Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Lancaster, F. Wilfrid, ed. *Proceedings of the 1972 Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing: Applications of On-Line Computers to Library Problems.* University of Illinois, Graduate School of Library Science; London: Clive Bingley, 1972. 169 p.

The papers presented at the ninth annual clinic represent a welcome continuation in this series. Reports and demonstrations were given on a wide range of library applications of on-line computers and reflected uses in libraries of various types and sizes. Examples of applications were given on a variety of jobs which cut across library operations from acquisitions, cataloging, and serials control to circulation systems and the retrieval of biomedical information.

The traditional conference scheme was followed by a keynote address (from a marketing representative), and a summation (from a network manager). Between these talks were sandwiched the reports on how things work at home. Some flavor was added to this clinic, however, with the talk by Ellsworth Mason entitled "Automation or Russian Roulette." Mason has tried to dissolve the smoke screen which has obfuscated the cost considerations in library automation, especially in on-line applications. His arguments are telling: library cost studies are not plentiful nor reliable, while careful comparisons of manual versus machine costs are virtually non-existent. Mason's part of the program was handled brilliantly in the summation by Glyn T. Evans, one of our most articulate spokesmen for networks. He said:

> Mason is a brilliant performer. His enviable command of the language, his elegant turns of phrase, the dismissive wave of the hand, his unremitting rhetoric, bedazzle and bemuse us to our—and his— loss. For his supporters are hypnotized by the silken glitter of his top hat as he soft shoes his cane-twirling, spats-twinkling, white-spotlit way across the stage. And his opponents, infuriated and goaded, attack the shadow of his cape and not the substance of his argument (p. 158).

Evans goes on to deal specifically with Mason's points, and agrees that the cost/benefit factor is the critical aspect of on-line application. In a clinic devoted to applications of on-line computers to library problems, one could expect to see a presentation on the largest and most predominant interactive system for shared cataloging—that of the Ohio College Library Center. Perhaps it was thought that OCLC has been represented sufficiently at meetings and in the literature.

The shared access to various data bases within a network organization is a problem of manifest administrative and technological concern. Although Pizer touches on this one area in dealing with "On-Line Technology in a Library Network," a fuller treatment of these questions somewhere in this work would have been welcomed.

Generally, each discussion of the individual application is clear, concise, and helpful. The clinic papers read like one of the few conferences about which one could say, "I wish I had been there."—*Donald D. Hendricks, Director of the Library, The University of Texas Health Science Center, Dallas.*

Burke, John Gordon, and Wilson, Carol Dugan. *The Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications; an Introduction to Its Use.* Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1973. $6.50.

Don't buy this book. Unless you have $6.50 to waste. Of the 113 pages in the book, approximately 36 are useful in terms of the stated purpose of the book. 36 is generous.

Chapter I contains four pages of original text describing the essential bibliographic elements which may be found in the *Monthly Catalog.* These pages are clear and well written and useful in helping someone who needs basic instruction. Accompanying these pages are three sample pages from the *Monthly Catalog,* one from the index, the second a typical page, and the third a sample order blank. The first two samples are quite useful as each bit of information is clearly identified; they illustrate the text