

sources not widely available are probably reason enough for publishing it here as a collection.

The author manages to find a remarkable diversity of anecdotes and events within the single theme of the volume. There are chapters on the early Franco-American bookseller Joseph Nancrede, Elizabeth Peabody's circulating library of foreign literature in Boston near mid-century, the murder of printer Samuel Adams by publisher John Caldwell Colt in New York in 1841, the pseudonymous Gothic novels of Louisa May Alcott, the first fifty years of *Publishers Weekly*, and many more.

There is, however, a kind of imbalance in the book that may prove bothersome to some—an imbalance not of quality but rather of intent. Some essays are complete in themselves, such as the excellent seventy-page biography of Nancrede and the several cameo lives of early upstate New York printers. Others, however, are not complete at all but seem to serve only as a reason for bringing out a very specific fact or circumstance; they represent beginnings, or middles, or ends, but not all three in sequence as required by Aristotle. Somehow they leave the reader with an unquenched thirst for the full tales.

Stern is a careful scholar, and her work is both thorough and well documented; yet she is more a good antiquarian storyteller than a historian. She seeks no great significance in the events she records. Significance, she seems to be saying, is in the eye of the beholder. Book people in twentieth-century America will like . . . *Book People in 19th-Century America*.—David Kaser, *Indiana University, Bloomington*.

Fjällbrant, Nancy, and Stevenson, Malcolm. *User Education in Libraries*. London: Clive Bingley; Hamden, Conn.: Linnet Books, 1978. 173p. \$10.50. LC 77-19192. ISBN 0-85157-251-0 Bingley; 0-208-01664-3 Linnet.

This book has a great deal to offer those interested in library instruction—especially those who might be setting up or reevaluating their own library instruction programs.

However, useful insights or approaches are sometimes lost in the midst of sections that are frankly tedious and repetitive. Much of the discussion of existing programs is centered on

those in Great Britain and Scandinavia, where the authors are librarians, with an overview of user education in the U.S. also included.

The authors provide a good discussion of library goals and objectives for library user education, questioning the premise that librarians actually recognize what students really need—or want—to know about the library. They stress the need for student input into the formation of instruction programs from the beginning. A fine overview of teaching methods and nonprint media for library user education is described in chapter 3, running the gamut from conventional tours to computer-assisted instruction.

Probably the most useful section for American readers is the excellent discussion of Great Britain's SCONUL (Standing Conference of National and University Libraries) scheme. This working group was formed to encourage cooperation in the production of slide/tape guides to different library tools to be used in libraries throughout the country.

Although there were necessarily some problems with the SCONUL arrangement, some thirty-five libraries were involved in the production of slide/tape programs ultimately used throughout Great Britain and beyond. Some thirty briefly annotated descriptions of slide/tape programs created by SCONUL are included. This type of cooperation might be used as a model for American libraries that often duplicate efforts as far as the production of costly and time-consuming slide/tape programs go.

A highlight of the book is the discussion of the evaluation of user education programs. The authors insist that evaluation is the key to rational decision making—a step that librarians still have a difficult time integrating into the total process of user education. Programs tend to be born and die without ever being evaluated, or evaluated on the wrong terms. What is often judged is, not whether the students learned something, but if they "liked" a particular slide/tape presentation, for example.

Probably the weakest sections of the book are those dealing with in-depth descriptions of existing instruction programs—at the University of Sussex (England), Chalmers University of Technology (Sweden), Roskilde University Centre (Denmark)—and a general overview of programs in the United Kingdom, Scan-

dinavia, and the U.S.A. If you are already involved in instruction programs, you might be bored by variations of the same theme; the authors become bogged down in detail of "how we do it good in our library." This is the kind of information that might be best summarized in chart or table form, since it is comparative in nature.

In one chapter, the authors offer a lucid discussion of user education and its integration into the functioning of the academic library. They point out that working on a library instruction program sometimes leads to modifications of existing library practices—something to which we should surely be open, since all of our practices and policies need to be reviewed from time to time in light of changing user needs. Included in the book are also a brief, cogent, and fair discussion of user education in the U.S.A. and a final summing up of needs for resources and staffing in user education programs.

It was somewhat annoying for an American reader to come across acronyms that were never explained (OSTI, CNA, etc.) and at least one author referred to in the text who was

never cited in the final list of references. The writing style throughout is extremely dry. But if you're an Anglophile, you'll be charmed to know that at one British university students are allowed a "tea break" in the midst of their library instruction exercise.—*Ellen Meltzer, University of California, Berkeley.*

Cope, Gabriele E. *Coping with the OCLC Cataloging Subsystem*. Kay Y. Hoffman, technical designer. Lincoln, Neb.: Ego Books, 1978. 81p. \$8.40 prepaid. (Available from Ego Books, 6011 Meadowbrook La., Lincoln, NB 68510.)

Since the development of OCLC in 1971, numerous manuals describing its use have been published. One of the latest is Gabriele E. Cope's and Kay Y. Hoffman's *Coping with the OCLC Cataloging Subsystem*.

The value of the work is that the authors have gathered information that has appeared in other manuals, notably those distributed by OCLC, Inc. Although they have not compiled a definitive volume, the authors have presented a clear and concise summary of how the system operates. It is important to note that

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