

through serendipity, not by following a carefully planned lifelong career chart. Most of the essays convey a sense of optimism, as well as an ability to cope well with less job security than many of our ilk tolerate comfortably. The benefit for these essayists (particularly those who are self-employed) is freedom from bureaucracy, supplanted by the ability to absorb and adapt to change quickly and responsively. Another hallmark of the collection is the number of people who have created new careers for themselves out of family necessity: Aluri developed his publishing venture when he moved to North Carolina with his wife Mary Reichel when she assumed the university librarian post at Appalachian State, whereas Mary K. Feldman married, raised four children, and started college at age 42—all in preparation for her return-to-work career as an independent librarian!

There are two vital lessons for academic library readers in *What Else You Can Do with a Library Degree*. The first is that librarians—even those firmly entrenched in academe—can do something else with that MLS. (Perhaps we would all do well to venture outside the box on occasion to refresh ourselves, our perspectives, and our organizations.) The second lesson is this: When one of these people decides to return to traditional librarianship in higher education and applies for work in our organizations, we should consider seriously what they bring—flexibility, ingenuity, creativity, and a heavy dose of optimism. Rather than focusing on the presence or lack of traditional academic credentials, we might see that these people are high-energy innovators whose skills and perspectives could be of enormous benefit in the conventional library setting.

What Else You Can Do with a Library Degree is far from a scholarly work. Its essays are chatty, personal, and readable. They all have potential use for professional development collections in aca-

ademic libraries, particularly those with encroaching burnout among professional staff and those facing staff cutbacks or retirement buyouts. Many of these librarian-writers have made lemonade from lemons, and their stories are worth reading and sharing.—*Diane J. Graves, Hollins University, Virginia.*

Meadows, A.J. *Communicating Research*. London: Academic Pr., 1998. 266p. alk. paper, \$59.95 (ISBN 0-12-487415-0). LC 97-23432.

In the great chain of scholarly communication, there really are only two essential beings—author and reader. The rest of us—publishers, libraries, indexers, booksellers—are all in the middle foraging for existence in the hard ground between the two. Some of us are more successful than others, such as Elsevier with its huge net profits. All of us, as A. J. Meadows points out, occupy niches that have been defined over the past three hundred years.

Since the middle of the seventeenth century, the number of people engaged in research and, correspondingly, the publications describing their research, have been increasing exponentially. Every ten or fifteen years, the volume of published information has doubled—meaning that over the course of any individual's career, the number of publications and the various channels for those publications has at least tripled. Meadows uses the illustration of the volume of research expanding like a balloon with researchers inhabiting the expanding surface. To cover the same area, researchers have learned to specialize and to collaborate in an effort to become more focused and simply to be able to keep up. Exponential growth cannot continue forever, and Meadows suggests that the expansion in research and in the communication of that research will follow an S-shaped curve that will flatten out around the middle of the twenty-first century. If it does not, Meadows points out, every adult and child in the world, along with every dog and cat,

will be engaged in handling research.

Just as the curve may be beginning to flatten, information technology has given it a boost by making researchers more efficient and, possibly, making scholarly communication more manageable. Meadows's theme in this book is that research communication has always been evolving and changing. Researchers themselves, the readers and the authors, and their communities change slowly. The means of communication, which are handled by publishers, libraries, and others in the middle, have always changed more rapidly, and the rate of change is being accelerated by developments in information technology.

His message is especially critical to academic librarians. With his background at the British Library and his deep scholarship as a historian of science combined with his extensive research in information science, Meadows achieves a special balance that is fresh and welcome. In this book, he traces the growth of scholarly and scientific inquiry over the centuries with a focus on the sciences and brings his discussion remarkably close to the present day, given the production schedule of a scholarly monograph (a subject he treats in the book). It is a well-structured book with six chapters that often parallel each other as he discusses the evolution of research and its communication and how the growth of research resulted in the development of disciplines. He also focuses on the char-

acter of the people who undertake research, the channels involved in communicating research, the way that research is made public, and how people find out about research. He always ends his chapters by focusing on the effects of technology.

Meadows is evenhanded in his treatment of libraries and publishers. He stresses that both institutions face difficulties as electronic publications become increasingly important for the communication of some research. He outlines the issues thoroughly and, although his purpose is not to offer an overarching solution, he does suggest how the future may evolve.

Any practicing academic librarian will find much that is familiar here but also will learn a great deal as Meadows builds his arguments methodically and completely. He does not spend much time on the economics of publishing or on explaining how commercial publishers came to dominate STM (scientific, technical, medical) publishing. Although that would have been useful, he is concerned with broader trends.

This would be an excellent text book for a course on the subject and a superb primer for administrators and faculty who want to learn about the underlying pressures that threaten the research endeavors of our universities. Any academic librarian will benefit from reading it and will be better grounded when explaining the crisis we face in scientific publishing to faculty, administrators, and the public.—*William Gray Potter, The University of Georgia, Athens.*

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Rochlin, Gene I. *Trapped in the Net: The Unanticipated Consequences of Computerization.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1997. 293p. alk. paper, \$29.95 (ISBN 0-691-01080-3). LC 96-41003.

If you have not already read this book, you owe it to yourself to do so. It is masterfully structured, well researched and documented, and often as gripping as a