less than optimal, might indicate the authors are not as aware as they should be of current technological advances. Some of the descriptions of current academic library practices, which have been enhanced by technology, omit crucial details. One example is the description of the use of OCLCs PromptCat service in conjunction with vendor approval plans. The example fails to differentiate between blanket approval plans, in which the library retains all items received, and approval plans in which titles are reviewed individually and either retained or returned. This difference is integral to being able to use PromptCat successfully. Moreover, there is some repetition throughout the book, but perhaps this is unavoidable because the three main sections are not mutually exclusive.

However, these are minor caveats to a clearly written, interesting, and succinct outline of how technology and managers are inextricably linked. There is much here for the neophyte manager as well as for the seasoned old-timer. I found myself making extensive notes on areas to explore and questions to ask at my own institution, particularly in chapter 6, which addresses automated systems in collection management. This chapter will be of great value to both the collection manager and the researcher. According to the authors, the potential utility of comparing collection purchases with collection usage, departmental profiles, and student course enrollment has been little explored, in part because "many libraries seem unconvinced of the value of the data." Continued budgetary stringency in many libraries, combined with the need to look for ways to compress or move some library collections to storage, make this an extremely valuable chapter.

I recommend this text to all who seek an in-depth appreciation of how technology has affected both internal practices and user services in the library. In the summary chapter, the authors state their belief that we still have a long way to go in managing the transition of the library "from one primarily physical to one primarily virtual."—*Gillian M. McCombs, University at Albany, SUNY.*

Rodgers, Terry. *The Library Paraprofessional: Notes from the Underground.* Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1997. 361 p. $45, alk. paper. (ISBN 0-7864-0222-9). LC 96-26371.

In this book, Terry Rodgers chronicles the history of the library paraprofessional and describes how the modern day paraprofessional a designation that represents more than 50 percent of all people who work in libraries is doing.

The first section of the book is an overview of what has transpired over the past thirty-five years. Citing a wide range of sources, Rodgers describes the lack of respect often given the paraprofessional. This low opinion appears to stem from the differences (or lack thereof) between the MLS-holding professional and the non-library-degreed staff. The lack of respect for paraprofessionals persists in spite of the fact that in most libraries the paraprofessional is expected to do what traditionally has been thought of as professional-level work. (A trend that also represents a considerable savings in salary money for the institution.)

The second section of the book traces the earlier history of the library paraprofessional. In tracking the various currents that make up the history of the worker in the library, Rodgers gives us a view into the social and work history of women—as women were and still are a majority of library employees—for the past hundred years. Women workers in the library faced grueling hours and high intellectual and social expectations but were rewarded with low pay, and even lower respect, by their male supervisors. Even when a large percentage of women left the library field to take higher-paying jobs during World War One, conditions for those who remained and those who came after did not change significantly.

In the remainder of the book, Rodgers uses historical perspective to examine issues that have an impact on the modern-day paraprofessional. Because most library workers are women, a key issue for paraprofessionals is sexism. Rodgers explains how both historic misconceptions about women and the women themselves have worked to hamper the professional growth of the library worker. Also examined is how other issues, including low pay, lack of variety, micro management by immediate supervisors, and lack of possible advancement, result in a great deal of dissatisfaction and burnout by todays paraprofessional. Possible solutions to these problems are presented, including better pay, more and diverse training, support organizations, and unionization; but unfortunately, according to Rodgers, these solutions either have been ignored or are ineffective.

Rodgers presents a very grim view of the life of the library paraprofessional. Admittedly there are problems, but after reading this book I wonder why anyone would work in a library as a paraprofessional. Almost the whole of the book is focused on what is wrong in the world of the library paraprofessional with very few, if any, glimpses of what is right. Poor organization and layout also distract from the books readability and usefulness. In the introduction, Rodgers states that very little has been written about the library paraprofessional, yet the author found enough material to fill a thirty-seven-page bibliography, which she cites extensively. The extended use of quotations, combined with the disorganized format, disrupts the flow of the book to the point that it is difficult to read.—*Tim Daniels, University of North Carolina at Asheville.*

Scholarly Publishing: The Electronic Frontier. Eds. Robin P. Peek and Gregory G. Newby. Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Pr., 1996. 363 p. $35, alk. paper. (ISBN 0-262-16157-5). LC 95-35556.

Why read a printed-on-paper book about the new frontier of electronic scholarly publishing? Is not its very existence oxymoronic? Its format old-fashioned? How can it be up-to-date for such a rapidly changing topic?

Although it is true that the most recent observations and citations in this monograph date from 1994, its content is anything but out-of-date. It is a collection of nineteen essays by librarians, library and electronic technology experts and entrepreneurs, library school faculty, publishers, academic administrators, legal experts, and professors in religion, psychology, comparative literature, and public policy. Almost every essay is brimming with vision. Utopian scenarios, voices of caution, and inquiries into the legal, societal, intellectual, and cultural probabilities and pitfalls join to raise profound questions still relevant and still unanswered. The authors collectively disagree with one anothers ideas provoking a lively dialog in the readers mind. Every chapter is convincing, persuasive, and informed. The divergence in opinions expressed allows the reader to glimpse the future while we are in the midst of uncertainty and chaotic change.

The unifying assumptions behind all the essays are that the future will be different and that electronics present opportunities, not solutions. Society has a moment of choice, of redirection unequaled since Gutenberg. Publishing, the exchange and distribution of knowledge, the creative process, and traditional services such as libraries and scholarly publishing will be transformed. This book does not offer any reassuring certainties as to how the changes will look; there is no consensus. And therein lies the books greatest power. Its discussions and contradictions invite the reader to imagine and question a vast gamut of options not all of which can coexist. It gives us the concepts and terms to explore what is happening now and challenges us to carry on in our own minds the envisioning, and next steps, in the