BOOK REVIEWS

skills this publication teaches should prove ever more useful.

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In this publication, the author presents ideas she developed and materials she created for a series of staff development and job training workshops. Her goal is to aid supervisors by suggesting a better way to conduct job training.

Chapter headings include “Overview of the Training Process,” “Specific Training Needs,” “Planning for Training,” “Implementation of Training,” “Evaluation of Training,” and “Beyond the Training Plan.” Staffing issues (including the tendency to equate problem situations with problem employees and managing operational policy transitions) are discussed with a view toward broadening the supervisor’s perspective. Exercises at the end of each chapter emphasize the important concepts.

The section on planning for the electronic library is an excellent treatment of philosophical concepts that library personnel must consider as operations become more computerized. A valuable appendix contains job training plans for clerical, technical, and professional positions that refreshingly incorporate goals and standards for both employees and supervisors. Plans touch on objectives, time sequencing, specific task training components, and performance expectations.

Although there is no extensive bibliography, there are citations to the classic and current personnel management literature. The manual is not directed toward a specific type of library. It will be a helpful resource to many supervisors who are seeking guidelines and models for employee training management.

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The stated goal of this book is “to provide a structure for understanding the principles and complexities involved in managing an (automated) information system.” It assumes that there are important differences between this type of management and management of nonautomated systems. Whether or not this is true, today’s manager, faced with a first automation project, certainly needs support.

The support offered here is in the form of ten short chapters describing components of information system management, from selecting information systems and technologies through monitoring and evaluating them. The introductory chapter suggests the general trends in modern information systems and technologies. It defines six steps in system development: problem definition, specifications, analysis and identification of alternative solutions, design/selection, implementation, and evaluation. Here as elsewhere in the book, the orientation is broad, although most examples described are relevant to libraries. In general, the systems perspective of the authors is a conservative one; discussions of storage media, for example, are devoted primarily to micrographics.

Chapter two is about choosing an information system, from goals and objectives through selection. It is aimed at the organization that decides to procure a system from a vendor. Writing an RFP, analyzing proposals, and contracting with the chosen vendor are also described. Chapter three returns to system planning and design. Focusing chiefly on in-house systems, it discusses the information processing cycle and technical aspects of file structure and indexing. The chapters on planning the technical aspects are complemented by a chapter on human factors that summarizes economic considerations.

Chapters five and six address performance monitoring from the perspectives of system reliability and quality control, and system maintenance and protection. Quality control is described in various areas—data and word processing, micrographics, and telecommunications. A brief chapter on evaluating information systems and technologies describes tests that may be useful.

In chapter eight, the authors discuss the important and often neglected area of system documentation; they offer suggestions on what should be included. Chapter nine acknowledges the human side of technology management and the challenges of selecting, training, and managing personnel. The final chapter, entitled “Managing Information
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Information Management from Strategies to Action explores information management from a British perspective. The eleven contributors are all from the United Kingdom, and most of the examples are drawn from British society. Its focus is information management in the business/corporate setting, particularly the profit-making sector.

The publisher, ASLIB (Association of Special Librarians and Information Bureaux), has recently changed its name to the Association for Information Management. Its focus has expanded from special libraries and information units to all groups in both the public and private sector involved with the management of information. This book is addressed to that new constituency.

Editor Blaise Cronin argues in the book's introduction that information management is more than "value-added" librarianship. Each of the eleven contributors supports Cronin's point. The reader comes away with the realization that "traditional" librarianship (accessing external databases and organizing printed material) is only a small part of information management. Librarians do have some of the skills needed for information management, but so do people with backgrounds in data processing, telecommunications, systems analysis, and office automation. The theme throughout the book, sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit, is that librarians will not inherit the role of information manager by default. There is a great deal of competition for this position from people in other disciplines. To become information managers, librarians need to expand their skills and to change their image within their organization.

The opening two chapters are directed toward librarians. In chapter one, Cronin discusses the information explosion and its implications for information management. Chapter two specifically addresses the role of the librarian in information management. The next eight chapters offer several definitions of information management and information managers. Each chapter, however, stresses that the field is interdisciplinary. The final chapter discusses seven educational programs in information management in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Luxembourg. The M.A. in Information Studies offered by Sheffield University, Department of Information Studies, is the only such course that even slightly resembles a traditional library school curriculum. The other programs are either offered by business schools or have a strong business slant.

Information Management from Strategies to Action would be useful to those interested in the British viewpoint on information management. The book might also interest those seeking corporate models for information management. The challenge for an American reader of this book is to determine which assumptions made by the contributors pertain only to British society and which can be generalized to include the United States.

As Cronin notes in the introduction, there is already a large body of literature in the United States on this topic. The U.S. literature should be sufficient for most health sciences librarians interested in information management.

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