Book Reviews

Bade, David. *The Creation and Persistence of Misinformation in Shared Library Catalogs: Language and Subject Knowledge in a Technological Era.* Champaign-Urbana, Ill.: Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Univ. of Illinois (*Occasional Papers*, no. 211), 2002. 33p. $8 (ISBN 087845120X).

Serious cataloging, as is well known by those who have done it, can be both a humbling and frustrating experience—humbling because the vast number of subjects, languages, and types of publications the cataloger must deal with can be daunting, even to seasoned veterans; and frustrating because nearly all catalogers find themselves torn between the demands of producing high-quality records and, at the same time, turning out a high volume of work in order to keep up with the flow of materials. In this issue of the University of Illinois' Occasional Papers series, David Bade demonstrates more frustration than humility with the process but has some useful and important things to say about cataloging in this age of shared, online databases.

As his title makes clear, Bade's focus is on the number and persistence of errors in shared cataloging databases such as OCLC and RLIN, a problem he sees as only worsening with time. He categorizes errors into six types: (1) typographical, (2) ISBD formatting and punctuation, (3) MARC tagging, (4) misapplication of cataloging rules, (5) linguistic errors, and (6) intellectual errors. The first four types of errors have been discussed a good bit in the literature, and Bade mentions them only briefly here. His real concern is with linguistic errors, which he understands as cataloging errors that result from an inadequate understanding of the language in which the work is written, and intellectual errors, which he understands as errors (usually of subject analysis and classification) that occur because of a lack of subject knowledge on the part of the cataloger.

How common are these errors in our shared databases, and what are their causes and consequences? Despite the fact that he has entitled a couple of sections of his book "The Extent of the Problem," Bade never really tells us the extent of the problem. The evidence he cites is anecdotal, and we are left to wonder how pervasive the problem is. In fairness to the author, I think no one else knows either. Lois Chan, among others, has published studies of errors in subject heading assignment, but these focus mainly on whether assigned headings match current LC authorities, whether they are constructed properly, and so on, not on whether they accurately reflect the content of the work in question. Given the complexity of the problem, it may be that all our evidence is anecdotal; but experienced librarians who regularly use these databases know that the problem is not a phantom. What is worse, as the author makes clear, after these errors are created in the bibliographic utilities, they propagate through local catalogs across the country as librarians and library database managers too often blithely load records without adequate quality control at the local level.

What is to be done? Bade offers both specific and general suggestions for ameliorating the problem. To catalogers, he recommends learning more languages, broadening their subject backgrounds by taking additional courses, making use of local and contracted knowledge sources to improve the quality of records, and, most important, abstaining from adding records to the shared databases when the necessary expertise—especially linguistic expertise—is lacking. To library administrators, he recommends recognizing the intellectual nature of cataloging and being willing to pay for it, hiring enough catalogers so that good ones are not made incompetent by being forced to cover too

many languages and too many subjects, and making use of intellectual talent in the library among staff whether or not they are professional librarians.

It is hard to argue against any of these ideas in principle, but how practical are they? Sad to say, most library catalogers who work a forty-hour week for eleven months of the year and keep house and body together in modern times have little time (or energy?) for advanced learning. And in a time of diminishing budgets, library administrators will not be overwhelmed with the creativity of a suggestion to solve the quality control problem in cataloging by hiring more catalogers, or even paying highly qualified nonprofessional staff more money to do specialized cataloging work. Bade is right to insist that we have a problem and that its consequences can be severe, but I am not sure how far his recommendations can go toward mitigation.

Surely, a big part of any solution must be to reinvigorate and expand our efforts at cooperative cataloging, especially in the area of standards and in the sharing of expertise. Whatever its limits and defects, cooperative cataloging has been a monumental success in the library community, making possible the creation of giant world bibliographic databases such as OCLC WorldCat and providing cataloging to local libraries at reduced costs. Bade is concerned that this open, cooperative process, together with the lack of a sufficient number of adequately trained catalogers, threatens to slay the goose that laid the golden egg. This is an important warning. But just as we sometimes fight fire with fire, so perhaps we fight the downside of cooperative cataloging with better cooperation. That may mean more rigorous standards and stricter control on the input of bibliographic records to the national utilities. It may mean paying a little more for cooperative cataloging products (rather than a lot more for catalogers in-house) to enable OCLC and RLG to do better quality control cleanup of the databases, although this is unlikely to do much for the correction of linguistic and intellectual errors that generally require having the work in hand. It may mean improving and expanding initiatives such as the Program for Cooperative Cataloging. I also would suggest the idea of allowing catalogers to join the PCC as individuals, making their special skills and knowledge available on a contract basis to other libraries as the need arises.

Bade ends his paper on a somewhat vociferous note, asking whether cataloging is now a matter of intelligence or artificial intelligence. He does a good job of reminding us that it is still very much a matter of human intelligence because it is the knowledge and the judgment of human catalogers that create the records that become the substance of our bibliographic behemoths. But it also is, of course, a matter of artificial intelligence, with computers processing, communicating, and, in some ways, correcting bibliographic records. It is likely to continue this way long into the future, with the proportions depending on what we value and what we can afford.—*Robert Bland, University of North Carolina at Asheville.*

Brown, Carol R. *Interior Design for Libraries: Drawing on Function & Appeal.* Chicago: ALA, 2002. 143p. $45, alk. paper (ISBN 0838908292). LC 2002-1325.

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This book is a good hands-on, basic manual written in a concise, easy-to-understand style. Short and approachable, it is filled with interesting and enlightening information. It contains fifteen color plates and thirty-two black-and-white illustrations. In her second chapter, "The Planning Phases of a Library Building Project," the author clearly delineates what is entailed by the programming, schematic design, design development, and development of construction drawings phases and what, as librarians and planners, we need to expect to see and have happen during those