programs rest on delicate underpinnings which can always be strengthened by reviewing goals and the factors which influence their accomplishment.—*Laine Farley, University of California, Riverside.*

Chen, Ching-chih and Schweizer, Susanna. *Online Bibliographic Searching: A Learning Manual.* New York: Neal-Schuman, 1981. 227p. LC 81-83497. ISBN 0-918212-59-6.

This book is intended to serve as a beginner's self-instruction manual to online searching. It is meant to be used as "part of an on-going, hands-on learning process." The authors suggest the use of the *Dialog Lab Workbook*, and the appendix of this book contains possible solutions to the workbook's exercises.

This book uses a combination of practical and theoretical information to give the student a good introduction to the subject. It begins with an overview of the different types of databases, lists of the vendors, and which databases they provide. The overview also contains information about how the database is constructed by showing sample records and the possible indexes that result from them.

There is a brief introduction to terminals and modems after which is a sample search session. This introductory session as well as the advanced techniques in the later chapters are all examples of searching on Dialog. The authors do this to avoid the confusion of having a beginner try to learn three different systems at the same time. The initial chapter covers basic commands and Boolean operators. A chapter on the reference interview serves as a good introduction to determining the benefits of free text versus controlled vocabulary searches. The discussion of the operators which can be used with free text searching point out the sophisticated capabilities of this kind of search. Multidatabase searching is also described.

The three major search services—BRS, DIALOG, and SDC—are compared as to hours of availability, cost, system features, and availability of training. The book concludes with chapters on manag-

ing an online search service, the future of online searching, and a glossary.—*Susan Jurist, Research Libraries Group, Stanford.*

Dodd, Sue A. *Cataloging Machine-Readable Data Files: An Interpretive Manual.* Chicago: American Library Assn., 1982. 248p. $35 LC 82-11597 ISBN 0-8389-0365-7.

Machine-readable data files (MRDF) have existed for forty years, data archives and data libraries for almost thirty years, yet it was not until the 1970s that ALA's Resources and Technical Services Division appointed the Subcommittee to Recommend Rules for Cataloging Machine-Readable Data Files. The inclusion in AACR2 of chapter 9—Machine-Readable Data Files—incorporates the recommendations made by the committee in its final report, and constitutes the library community's official recognition of MRDF as legitimate resource materials.

The format of AACR2, however, precluded the inclusion of appropriate background material necessary for understanding the fluid nature of MRDF and the difficulties associated with cataloging and controlling them; hence the necessity for this manual.

In the preface, Dodd sets the objectives of the manual: "(1) to provide guidelines for establishing bibliographic conventions for MRDF . . .; (2) to suggest integrated levels of recordkeeping for MRDF; (3) to bring into sharper focus the AACR2 rules as they relate to cataloging computerized files; (4) to provide notes, examples, and interpretations of MRDF cataloging, which would otherwise not be available; and (5) to provide working tools for those cataloging MRDF for the first time."

The manual is divided into three basic sections. Part 1 describes MRDF in basic terms to the uninitiated, and discusses the distinction between documentation and data files. Part 2 is a step-by-step interpretation of AACR2 chapter 9, and chapter 21 as it relates to MRDF. Each part begins with a summary quote from the specific rule followed by interpretation and examples related to a variety of MRDF (text files, numeric files, program files). Part 3 includes sample catalog cards for all types