

Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Introduction to Information Science.

Comp. and ed. by Tefko Saracevic. New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1970. 751p.

This book is a collection of sixty-six papers by various authors. Most of the papers have previously been published elsewhere, and all are quite recent. (Only three pre-date 1960.) Most of the papers are important: Maron and Kuhns on probabilistic indexing, Swets on system performance, Leimkuhler on library systems analysis, Borko and Bernick on automatic classification, etc. Because these papers have appeared in journals as disparate as *ETC*, *College & Research Libraries*, the *Journal and Communications* of the Association for Computing Machinery, *American Documentation*, *Nature*, etc., their collection into a single volume is a signal service for which we owe Professor Saracevic and The Bowker Company a debt of gratitude. Because most of these papers have not previously been collected, and because their general quality is so high, this book should be purchased by every library that has even a minimal collection in the area of librarianship or information science.

A very regrettable feature of the volume is that in his general introduction, the editor does not help to clarify what this discipline that he calls "information science" is, but rather perpetuates and further compounds the confusion that is rampant in the promotional literature of ASIS, the bulletins of schools of "information science," and other publications. True, "information science" is, as Professor Saracevic states, a "nascent science," and we should therefore not expect a totally unambiguous definition of the field—especially since practitioners of even long-established disciplines often cannot do so for their own fields. Nevertheless, we do have a right to expect Professor Saracevic to explain whatever obvious lacunae and

gross disparities occur in his own definition.

The evidence presented in this volume suggests that the discipline it represents—whether one calls it "information science" or something else—is substantial and shows vigorous signs of approaching maturity. This makes it all the more regrettable that the editor has so misled the reader—particularly the reader who is new to the field and has not yet learned to discount the grandiose claims information science usually makes for itself—about the nature of the discipline to which the volume is an introduction. It should be stressed again that Professor Saracevic is not alone in defining information science more broadly than he conceives it in practice. Even the constitution of ASIS delineates the Society's area of interest as "information and its transfer" which is clearly not the Society's interest in practice. For example, the *ASIS Journal* would almost certainly not accept an article, even of very high quality, on the structure of Swahili, or the imagery of Keats, or problems in teaching arithmetic to ghetto children; yet all three articles could quite reasonably be subsumed under the rubric of "information and its transfer." (But then the *Journal* of ASIS has not kept up with what is going on in its parent society: it calls itself, in its "instructions to authors," a "... journal in the various fields in documentation." However, this states better than the constitution of ASIS what the real interests of the majority of the Society's members are.)

A final minor complaint: This book will probably be used primarily as a sourcebook. It is therefore regrettable that it does not contain an author index. This might have been more useful than the rather poor subject index that is provided.—*Kelley L. Cartwright, School of Library Service, University of California, Los Angeles.*

Planning the Academic Library: Metcalf and Ellsworth at York. Harry Faulkner

Brown, ed. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England: Oriol Press Limited, 1971. 97p. 30s. net.

This small volume is the edited record of a collection of informal papers given by the two internationally famous academic library consultants, Dr. Keyes D. Metcalf, Librarian of Harvard College, Emeritus, and Dr. Ralph E. Ellsworth, Director of Libraries, University of Colorado, at a short course on Academic Library Planning held at The York Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies in 1966. As the foreword indicates "brevity has dictated the elimination of certain contributions and most of the discussion." This is unfortunate, in the opinion of the reviewer, because often the most meaningful results of a gathering such as this are the questions asked and the ideas which surface in the unstructured discussions by the participants.

From its title, if indeed titles nowadays should be somewhat descriptive of a book's content, one would suppose that the major thrust of the work would be in the direction of the actual design of academic libraries. To a considerable extent this is not the case. Rather, the contribution made to the literature and thus to a part of the planning process is the verbalizing of the philosophy of the underpinning of American academic and research library development and planning since the 1940s, and the special relationships that should exist between architects and librarians. Any librarians who have ever been consultants can see their own experiences mirrored and will appreciate how often these experiences become "sticky wickets." Such candor in discussing the pitfalls of library planning on today's campuses is indeed refreshing.

The work is entirely verbal; there are no illustrations which would seem a must in a book on library planning. There is a rather curious omission of a discussion of that recent American phenomenon, the undergraduate library. There is no statement on lighting, and one final deficiency is the absence of an index.

Together, Drs. Metcalf and Ellsworth have been involved in some phase of the planning of over 600 major libraries. This makes anything they have to say regarding library planning significant and important. However, there is just no way that this

book should be purchased ahead of Metcalf's *Planning Academic and Research Library Buildings*, 1965, and Ellsworth's *Planning the College and University Library*, 1968. These two titles remain the essential tools for librarians, architects, and consultants.—Kenneth S. Allen, *University of Washington Libraries, Seattle.*

Allen, Kenneth W. *Use of Community College Libraries*. Hamden, Conn.: The Shoe String Press, Inc., 1971.

Use of Community College Libraries, by Kenneth Allen, is a survey report that will interest many persons who feel strongly about upgrading the quality of higher education. If taken seriously, Allen's study could help in accomplishing this task. As a result, all those who believe that learning can be facilitated by incorporating a library dimension into the educational system should take it seriously indeed.

The reason why *Use of Community College Libraries* could contribute to such a goal is because this work supplies one more clue as to how students and faculty members perceive the teaching function of today's academic library. Unfortunately, Kenneth Allen's investigation shows that the perception is still considerably out of focus, and in doing so it becomes only the latest in a long line of surveys indicating that "the heart of the college" is anything but the center of the academic enterprise.

The impact of this study will come more from the data collected, and the conclusions which follow, than from the manner in which they are presented. This is because the entire work is organized in the form of a doctoral dissertation, even to the extent that the author subdivides the first chapter with such captions as "Statement of the Problem," and "Limitations of the Study."

Allen's survey deals with information that was obtained from faculty members and students at three community colleges. To gather these data, the author designed a number of questionnaires which could be used in conjunction with circulation records that were available from the same three Illinois schools. After assembling this considerable amount of information, Kenneth Allen analyzed the material to determine whether certain attitudes and given circumstances, such as the number of hours a student was