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BOOK REVIEWS

Scholarly Communication: The Report of the National Enquiry. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr., 1979. 176p. \$12.95 hardcover, \$3.95 paperback. LC 79-51420. ISBN 0-8018-2267-X hardcover; 0-8018-2268-8 paperback.

Research and publication have increased, and degree programs have multiplied over

the past twenty years as the academic community has responded to the challenges of the information explosion. The prospects of declining enrollments, limited resources, and continuing inflation during the 1980s, however, are causing teachers, librarians, and administrators in higher education, as well as publishers, to recognize that substantial changes will be necessary to meet the future needs of scholarship. *Scholarly Communication: The Report of the National*

Enquiry addresses these issues factually and with insight and offers recommendations that deserve careful consideration and support.

Initial impetus for the study came from the interaction of a group of university press directors with officials of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Council of Learned Societies. Subsequently, \$600,000 was provided by NEH and the Ford, Mellon, and Rockefeller foundations, and the project was begun in 1976. Members of the enquiry's board of governors were drawn from the ranks of university administrators, faculty members, librarians, editors, university press directors, and representatives of learned societies and the publishing industry.

Three major elements within the field of scholarly communication were studied—scholarly journals, scholarly books and presses, and research libraries. Factual information gathered by careful research and opinions obtained by people involved in the process of scholarly communication are presented and form the basis for a series of summaries and recommendations. The re-

sults provide "a mixed picture of a basically healthy communication system beset with numerous problems, none of them fatal, but requiring a variety of improvements if the system is to continue to achieve its purposes" (p.5).

Journals are regarded as efficient, flexible, and effective methods of communication. The number of journals published, however, rising an average of 2 or 3 percent annually, suggests that quality and usefulness should be scrutinized more closely and net growth discouraged. The strain that subscription costs are placing on most library budgets is shown by the Higher Education Price Index for U.S. periodicals, which increased from 100 in 1967 to 288.2 in 1977. Higher journal costs unfortunately have resulted in funds steadily being diverted from acquisitions of books and other library materials.

The report expresses dual concern for the problems of university presses as well as the rising publication rate and cost of books. While stressing the importance of scholarly publishing, the report also directs attention toward the need for greater collaboration among university presses in management, processing, business, warehousing, and sales activities. Considering that book publishing in the U.S. increased from 11,022 titles in 1950 to 42,780 in 1977, and that the average hardcover book increased 143.5 percent in price between 1967 and 1977, libraries face major problems in selecting materials and supporting collection development. As a result, libraries will increasingly need to consider alternative forms of materials, resource sharing, and access to information in data bases at remote locations, while also recognizing that "the day of the comprehensive, self-contained library, if it ever existed, is irrevocably past" (p.13).

The enquiry offers twelve principal recommendations: (1) creating a national bibliographic system linked with the Library of Congress, (2) establishing a national periodicals center, (3) forming a national library agency to plan and coordinate development of a national library system, (4) controlling journal growth, (5) seeking economies for small independent journals, (6) cooperating with the Copyright Clearance Center, (7) marketing books abroad, (8) involving uni-

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versities without presses as participants in scholarly publishing, (9) broadening the role of foundations, (10) collaborating in management by scholarly presses, (11) establishing an office of scholarly communications, and (12) continuing discussion related to the intelligent use of technology.

In summary, the report affirms that "the goal to be pursued is not a continuation of business as usual, but rather the development of new ways to meet the needs of scholarship" (p.11).

The Report of the National Enquiry provides an important assessment of the problems, needs, and future options for scholarly communication in the United States. It deserves thoughtful reading, discussion, and response by all concerned individuals in the academic community.—*Kenneth G. Peterson, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.*

Use of Library Materials: The University of Pittsburgh Study. By Allen Kent and others. Books in Library and Information Science, V.26. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1979. 272p. \$25. LC 79-11513. ISBN 0-8247-6807-8.

Ranganathan's famous five laws of library science can be rewritten to fit the traditional research library:

- Books are for collecting
- To some readers their books
- To some books their readers
- Waste the time of the reader
- The library is a growing mausoleum.

The University of Pittsburgh study both sheds light on the extent to which these laws are observed and casts doubt on their validity. Its impact ought, and deserves, to be profound.

This book in fact reports three studies. Parts of all of them have previously appeared as articles, but these were mainly previews.¹⁻³ The first study, conducted in the Hillman Library ("a central research library emphasizing the Humanities and Social Sciences"), is a remarkable longitudinal study of books acquired in 1969. By the end of 1975, 40 percent of these had never circulated, and a further 14 percent had circulated only once. If a book had not circulated in the first six years, the chances of its ever being borrowed were calculated as one in

fifty. Three-quarters of the books used in the library had also been borrowed, so that borrowing is a good measure of total use. Weeding books unused after seven years would extend the life of the building by twenty-one years. This study is much the most important part of the book, partly because of its originality of approach and partly because the findings are of such importance.

The second study, on the use of journals in six science and engineering libraries, is not as interesting because its methodology is less original and its findings largely reinforce existing knowledge rather than add to it. It is also, along with its appendix, the longest part of the book. Use in these libraries was generally low, and highly concentrated on a relatively small proportion of the collections. Browsing was mainly in current and recent volumes; the great majority of older volumes were approached through specific references. There are striking differences among the six libraries, presumably explicable by local conditions (but unfortunately not generally explained). The methodology of the sample study, intended as a possible model for other libraries, nevertheless seems hardly less cumbersome and time-consuming than other methods.

The third study consists of a very detailed analysis of the costs of library use and a cost-benefit model of library operations. These are some of the most detailed and best such analyses in the literature.

The three studies are preceded and followed by brief, but thoughtful, open-minded and incisive contributions by Allen Kent and his colleagues.

The book is not perfect. It barely hangs together, mainly because the different parts have different authors. Some of the detail, especially in the journal use study, is not only unnecessary but of doubtful value (the numbers in some cells are too small to support conclusions drawn from them). Adding 25 percent of the subscription costs of each journal to allow for other costs is far too crude, since these other costs vary greatly according to journal size and frequency of distribution. The fact that most books lent to other libraries were also circulated locally hardly supports the argument for resource sharing, since there must be a good chance