

one experiment showed that the smell of cinnamon buns is more of a sexual attraction for men than perfume (that would explain those long lines at the airport Cinnabun counters); on the other hand, it goes into ponderous detail about topics that do not seem relevant to contemporary issues. At times, there is just too much history. Why do we need such detail on the use of the electromagnetic spectrum and how computers read letters? Do we need to know how the phone works? Do we need a history of radio in the twentieth century? Sure, all this is typical of the genre, but it just seems to me that this history is presented in lieu of information that I would rather see here.

For a book on contemporary trends, it is strangely disconnected from the opinions and activities of contemporary seekers of information. For example, there is little discussion of how people actually use information systems and even less on how people read books. Yet, there is considerable hand-wringing over the loss of reading discipline that comes from the reading of hypertext books. Although Meadow recognizes that there have always been differences in the way people read fiction and nonfiction, he only seems to be concerned with the reading of fiction and encyclopedias. But what about other nonfiction? Surely social scientists have been selectively reading books in their disciplines for ages. Meadow does not come right out and say—though the reader may easily get the impression—that he views hypertext as the text equivalent of the sound bite.

On the positive side, reading Meadow makes us constantly question our own assumptions. The chapter on the book makes a strong argument that the technology called the book has changed over the past five hundred years. The author writes coherently about the possibility of reading books on computers and of individuals being able to independently print copies of books they desire. He poses many excellent questions about multimedia: What do we make of the fact that it is more difficult to find errors in multime-

dia products? What effects will the use of multimedia products have on learning styles and education? He ponders the possible changes in book storage and distribution, and reviews the issues of portability, durability, versatility, and acceptability as they concern electronic books. Meadow does all this while very wisely refusing to make definitive futuristic statements.

As is the case with any book addressing current trends in information studies, this one runs the risk of quickly becoming dated. There are already hints: Meadow states that the year 2000 problem is probably trivial, but it could be expensive to fix and he predicts the day when the Web will become more commercial. Time does fly. This book is an opinion piece, and it is safe to say that it is probably not a final word on anything but, rather, a beginning word on many issues. —*Ed Tallent, Harvard University.*

Towards the Digital Library: The British Library's Initiatives for Access Programme. Ed. Leona Carpenter, Simon Shaw, and Andrew Prescott. London: The British Library, 1998. 256p. \$45 (ISBN 0-7123-4540-X) LC98-183175.

This collection of articles on the British Library's now-concluded Initiatives for Access Programme can be read at various levels. On one level, it is a kind of *Festschrift*, actually a *Selbstfestschrift*, in that it places a monument to what, by all the accounts collected here, was an enormously successful spurt of innovation in the field of library digitization. As such, the celebratory tone of many of the contributions in this volume, the heavy coated paper used in its production, and the beautiful color plates reproducing the digital *Sforza Hours* or the library's Portico Web site all lend an uncommon air of weight and even permanence to the accomplishment—the notorious volatility of the digital scene notwithstanding. Underlining the showcase function of both this book and the projects it describes, the British Library's chief executive, Brian

Lang, points to the library's Initiatives for Access Programme as proof that the venerable institution he leads is now "a key player in the international revolution in the electronic production, storage and retrieval of information."

But this volume also can be read as a textbook study in large-scale research library project management. The program was launched in July 1993 to consolidate efforts on twenty separate electronic development projects. The purpose of this unified approach was to permit constant comparison and exchange of experience among many diverse projects with different, yet often overlapping, hardware and software needs, facing many of the same management and procedural issues. We read that a project management methodology called PRINCE was used to coordinate all aspects of the program, enforcing rigorous definition of the participants' assignments, frequent reporting and liaising, all measures that presumably reduced redundant investments of staff and equipment and allowed insights garnered in one area to benefit workers in other parts of the project. Within this superordinate framework, each project described is also presented from a project management perspective, with interesting insights into the inception, organization, actual implementation, and termination of each. The problems and setbacks encountered along the way are described openly, putting the solutions into clearer relief and increasing the reader's respect for the final product.

Finally, and this is the aspect that makes the present volume such an interesting read for academic librarians, *Towards the Digital Library* introduces the meat of the projects themselves. We learn much fascinating background detail about some of the best-known British Library projects, such as the Electronic Beowulf or the Medieval Realms CD-ROM. But, in addition, we learn, in more or less detail, about many other, no less intrinsically interesting demonstrator projects, such as the digitization of the Gandharan Buddhist Scrolls or Project

Digitise, an experiment to transfer analog sound recordings of the National Sound Archives (some of these recorded on wax cylinders) to digital files. Brass-tacks descriptions of techniques and equipment are provided, surely to the delight of practitioners in other parts of the world who themselves are grappling with the same operational questions of how to make the transition from traditional media to the fully digital library.

A number of these articles deserve mention as especially relevant to librarians in research libraries facing real-life digitization issues. Those responsible for cataloging CD-ROMs and other digital media, for example, will find the report by Sandie Beaney and her collaborators on the "CD Demonstrator Project" useful. She describes the difficulties of applying standard cataloging tools (AACR2 and LCSH) in the new environment but also covers a host of technical problems, such as the constant loading and then deinstallation (one hopes) of interface software. Hazel Podmore, in her article "The Digitisation of Microfilm," describes the methodologies used most successfully in the digital reformatting of Burney Collection microfilm undertaken between autumn 1993 and March 1996. Digitized "Access to Patents" is the subject of an article by David Newton of the British Library's Science Reference and Information Service, introducing the library's Patent Express Jukebox. These are collection areas that are giving fits to librarians at most larger research institutions, and the librarians can only benefit from reading these reports.

One of the most extensive articles is Lou Bernard's description of the British National Corpus (BNC). The BNC is a vast digital library of contemporary British English language in text form created between 1991 and 1994, comprising more than 4,000 samples, all SGML tagged with TEI conformant headers. Its 100 million words dwarf by two orders of magnitude the Brown Corpus created in the United States almost forty years ago, which is still the staple of much linguistic research on

this side of the Atlantic. Bernard describes the markup scheme used by the taggers, details of the speech transcription conventions developed, analysis tools (mainly SARA, short for SGML-Aware Retrieval Application), types of queries, and much more. The only mystery remaining by the end of this article is why for years there had been no legal access for American libraries and scholars to this resource, as if it were some kind of defense-sensitive rocket technology. Only in March 1999 did the British Library announce publication of a BNC Sampler CD, containing a two-million-word subset of the entire corpus complete with analytical software, with the assurance that it and all future releases of the BNC would be available worldwide.

With this exception, it is in fact the depth and breadth of transatlantic cooperation in the area of library digitization that impresses the North American reader. Electronic Beowulf, for example, arose out of a collaboration between experts of the British Library, the University of Kentucky, and Western Michigan University. Photographic expertise was enlisted from the University of Kansas, and collections that hosted the shoots included Copenhagen and Harvard. Anecdotes—such as the fact that the large photoflood lights used at the Royal Library in Copenhagen blew out the fuses there three times—not only add some human interest to these reports, but they remind us all that without pain there can be no gain.

It may be that most of the articles in this volume will be chiefly of historical interest ten years from now, so rapidly is the landscape changing. But that still gives us several years to browse through them and to share them with frontline administrators and electronically aware faculty, who will no doubt be grateful for the courtesy. General information on the Initiatives for Access Programme and the many projects it brought into life, most of which have now been mainstreamed, is available from the British Library's

online information server Portico at <http://portico.bl.uk>.—*Jeffrey Garrett, Northwestern University.*

Watson-Boone, Rebecca. *Constancy and Change in the Worklife of Research University Librarians.* Chicago: ALA (ACRL Publications in Librarianship, no. 51), 1998. 172p. \$30, alk. paper (ISBN 0-8389-7984-X). LC 98-26935.

Complementing several oft-cited sociological studies of professionals such as physicians, scientists, and college teaching faculty, Watson-Boone's book is an ethnography of the work life of academic librarians at a large public research university in the mid-1990s. The object of her research was not simply to describe and analyze an academic library as a place but, rather, to understand the work of academic librarians. She considered work not merely as a set of tasks and attendant working conditions separate from human actors but also sought to learn how the librarians themselves defined and valued their work. To this end, the author—a librarian, library and information studies educator and researcher, and president of the Center for the Study of Information Professionals—interviewed twenty-nine (about one-third) of the nonadministrative academic librarians at the pseudonymous Midwest Public Research-I University (abbreviated MIRI-U). This book is a description and interpretation of her findings.

For studying the librarians, the author used the qualitative sociological method known as grounded theory—a method that emphasizes induction of theory from actual cases instead of its derivation from a grand, overarching theory. Hers is not a quantitative study. Devotees of statistically based methods might well object to its lack of formal hypothesis testing, rigorous sampling procedures, and quantified responses to questions. Nevertheless, qualitative methods have enabled her to write an illuminating portrait of her informants' work.

Besides an introduction, a bibliography, and an index on method, the book is divided into five chapters and an appendix. The first chapter, consisting of an abstract discussion of work and its mean-