

# Recent Publications

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Rowley, Jenny E. and Rowley, Peter J.**  
*Operations Research: A Tool for Library Management.* Chicago: American Library Assn., 1981. 144p. \$10. LC 81-12899. ISBN 0-8389-0337-1.

Exploitation of sophisticated management techniques can be found increasingly common in library management. There are several management techniques that can produce satisfactory outcomes. One of these several options is operations research (OR). Military decision makers developed and used OR methods during World War II. Subsequent peacetime applications were introduced in the private sector and industrial production and other organizational decision-making processes have also utilized it successfully. It is fair to say that OR never became a popular management tool in higher education, including libraries. OR faced stiff competition from other available managerial options that could be easily adapted to suit organizational needs. Time and motion studies, planning-programming-budgeting, cost-effectiveness analysis, and systems analysis are just a few of these possible management approaches to the decision-making process.

The authors of this paperback consider their work an introduction to operations research, with the stated hope that "this brief text will act as an appetizer and that the reader will go on to study more detailed accounts of operations research." It appears that the authors have made a good faith attempt to write an introductory text on OR, but then failed to show consistently and convincingly, how these

principles can be used for library management purposes. For example, chapter 4 on the subject of "Simulation" uses a hairdresser's shop as a model. Chapter 6 on "Resource Allocation" uses an equation of profit, and chapter 9 uses an example of a merchant delivering tons of grain to customers as an effective way to calculate methods of transportation. It appears, then, that the authors were hard-pressed, for reasons of their own, to give illustrations more suitable for the nonprofit educational institutions. In all fairness to the authors, they have included some examples of library applications. In the opinion of this reviewer, however, the unnecessary inclusion of profit sector illustrations distracts from the full impact this text may have on library management literature.

The datedness of the recommended reading material is also of concern. To illustrate, chapter 3 has two citations published in 1958 and 1970 respectively. Chapter 11, titled "Organization and Management," is four pages in length and has only a single citation, a six-page periodical article written over ten years ago. It also appears that the eleven chapters were not treated in equal length or in equal detail.

In spite of its shortcomings, the book has its useful points. It would be a reasonable choice to include, along with other reading options, in a course designed to introduce students to OR. Certainly the mathematics used in this text is simple, straightforward, and suitable for introductory work.—*Peter Spyers-Duran, California State University, Long Beach.*