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## BOOK REVIEWS

Little (Arthur D.) Inc. *Into the Information Age: A Perspective for Federal Action on Information*. Vincent Giuliano, project director; Martin Ernst, project reviewer; Susan Crooks; James Dunlop; Arthur D. Little, Inc. Chicago: American Library Assn., 1978. 134p. \$7.50. LC 78-26851. ISBN 0-8389-0283-9.

Several features of this report urge its reading by knowledge professionals and policy makers: its modish title, National Science Foundation sponsorship, the reputable

contractor, a former library educator as project director, and, not least, publication by ALA. The study is yet another push for full recognition at national levels of the critical value of information in our society. It is well organized for readers with even a minimum of time and of previous knowledge or concern with policy problems of information transfer.

The report adds several useful perspectives. Three modes of information transfer are considered in historical order: "discipline-based," "mission-based," and "problem-based." Designated as eras I, II, and III, the modes are said to operate on

different values and with differing information systems. While chronological in terms of new emphases, all three "eras" actually operate concurrently, a factor somewhat obscured by choice of the term. A new springboard for national commitment "to make information work better for our society" is projected for era III, emphasizing the role of scientific, technical, and societal information (STSI) in addressing current problems of economic well-being, environmental protection, energy availability/use, public health/safety, etc.

Implications for action are set forth for "readers who are in a position to make information-related policy decisions." No specific solutions are proposed (library resource sharing is specifically discredited), but rather a "framework for understanding" for senior policy makers, agency executives, R & D managers, congressional staff, and senior scientists. Change is expected to stem primarily from congressional action rather than from the executive branch; however, support is expressed for the 1976 NCLIS call for a White House office of information policy and a representative advisory committee.

Running through the report is the information-as-commodity principle: In the future, change will depend on two "dynamics"—"a market-oriented dynamic, involving private sector ventures of both for-profit firms and not-for-profit organizations, like professional associations [, and] a central-planning dynamic, largely focused around the federal role in STSI transfer."

Questionable to many in a democratic society will be the marketplace philosophy applied to information access, leading, as it will, to the rich getting richer and the poor poorer. Others will feel it misused unless a similar market dynamic is methodically applied in government decisions for support of the research itself (now more than \$22 billion per year). Still others will hold that, government-generated STSI having already been paid for, support of its primary and secondary dissemination is also in order, thereby setting in place the infrastructure for the entire knowledge base essential to era III problem solving.

The report concludes with a useful annotated bibliography of the principal govern-

ment and quasi-government studies from Baker (1958) through NCLIS (1976). Doubtless *Giuliano/Little* will now join them. An articulate, thoughtful, provocative discussion, this report deserves careful reading by all its intended recipients, including librarians. The issue is pressing: how the knowledge base, on which all our institutions depend, shall be managed, and for whom.—*Irma Y. Johnson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge.*

Adkinson, Burton W. *Two Centuries of Federal Information*. Publications in the Information Sciences. Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1978 235p. \$26. LC 78-7294. ISBN 0-87933-269-7. (Dist. by Academic Press).

"Government and scientific and technical information" as an alternate title would better explain the scope and focus of *Two Centuries of Federal Information*, for if one is expecting a developmental history of the Government Printing Office and the depository library system or an overview of all federal information activities, this is not the book. With this caveat in mind, Burton W. Adkinson still set out to do a big job, namely to present the federal government's scientific and technical information (STI) policies and programs from 1790 to 1972, and he admirably accomplished his goal.

The author successfully designates four periods within the two-century span and weaves four chapters around significant STI characteristics for each period, concentrating especially on the intensity of the 1942-72 years. Next, he interprets and assesses the general developments affecting this later period, reviewing the many recommendatory studies of STI, the federal-private sectors' relations, international cooperation, and trends, people, and future directions. The result is a cogent text comprising the agencies, the activities, the policies as manifested for the various periods, the personalities, and those events auguring change and future directions. Here, then, is a book well suited to a course in STI that emphasizes the official role, or one that could well ground the newly interested in federal policy for science information.

Coverage of scientific and technical activities is quite extensive. Adkinson at times