

to one year. Still the author concludes that "the overall reviewing pattern in all disciplines has seemed to remain relatively constant over the past couple of decades" (p.123). We can possibly infer that the minor inconsistencies in data gathering did not materially affect the results.

More useful and impressive than a rigid pattern of data gathering would have been a technique developed for easy, direct comparison of the analogous findings from each study with the other and with a composite profile. In spite of the numerous tables within the text, plus appendixes at the close, readers are forced to search out and compare for themselves (no easy task in view of the constantly changing presentations of both text and tables).

The final chapter of general conclusions does give a composite time-lag table, although none of the other summaries of findings is similarly documented. This volume adds evidence to the impressions of many observers that, while the burden of book reviewing is carried by a comparatively small percentage of sci-tech journals, reliable book reviews for most significant general biomedical and general science books do appear in a year or less, frequently in more than one source. The situation in special disciplines, we are told, is less reliable, with astronomy and engineering titles being the most poorly reviewed.—*Jeanne Osborn, School of Library Science, The University of Iowa.*

Computer-Readable Bibliographic Data Bases: A Directory and Data Sourcebook.

Compiled and edited by Martha E. Williams and Sandra H. Rouse, Information Retrieval Research Laboratory, Coordinated Science Laboratory, University of Illinois. Washington, D.C.: American Society for Information Science, 1976—Loose-leaf. \$68.00 per year. LC 76-46249. ISBN 0-87715-114-8.

The rapid integration and growth of on-line bibliographic services in all types of libraries during the past four years has demanded a single reference source of the available machine-readable data bases. Librarians and end users alike have required an up-to-date compilation of the publicly available data bases outlining their subject scope, format, acronym, full name, produc-

er, and accessibility. This ambitious and urgently needed task has been accomplished by Martha E. Williams and Sandra H. Rouse in their massive work, *Computer-Readable Bibliographic Data Bases: A Directory and Data Sourcebook*. Compared with the 1973 ASIS publication, *Survey of Commercially Available Computer-Readable Bibliographic Data Bases*, which provided information on eighty-one data bases, the new directory expands coverage to 301 data bases and includes more pertinent details about the files.

Anticipating the dynamic nature of data bases which frequently change their name, format, ownership, or availability on various systems, the directory appears in a loose-leaf binder with update pages being promised at six-month intervals. Ranging from ABIPC (the *Abstract Bulletin of the Institute of Paper Chemistry*) to *Zoological Record*, the data base outlines follow a consistent format, the definition and methodology of which are well described in the "Introduction." Approximately 58 percent of the data bases are produced by U.S. organizations and about 41 percent by foreign organizations. Although some of the minimal data base descriptions are not fully detailed, the majority of the file entries include a great deal of information: acronym and complete name, issuance, correspondence with printed source, producer, distributor and/or generator, subject matter and scope, indexing, tape specifications, data base services, and user aids if offered by the producer. Of particular assistance is the name, address, and telephone number of the person to contact for further information about the data base. Included in the data base services category are the centers which process the file in either the on-line or batch mode; deliberately excluded are centers which provide in-house service only or brokers which provide search services by remotely accessing other computer facilities. The directory is augmented by four indexes—broad subject categories, data base name, producer, and processor.

In order to retain its usefulness, rigorous updating will be necessary. Having been published in October 1976 before the January 1977 availability of the Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc., BRS system and before the actual loading of several pre-

viously announced files of System Development Corporation's ORBIT and Lockheed Information System's DIALOG systems, the directory already needs several update modifications reflecting vendor additions.

Overall, this work is recommended for any library which provides an active search service capability. To ensure its viability, it is urged that after the original one-year purchase, updated and additional pages be provided by ASIS at a nominal fee to the original subscribers.—*Patricia E. Vaughan, Coordinator, NASIC, New England Board of Higher Education, Wellesley, Massachusetts.*

Pitkin, Gary M. *Serials Automation in the United States: A Bibliographic History*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1976. 148p. \$6.00. LC 76-18116. ISBN 0-8108-0955-9.

According to the introduction, "the purpose of this book is to provide, in one place, access to all information published on the automation of serials control functions in the United States and cited in *Library Literature*." The book is an annotated, bibliographic history, covering the period from 1949 to 1974. Each entry, numbered and in chronological order, is annotated and contains complete bibliographic information. In addition, each entry briefly notes the major automation application, such as ordering, claiming, binding, etc., and the type of library, including the categories of academic, government, industry, medical, military, public, and secondary schools.

The annotations are well-written and informative, varying in length from one to four paragraphs, with ample quotes from the original item. The appendixes contain an index of the articles by serials control function (binding, claiming, holdings information, etc.), and there is also a complete author index.

This book will help anyone considering serials automation by providing concise information on the way in which other libraries faced the challenges of serials automation and by locating specific articles relevant to the library's particular automation needs. Its usefulness is diminished by its 1974 closing date for entries and the limitation to the United States.

Admittedly, most libraries contemplating

the automation of their serials control functions will have *Library Literature* at their disposal. However, this book, reasonably priced at \$6.00, provides a reliable, annotated literature survey and is highly recommended for any library or organization involved with serials automation.—*Jean Hawks, Director of Public Services, Northern Arizona University Libraries, Flagstaff.*

Sheehy, Eugene P. *Guide to Reference Books*. Compiled by Eugene P. Sheehy, with the assistance of Rita G. Keckeissen and Eileen McIlvaine. 9th ed. Chicago: American Library Assn., 1976. 1015p. \$30.00. LC 76-11751. ISBN 0-8389-0205-7.

It is difficult to consider doing a review of Kroeger/Mudge/Winchell/Sheehy without a feeling of reverence. Memories of the earlier editions from library school days on through years in the library profession bring proud recognition that the *Guide* has been a work of consistent excellence by librarians for the entire learning world. As one reads through the pages of this latest edition, there is the pleasure of recalling massive sets of volumes on shelves and of remembering authors whose careful work is always within reach and students whose puzzling questions have been answered.

As noted in the preface, very little has been dropped from the previous edition and much has been added. This fact was confirmed by checking sections throughout the cumulated index of Supplement 3 of the eighth edition with the index of the ninth. The omission of reference works on individual authors appears to be the major deletion. One can sympathize with compromises because of space requirements, but the omissions seem not to be done as consistently as would be desirable.

Inclusions are said to be classical writers and "a few indisputably major authors" (Pref. p.x). This decision results in no listing for American authors (there were twelve in the eighth), and only Goethe is left for German writers—Hegel, Heine, Kafka, Mann, Schiller having been dropped. Corneille, Moliere, and Racine remain of fourteen French authors in the eighth. There is a satisfactory explanatory note as to the treatment of this type of reference work in the English literature section; a