

changes of the past century. Beniger argues his control revolution theory convincingly. Specific parts of his relentless elaboration may be easily assailable, but overall he has given us a new way to view ourselves as a society and to consider our profession within it.—*Charles B. Osburn, University Libraries, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.*

**Hyatt, James A., and Aurora A. Santiago.**

*University Libraries in Transition.* Washington, D. C.: National Assn. of College and Univ. Business Officers, 1987. 112p. \$15 (ISBN 0-915164-29-9). LC 98-12819.

In Martin M. Cummings' *The Economics of Research Libraries* (Council on Library Resources, 1986), mention was made of a NACUBO-sponsored survey examining management practices of four university libraries undergoing rapid technological change, that is, in transition toward automation. The book under review is the official report of that survey.

The primary objectives of the study are:

1. to examine the management and planning of university libraries within the context of overall institutional goals and objectives; and

2. to examine the impact of technological changes on library operations, with regard to both current and future activities. The design and methodology of the project include the collection and analysis of background information on the participating institutions, site visits and interviews on a set of issues with key campus administrators and library officials, the documentation of the site visit findings, and concluding overview of the survey results.

It is, as the report rightly claims, "a landmark study, in that it not only provides a detailed analysis of library automation, but also describes institutional approaches to acquiring and maintaining automated systems." The four libraries, all members of the Association of Research Libraries, differ in governance and organizational structure but combined manifestly represent major characteristics of many American research libraries. Princeton and New York University li-

braries are private institutions, and Universities of Illinois and Georgia libraries are public state institutions. All four participate in national utilities: Princeton and NYU are members of RLIN, and Georgia and Illinois are members of OCLC. Both locally developed systems (Georgia's MARVEL, NYU's BOBCAT, Illinois' LCS/FBR) and externally purchased systems (GEAC and Carlyle) have been in use, and almost all aspects of library functions (circulation, reserve, acquisitions, serial control, online catalog) have been involved. The case studies offer the reader some fairly detailed analyses of four quite different approaches toward library automation, each responding to its specific needs and operating with its special strength and constraints. Princeton, with its tradition of participatory decision making and emphasis on scholarly research, developed its automation strategy by consensus-building among faculty, students, university administration, and library staff. Its experience with the 3M venture notwithstanding, or perhaps because of that, Princeton opted to purchase systems with proven viability instead of developing its own. The University of Illinois, with the strong support of the state and proactive role of the university librarian, assumed the leadership of a statewide automated library system that effectively links a number of academic libraries throughout Illinois and makes resource sharing a reality with an active and efficient statewide interlibrary delivery system. The New York University, described as a "federated institution," functions on many levels of informal contacts and overlapping relationships. The library itself has had a history of decentralized governance. Automation, which perforce propels toward some degree of centralization, provides the library an opportunity to play a central role in the technological transition of the university in its teaching and research programs. This the Bobst Library of NYU has in good measure proceeded to do. With the active personal involvement of the dean of the libraries and the pivotal role of library automation in the technological transformation of the university itself, NYU libraries have been

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able to respond to technological change despite budgetary constraints. The University of Georgia experience differs from the other three in that the library has opted to maintain the university's own locally developed system, MARVEL, with a batch mode to reduce cataloging cost, and to cooperate closely with the campus computer center to develop its programs. It responded to its own institutional needs by being a partner with the computer center.

To respond to and capitalize on one's own unique institutional environment with its specific and special needs and capabilities is perhaps the key to the survey findings. As the report concludes in its overview,

it is important to recognize that management processes and automated systems of these organizations were developed within unique sets of environment factors . . . the benefits of these case studies lies in noting how each institution and its library responded to technological change within the context of its institutional goals, objectives, and priorities.

The report has another cautionary note. Automation does not result in reduced operating costs. And perhaps more serious yet, the true costs are difficult to ascertain. The four case histories provide interesting, indeed illuminating, albeit brief, descriptions of four success stories of how these libraries responded to the challenge by meeting their respective institutional needs within their specific institutional environment. The cases illustrated administrative savoir faire and professional vision as well as expertise, but the cold facts of cost estimates and cost-benefit analysis remain elusive. If one may wish for more from this very useful study, perhaps it would be that not only success stories are studied. If only some libraries would instruct us with their stories of thwarted hopes and failed experiments! So often we learn more from failures than from successes.—Y. T. Feng, *Harvard College Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

**Carpenter, Kenneth E.** *The First 350 Years of the Harvard University Library: Description of an Exhibition.* Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Library, 1986. 216 p. \$20.

Whatever one wishes to call it—a collection of collections, a library of libraries, the world's largest privately supported library, an international collection, or simply many tubs sailing the bibliographical seas on their individual bottoms—the Harvard University Library is a phenomenon that commands admiration and respect. After 350 years of existence it celebrated its many achievements with this catalog to an exhibition documenting its course into the contemporary world. The reader quickly perceives the library's evolution from a struggling provincial outpost to a period of unprecedented collection building beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The story concludes with Harvard's approach to the preservation of all that it has so assiduously gathered during its long history, and its need to control its collections with the use of automation and its own library information system. Harvard, in effect, has seen it all, as is made clear by this careful gathering of incidents and personalities from the copious records of the library's past.

The message is clear. This mighty institution has a past to be reckoned with. In its long life, it has participated in more than one kind of revolution and has instigated, on the bibliographical side, quite a few of its own. With its own rich historical experience—one might say lineage—the Harvard University Library can take on whatever comes its way. One of the virtues of this volume is that it gives a broad perspective of change and durability within a unique institution from which the thoughtful reader can draw the lessons of history, or at least the history of libraries.

The presentation is simple and direct, enabling the reader to become engaged at any point that attracts an interest. More than eighty years were selected to establish the inevitability of Harvard's greatness. Each chosen year signifies an event that melds into the ultimate character of the institution and presumably affects it forever. It is a persistent gathering of strength and diversity with only a trace, here and there, of puffery or unnecessary hyperbole. The Harvard library becomes, as one moves through the years, truly the