

For his last three chapters, Rota breaks with this approach and considers in turn several publication types that responded to public needs or even created them, namely, the famous Victorian “three-decker” novels, the practice of serializing publication of individual works over time; the “yellow-back” and the advent of series publishing; and the rise of the cheap paperback, such as Penguin in England and Bantam and others in the United States. This is a veritable crash course in modern publishing history and sociology.

Apart from the Text was the presentation volume for members of the Private Libraries Association several years ago and clearly was written with the needs and historical sensitivities of the educated book collector in mind. Although no one will turn to it for a theory-conscious analysis of the codex book as a triumph of reading technology à la Walter Ong, much less as a characterization of the book as a semiological, “grammatological” entirety à la Jacques Derrida, an extraordinary amount of traditional book learning (in both meanings of this phrase) is contained in, and can be gleaned from, its pages. Granted, it is a conservative work—an anomaly, perhaps, at the close of one millennium and the dawn of a new one—but *Apart from the Text* can certainly take a proud place next to other works on book history on library shelves, both private and academic.—*Jeffrey Garrett, Northwestern University.*

Stover, Mark. *Leading the Wired Organization: The Information Professional's Guide to Managing Technological Change.* New York: Neal-Shuman, 1999. 362p. \$49.95, paper (ISBN: 1-55570-357-7). LC 99-28011.

Those of you who may be wrestling with technology—how to manage and use it to improve whatever services you provide—will find this volume by Mark Stover just what you are looking for. *Leading the Wired Organization* offers the information professional of whatever stripe or variety—managers, professionals, paraprofessionals, and executives—a first-rate

guide on how “to thrive in the new era of information and computing.”

Stover recently served as director of information technology at Phillips Graduate Institute in Encino, California. Currently, he works as the psychology and behavioral sciences librarian at San Diego State University. His varied experience and penchant for seeing technical questions and difficulties from a human angle give his book an especially thorough and even-handed feel. In ten chapters, Stover treats a host of predictable, but key, issues associated with technology and information. Topics discussed include: communicating online (the advantages of e-mail and its pitfalls), doing business on the Internet (your library should not rule it out), planning the ideal Web site (the political problems that Web design can entail on many campuses), using emerging technology effectively (why pushing the envelope can be risky), and managing computer resources in a wired organization (the inherent difficulties in any computer center and library relationship).

Stover begins each chapter with narrative: a descriptive account or case study of a particular situation. He describes, for example, the scenario of disgruntled library workers irritated at the pace of technology in their department or the frustration of information overload that a group of reference librarians may be experiencing. Narratives are followed by analysis and advice and a section of comments pooled from a select group of professionals whom the author polled. These latter data, though some might argue too selective (there were only forty respondents in his survey), add an extra dimension to the author's analysis. They give him, notwithstanding their somewhat limited number, a convincing, field-tested, empirical basis for many of the book's conclusions.

In attempting to provide the information professional with perspectives on the plethora of issues facing technology and library services, the author naturally covers a lot of territory—ground that at times can be controversial. For instance, Stover insists on calling library users “custom-

ers," has no qualms about libraries marketing their services (within certain limitations), and contends that libraries can embrace a kind of postmodernism while providing genuinely authoritative information.

The value of Stover's book is not in the novelty of his analysis. He breaks little new ground; much of what he says has been said elsewhere, although not necessarily as well or as succinctly. On the whole, Stover writes with genuine balance and even-handed candor. The real genius of the volume lies in the author's capacity to engage technology and, in so doing, preserve what he would term the "humanistic" dimension; Stover would have us value our working relationships and improve our services. He offers great advice on how to work well with people and on how to anticipate and offset some of the tensions that inevitably accompany

new technologies. Although he does not speculate on the end of print or the demise of traditional libraries, he is altogether gung ho about efficiency and keen on improving electronic services.

It is in these respects that *Leading the Wired Organization* makes such a great contribution to the field. In a single volume, the reader gains access to clear-headed insight on how everyone in the wired organization can get down to the business of providing information and using technology to do it, while at the same time, gleaning some surprisingly sage advice on the human dimensions of the enterprise. *Leading the Wired Organization* is purely and simply a handbook. But it is a great handbook. It is a reasoned and careful guide to our present and immediate electronic future. No wired professional should go online without it.—*Steve McKinzie, Dickinson College.*