vs. product distinction is important in determining the appropriate mechanism to disseminate the outcomes of a meeting to a broader audience.

The best outcome of process conferences is a consensus document representing the thinking of the group. Such a document can be disseminated widely to engage a larger community. This conference produced such a document, the 6-page Alexandria Declaration of Principles, and it is by far the most valuable part of this volume. Unfortunately, these 6 pages serve as an introduction to a 547-page transcript presented in a linear, relatively undigested print format. The declaration would reach its audience more effectively if disseminated as a short statement and republished in various professional magazines and journals, in multiple languages and in multiple countries.

The Alexandria Declaration frames the GII as an open, self-organizing, interactive and interconnected system that will provide a communication channel for democratic discussion. The ten principles formulated by the conference participants warrant listing here (p. 1–6):

1. Empower individuals
2. Educate and train in use
3. Increase knowledge
4. Develop local resources
5. Identify responsibilities of information professionals
6. Educate the information professionals
7. Build from country to region to international
8. National agencies in development
9. Emphasize public/private sector cooperation
10. Recognize the need for appropriate economic policies

Each is briefly discussed and elaborated, followed by a list of specific issues that are in urgent need of resolution.

The rest of the proceedings consists of a few new papers (i.e., narrative works of ten pages or more with citations to other work), reprinted papers from journals and other conferences, short (three-to-ten page) updates or overviews of individual programs in a variety of countries and regions, outlines of papers (speakers' overheads), and transcripts of question-and-answer sessions. The reports are notable for their broad geographic range, including Asia, Africa, and Europe (Eastern, Central, Western, and Northern).

The two new papers of interest are those by Yakov Shraiberg and Robert M. Hayes. At twenty pages, Shraiberg's paper on the infrastructure for scientific and technical information in Russia is the most comprehensive in the volume. Shraiberg discusses history, current issues, and future projections; the paper is illustrated with many tables and diagrams, and it includes a bibliography of resources in English. Hayes' paper, "An Educational Component for the Global Information Infrastructure," includes modeling data on library roles in the information economy, with comparisons among ten countries.

The most useful reprints are Ching-chih Chen's thoughtful piece on the "Information Superhighway and the Digital Global Highway: Realities and Challenges," and the paper by Peter Young, Executive Director of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) on "Global Knowledge Network Infrastructure Development: The National Library Role." Young provides an overview of the relationships among NCLIS, the Library of Congress, the Network Advisory Committee, the National Research and Education Network, and other agencies.

The new papers, and others that might have been submitted by the speakers, would have received wider, though less timely, attention as a special issue of an international journal. The remaining transcript materials could have been posted on a WWW site for those wishing the full details (with links to the appended materials) and perhaps also issued as a techni-

cal report for people in countries without WWW access.

I can recommend the full volume only for those seeking a current update on developments in a wide range of countries and regions. The new material here will be dated fairly quickly and much of the book includes already dated reprints. While the full volume would be of urgent interest in developing countries, these countries are the least able to acquire a print volume in a timely manner, due to their own economic and infrastructure problems. It will be of interest to readers in developed countries for its international perspective, particularly in the United States, where most current materials address domestic concerns.

The declaration deserves wide dissemination, but is unfortunately buried in this publishing outlet. A more effective approach would be to offer it for translation and republication in domestic library and information science, communication, and policy journals around the world, which is common practice in developing countries. For future conferences, I urge the organizers to consider alternate means of publication of papers and transcripts, whether print or electronic, that will engage a larger audience in the issues addressed by these important meetings.—Christine L. Borgman, *Department of Library & Information Science, University of California, Los Angeles.*

Technical Services Management, 1965–1990: A Quarter Century of Change and a Look to the Future: Festschrift for Kathryn Luther Henderson. Ed. Linda C. Smith and Ruth C. Carter. Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth, 1996. 370p. \$39.95 (ISBN 1-56024-960-9). LC 95-20463.

In more than twenty-five years of teaching cataloging at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Kathryn Luther Henderson introduced hundreds of students to the notion of a festschrift. With this volume, twenty-one of her students and colleagues honor Mrs. Henderson and recognize her influence on their professional lives.

The theme of change is a most appropriate one for this festschrift. Kathryn Henderson's teaching career spanned a time of rapid, continuous, and unprecedented change in library technical services. The daily realities of 1990—MARC format, bibliographic utilities, online catalogs, and CD-ROMs—were only wild ideas, if they were thought of at all in libraries, in 1965.

The book's twenty chapters provide broad coverage of technical services, with the emphasis (ten chapters) on cataloging. The other chapters deal with the literature of technical services, acquisitions and collection development, preservation, indexing, professional education, and intellectual property rights and electronic media. Most of the authors are academic librarians or library and information science faculty members.

The authors tend to record events rather than analyze them. In Chapter 1, "Technical Services Literature, 1969–1990," Carolynne Myall states that "the literature of library technical services increased in volume and in degree of specialization" (p. 15). She supports this assertion with a census of the number of index entries, the number of periodical articles, and the number of periodical titles indexed for ten technical services topics in *Library Literature*, 1970/71–1990. Without statistical analysis, it is impossible to ascertain the validity of her assertion. In discussing the results of her survey, Myall focuses on the content of the publications rather than on an analysis of the count of index entries.

In their chapter on the past twenty-five years in school library technical services, Kathleen Shannon and Mary Ellen Gibbs focus on "changes in the way libraries do things" (p. 41) as they cope with new rules and practices, new types of material, and new equipment. In the chapter "Acquisitions and Collection Development," Marion Reed takes a similar approach, describing changes in selection, funding, tools, procurement methods, and staffing. In "Authority Control" by Robert H. Burger, "Descriptive Cataloging" by Mary Ellen Soper, and "The Transformation of