tive public library. The commitment of the BdF to collect other media, to start an aggressive effort to digitize texts and manuscripts and to serve as an information node for the wider distribution of these electronic documents to public and university libraries within France and to major research libraries abroad, led one critic (Jacques Julliard) to exclaim that the "BdF would become the Disneyland of reading."

In 1992 Gattégno was asked to leave his position, an indication that the direction of the project was about to change significantly after the failure of various attempts to compromise (e.g., establishing separate reading rooms for the general public and for researchers). In January 1994 Dominique Jamet was also replaced. More importantly, the BN and the BdF were merged into a single administrative entity: the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNdF). Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie was appointed president of the Conseil Scientifique, an announcement that will not have come as a surprise to Gattégno. In his estimation, the dismantlement of a "library of a completely new type" to a *BN bis* had been completed.—*Kurt De Belder, New York University, New York, New York.*

Musmann, Klaus J. *Technological Innovations in Libraries, 1860–1960: An Anecdotal History.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1993. 245p. $55 (ISBN 0-313-28015-0).

Librarians assume too easily that today's technological challenges and promises represent something new for libraries. We look back nostalgically to the stability of the library world prior to the 1980s (the era of bibliographic utilities, online catalogs, CDs, CD-ROM), or the 1970s (when circulation systems, online searching, and videocassettes came into use), or the 1960s (when LPs and early automation were introduced). Klaus Musmann reminds us that technological change is not a phenomenon of the past thirty years: he argues that changes around the turn of the century were quite as revolutionary as anything in the present. He cites as examples the impact of cheap, safe artificial light; proper ventilation for large library spaces; even the standardized 75-by-125 millimeter catalog card. Musmann points out that librarians have always faced technical difficulties, e.g., how to disinfect returned books, how to manage newspaper collections before microfilm or how to deal with the "library hand" before typewriters were widespread.

Nor is the feeling that the printed book is doomed anything new. In 1918 Homer Croy was convinced that print would be replaced by motion pictures. In 1926 Melvil Dewey had us outgrowing books within fifty years. In 1936 Stephen Gaselee "expressed some doubts whether the book would survive as a popular medium for the diffusion of knowledge during an age of broadcasting and television." In 1938 Alice Farquhar asserted that radio had decreased public library circulation, that people could not be expected to read books and magazines on current affairs when the radio offered "last minute information fascinatingly presented," and asked "Why read a mystery when you can get your hair to stand on end, just passively listening to 'Lights Out'?" Similarly, G. D. Richardson contended in 1951 that television would entirely replace recreational reading. Since the 1930s librarians have suggested that microform publications would or should replace books—and in 1935 Louis Hewitt Fox wrote that "the average reader prefers the film to the book."

Musmann begins his book with a discussion of technological innovations, revealing a somewhat downbeat attitude about the significance of libraries: surely it is an overstatement that public libraries are no longer "an important force in the leisure time activities of the public-at-large" in many cities and towns. Still, the book offers its own grounds for optimism. The second chapter, "Librarians in an Age of Technological Change," deals not with the present but with the period from 1887 through 1958. If librarians survived that age and used technological change to improve library holdings and services,

why should we do less in the next fifty years?

Six chapters deal with varieties of technology: the physical environment of the library (lighting, ventilation, and the spread of disease); streamlining library processes (appliances, contrivances, and gadgets); photographic processes; new communications devices (telephone, phonograph, and typewriter); the library and radio; and motion pictures and television. Musmann concludes with a chapter on the future of the library and its technology.

This book is indeed "an anecdotal history," much of it derived from library periodicals from the century under consideration (1860–1960). The book is full of quotations and comments, footnoted to a fare-thee-well. The style is sufficiently informal to be readable, and Musmann does a good job of organizing and commenting on the array of sources. While most of the discussions lack in-depth statistics to place specific anecdotes in context, this weakness is almost certainly a realistic reflection of the library world's sketchy historical record. Do we really know how many libraries had in-house radio broadcasts in 1936—and do we have any idea how many libraries currently circulate CD-ROMs?

After reading this book, I have a much better sense of the field's technological concerns through the century before I began to work in libraries. It has been clear for some time that ongoing change and increasing complexity—the continued importance of print, but also an array of new media and access mechanisms—are the only plausible future for libraries. This book reminds us that libraries have never been the stable, unchanging institutions that some people assume, and that there have always been commentators looking for a single, simpler future that was never in the cards.

If you are concerned about the future of the book and the ability of libraries to cope with the onslaught of technology, you should read this book. Yes, it is library history—but it is history that provides a worthwhile perspective on today's fashion for doom-crying and self-doubt among librarians.—*Walt Crawford, The Research Libraries Group, Mountain View, California.*

Women, Information Technology and Scholarship. Ed. H. Jeanie Taylor, Cheris Kramarae, and Maureen Ebben. Urbana, Ill.: Center for Advanced Study, 1993. 127p., $10 + $2 shipping and handling (ISBN 1-882875-00-1).

Academic libraries have succumbed to a romance, indeed an obsession, with technology. Yet how often do we stop to contemplate the profound implications of this information "revolution"? Do we ever pause to ask what should be critical questions: "Revolution by and for whom"? Do we dare to link this brave new library and information world with our professed commitment to "diversity" and equity? As we welcome the potential of powerful new information technologies and the resulting changes in the nature of scholarly research and practice, we must also pay close attention to the power relations embedded in their development, deployment, and use. All the more welcome, then, is this volume which tackles head on the profoundly political nature of information technologies and the implications for university policy.

In September 1991, at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, an interdisciplinary group of thirty-three faculty and academic professionals, including five librarians, gathered around a common goal to "help insure that new communications technologies will be structured and used in ways beneficial and equitable for all." *Women, Information Technology, and Scholarship*, sponsored by the Center for Advanced Study, draws from the first year (1991–92) of their ongoing colloquium.

Four articles by colloquium participants or collaborators anchor the volume, followed by six colloquium digests and an extensive bibliography. In the first article, Maureen Ebben and Cheris Kramarae offer an overview highlighting issues of particular concern for women in four key areas: difficulties en-