computer-based services are being used in libraries. The author mixes generic explanation of activities such as database searching with practical examples to give the reader an up-to-date picture of library computing. In this respect, the text is a good companion to some of the earlier works on the same subject. The author occasionally creates an impression that the possibilities for automation in a particular area are completely defined by his examples and his description of current practice. As hardware changes and software improves, many library automated systems will certainly change character dramatically.

Systems Thinking attempts to help library managers by delving into the systems theory and systems-modeling world and searching out means of using the methodologies of these disciplines. The author attempts to build a foundation of concepts and then proceeds to relate them to library problems.

Unfortunately the book is an extremely difficult text to read. The author's style obscures what he is trying to achieve. There is room within librarianship for a certain amount of "purely theoretical" discussion as long as the objective is the eventual enhancement of practical activity. I think that the author understands this and intended to add to our ability to view library decision making within a theoretical context. However, this reader found that the writing style, the use of jargon, and the organization of the text combined to create an almost impenetrable treatise.—*Peter G. Lipman, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.*

Maranjian, Lorig, and Boss, Richard W. *Fee-based Information Services; A Study of a Growing Industry.* Information Management Series/1. New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1980. 199p.

This is a clear, factual description of current services offered in the United States and Canada by commercial and free-lance firms that gather data and organize or analyze them for a fee, using the methods of traditional librarianship supplemented with techniques such as online literature searching and telephone interviewing. Maranjian, at the time the book was written, was a research assistant with Information Systems Consultants, Inc., of Bethesda, Maryland, and Boston; she is now administrative assistant with

Creative Strategies International of London, England. Boss is senior consultant with ISCI and is well know as a writer and speaker on library automation and kindred subjects.

The study is based mainly on the answers received on questionnaires filled out by 105 proprietors of information services. The authors have reported on answers from seven types of services: (1) large firms (with more than twenty-five employees), (2) medium-sized companies, (3) small companies (fewer than five employees, according to a statement on p.3; fewer than six, according to another on p.20, (4) free-lancers, (5) services in not-for-profit organizations such as libraries and professional societies, (6) Canadian services (the reason for the separate treatment of this group is not given), and (7) services mainly intended to serve units of the firms of which they are parts.

The forty-two-item questionnaire asked for a wide variety of information about each organization surveyed. Topics included kinds of services offered, kinds of resources used (databases, collections of nearby libraries, etc.), size and background of staff, marketing practices, pricing policy, amount of business, and capitalization. Respondents were also asked to predict the future of their firms and of information brokering in general.

Several descriptions or "profiles" of individual firms of various types help the reader to understand how this industry operates. The first firm treated in this way, FIND/SVP, which is fascinating but not at all typical, has revenues exceeding three million dollars a year. It is affiliated with an even larger Parisian firm, SVP (Sil Vous Plait), and an entire family of firms throughout the world.

In other sections, the authors speculate on the future of this branch of the information industry, discuss relations with libraries, and briefly describe the state of the industry in the United Kingdom.

Special features include a brief list of sources of help for small businesses and a group of reproductions of advertisements used by some firms. One feature is surely not very helpful to adult readers: several chapters are followed by brief, simple questions and answers about the text which are reminiscent of those in junior high school books.

The information in the book will be partic-

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ularly useful to anyone who operates or plans to operate a fee-based information service. It should also be read by public, academic, and special librarians, however, as it explains exactly why people are willing to pay for some kinds of information even though others are available without charge. Furthermore, the book is delightfully calm in tone: unlike some of the literature in this field, it predicts the demise of no institution of any kind.— *Haynes McMullen, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.*

Research on the Impact of a Computerized Circulation System on the Performance of a Large College Library. Part One: The Main Library. Report on National Science Foundation Grant no. IST 78-10821 for the period September 15, 1978—June 1, 1980. Prepared by Katherine A. Frohmberg and William A. Moffett. Order no. PB 81-199549. Oberlin, OH; Oberlin College Library, 1981. 89p. $9.50 paper; $3.50 microfiche.

This report, prepared to satisfy contractual requirements of the funder, the National Science Foundation, should not have been published in its present form. In terms of meaningful content there is only enough material for a journal article. For eighty-nine pages printed only on one side, with large type, wide margins, and amateurishly drawn graphs, a price tag of $9.50 seems excessive.

Oberlin College used "the occasion of the introduction of an automated circulation system in 1978 to study certain measures of library performance." These measures include availability, building use, visits to the library, number of checkouts, required time to charge a book, and patron attitudes. These are not new measures, nor are the methods new. Paul Kantor, who served as a consultant to the study, has already published much of this material.

Treatment of the findings from the study is uneven. For example, chapter five includes a twenty-five-item questionnaire given to Oberlin students. The following chapter contains a very technical discussion of modeling variables including those from the questionnaire. Yet the responses from the questionnaire are not discussed until chapter eight, and then, only four of the questions are analyzed.

Basically the study found that availability and accessibility improved as a result of automation. Student's favorable attitudes toward the library declined with the introduction of the system but improved as checkout time decreased.— *Ellen Altman, University of Arizona, Tucson.*

Rink, Evald. *Technical Americana: A Checklist of Technical Publications Printed Before 1831.* Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus International Pubs., 1981. $60. LC 81-4036. ISBN 0-527-75447-1.

This is a pioneer treatment of the subject and as such is an important reference work for those concerned with the early history of technology and industrial development in the United States. The 6,065 titles and editions are grouped chronologically within seventy-five subheadings. The subheadings are in turn gathered under twelve main headings: general works, technology, agriculture, crafts and trade, medical technology, military technology, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, manufacturing, mining and mineral production, sea transportation and inland transportation. The scope is restricted to books published in this country prior to 1831, both original works and reprints of British or translations of continental writers. It is a record of the literature of technology produced by American publishers for the use of Americans. The largest portion (85 percent) are nineteenth-century publications. The largest main heading is "Inland Transportation," which occupies one third of the work. "Agriculture" is the next largest with 14 percent.

The author explicitly states that this is not a bibliographical study of individual items, but an effort to make the publications listed "available to the users". Descriptions are therefore "limited to essential features sufficiently complete for their identification." They consist of a main entry, the title shortened where appropriate, and an imprint in a standardized form which gives place, printer or publisher, and date. The collation is in a library format. In some cases there is an additional note when the title information is not complete. Although thirty-four bibliographies are listed as references, each entry has only one bibliographical citation, preferably to an imprint bibliography such as Evans,