

Reviews

Shearer, James R., Thomas, Alan R. *Cataloging and Classification: Trends, Transformations, Teaching and Training*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press Inc., 1997. 210 p. ISBN: 0-7890-0339-2

As catalogers, we know that we have to keep up with changes in computer technology, we know the impact that the World Wide Web has had on our OPACs, and we know how valuable cataloging courses are for all librarians. Cataloging and Classification emphasizes these points and provides a broad review of the current research in the cataloging profession.

The book is a compilation of essays that are separated into four groups: The Cataloger, The Future of Classification Systems, New Technology and Its Implications, and A Director's Perspective.

The various papers in The Cataloger group deal with education, employment, and cross-training in libraries. The joys and hardships of holistic librarianship, mentioned in Alan Thomas' essay, may be recognized by anyone working in a small library, but may be somewhat new territory for those of us who work in large libraries.

The Future of Classification Systems section provides an interesting and forward-looking vision of cataloging work. C.D. Hurt sees a "problematic and ultimately catastrophic" future for our profession unless we "take classification and subject analysis to a more useable and more sophisticated level."

The papers making up New Technology and Its Implications attempt to create an educational agenda that catalogers should follow. Ling Hwey Jeng states that catalogers "have not expanded their scope of professional reading" and that they need to "go beyond self-defense and accept a certain level of risk." Gillian McCombs finds that "it is safe to say that technical services has pretty much missed the boat as far as exploring innovative use of the Internet." This section is a call to arms for catalogers to take initiative with new technology by means of research and risk-taking changes.

In the final section, A Director's Perspective, Richard Meyer shares a director's view

of the cataloger's future. Catalogers should read this book and then encourage librarians from other departments to read it and perhaps see better the position in which catalogers are constantly placed. Catalogers are caught "between the forces of evil and a crumbling societal infrastructure" says Meyer, dramatically, but well. In addition to some illuminating comments on the future of bibliographic control, Meyer provides us with a lesson in library economics.

Shearer and Thomas have compiled a group of papers that promote change by frequently looking to the future of new technology and the effect that it will have on cataloging and classification professionals. I encourage, not only catalogers, but also students, teachers, and all library professionals, to read this informative book.

by Pamela Colburn Harland, M.L.S. Harland is web specialist in the Research Department at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

Frants, Valery I.; Shapiro, Jacob; Voiskunskii, Vladimir G., *Automated Information Retrieval: Theory and Methods*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1997. 365 p ISBN: 0-12-266170-2.

Automated Information Retrieval: Theory and Methods is one of many volumes in the Library and Information Science Series from Academic Press. Its purpose is to describe the development of automated retrieval systems. It accomplishes this purpose with text that is thorough, detailed, and methodical. The book is dry, but not dull, and requires the reader to pay careful attention to the logical progression of theory and systems analysis as it is presented in each chapter. Mathematical models, graphs, and formulas are used throughout the text. This may intimidate readers until they realize that these techniques are merely ways to represent the concepts of systems analysis and information retrieval. The first two authors are from departments of computer and information science and

statistics and computer information systems, respectively. The third author is with the National Library of Russia.

Beginning with "Systems and the Systems Approach", the authors begin a building a foundation for looking at automated retrieval systems. This first chapter describes the characteristics of a systems approach, followed by chapters on information needs and information crises. Chapters four and five consider information retrieval systems and languages, while chapters six and seven cover indexing of documents and search requests, with topics such as algorithms, statistical indexing methods, and constructing queries. Storage and access to information are discussed in chapter eight, and chapter nine covers the important issues of control and feedback in information retrieval systems. Chapters ten and eleven cover the evaluation of searches and objects. Chapter twelve looks at new directions in the development of information systems, including artificial intelligence. All chapters have references and most have bibliographic remarks, directing the reader to additional sources of information.

Automated Information Retrieval is not a book to be picked up and digested in one sitting. Complex and theoretical, it requires slow and thoughtful reading in order to grasp the concepts fully. However, for librarians, scholars, and researchers with an interest in information retrieval systems, it presents a thorough and well-organized treatment on the topic. Librarians with an online searching background will be particularly interested in this book and will become increasingly confident with the concepts as they proceed through the volume. It would be a good addition to academic libraries, particularly those supporting information science, mathematics, and computer technology programs, as well as special libraries with collections in these areas.

by Sara Anne Hook. Hook is head librarian, Indiana University School of Dentistry.