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The Impact of Rising Costs of Serials and Monographs on Library Services and Programs.

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general literature to develop the theme. The materials can be used by individuals for a self-assessment or development resource, as well as a springboard for leadership training programs.

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***The Impact of Rising Costs of Serials and Monographs on Library Services and Programs.* Edited by Sul H. Lee. New York, NY: the Hawoth Press, Inc., 1989. ISBN: 0-86656-885-9, 125 pp.**

The papers contained in this book were presented at a conference at the University of Oklahoma in February 1988. The papers were also published as an issue of *Journal of Library Administration*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1989). Two earlier conferences at the University of Oklahoma had a similar theme. While \$19.95 is a hefty price for an 125-page book, the contents of which are available elsewhere, it may be acceptable since the information deserves the widest possible dissemination. The importance of rising costs for library materials during the last several years, particularly the costs for serials, is evidenced by the frequent appearance of the topic in journal articles and presentations at meetings. In 1989 the Association of Research Libraries produced its "Report of the ARL Serials Prices Project" in response to the crisis of rising serials costs for its members. Another key indicator of the crisis nature of serials prices is the fact that an electronic newsletter on serials pricing issues is now produced by Marcia Tuttle at the University of North Carolina.

Library managers and collection development librarians can no longer simply decry the escalating costs of serials acquisitions which occur simultaneously with static or reduced funding. *The Impact of Rising Costs of Serials and Monographs on Library Services and Programs* along with other publications on the same topic provide many coping strategies as well as a few suggestions for long-term reso-

lution of the problems.

As is often the case in a collection of papers, the eight papers in this book vary in significance and writing quality. However, all the papers contribute to a greater understanding of the overall magnitude of the problem of rising costs of materials on library services and programs. Thomas Shaughnessy's paper on "Management Strategies for Financial Crises" offers insight on involving staff, faculty, and administration in the management effort. In "Will the Serials Giant Eat Us?" Shelia Dowd provides an excellent summary of practical considerations in analyzing the library's cost areas and the budget options available. Charles Hamaker in "Costs and the Serials Information Chain" concentrates on dealing with the serials titles and publishers representing a relatively small percentage of the serials list but a large percentage of the serials pricing problem. Other papers deal with the perspective of the serials vendor, the possible impact of new technology, etc.

While the focus of this collection is on academic libraries, all the contributors being academic librarians or vendor representatives, the understanding presented and the strategies and solutions suggested are applicable to all kinds of libraries—at least to those experiencing a continuing gap between rising book and serials costs and increases in budgets. Taken as a whole, the suggestions offered here can make a real difference in our success in dealing with superinflationary costs and budgets which are inadequate to offset the loss in purchasing power.

Don Lanier

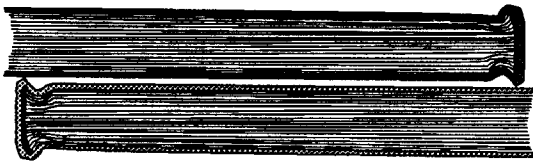
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Information Quality: Definitions and Dimensions; Proceedings of a NORDINFO Seminar, Royal School of Librarianship, Copenhagen, 1989, edited by Irene Wormell. London: Taylor Graham, 1990, ISBN 0-947568-43-3, 139 pp.

Evaluating the quality of information services is, like the old aphorism about the weather, something we all talk about but seldom manage

to do much about. While this little paperback work also does not give much in the way of things we can do to help evaluate the quality of information services, it certainly provides a lot of things to think about when contemplating this very difficult issue in the management of information services. It is highly recommended reading for managers and an absolute must for researchers in the field.

The volume contains the ten papers presented at the August 1989 NORDINFO (Nordic Council for Scientific Information and Research Libraries) Seminar in Copenhagen at the Royal School of Librarianship. The papers appear to be the verbatim texts as presented at the conference along with a very brief introductory (containing summaries of the papers) chapter by the editor. The ten authors represent a wide spectrum of nationalities (European, U.S.; Australian, etc.), disciplinary backgrounds (library and information science, computer science, public administration, etc.), and focus of work. Both researchers and working managers—and combinations of the two—are well represented.



The best overall context for the volume as a whole is put most effectively by Gulden Wagner, of Australia, in her short but superbly crafted paper, "In the Age of Information it is a Profound Irony That There is a Lack of a Solid Body of Theoretic Work on the Quality and Value of iInformation." (p. 69) Both the lack and need for theoretical perspective is also addressed in two other papers. Johan Olaisen, of the Norwegian School of Management, explores the relationship between connective authority and institutional authority in information processing. Rafael Capurro, from the Federal Republic of Germany, discusses the social character of information and the issues involved in developing an information ecology that has "ethical quality" implications.

Theoretical issues do not predominate, however, and a number of different efforts are made

towards developing definitions that are useful to researchers as well as managers of information systems. Don Marchand, of Syracuse University, explores differing components that make up quality and the implications those parts have in the management of quality. Miriam Ginman, of Finland, using data from her study of CEO's of varying sizes of corporations, shows how various personal, behavioral, and organizational characteristics affect quality judgements.

Patricia Hamalainen, Senior information Officer for ALKO, Ltd. of Finland, provides an excellent model of quality information service delivery through her discussion of how to deliver specific niche information service products to managers. Her discussion is particularly appealing as one answer to quality because of the frequent conclusion that quality, or value, in information services is situation dependent, time specific, and, perhaps, totally subjective. While Werner Schwuchow of Germany is sympathetic to this view, his paper is an interesting effort to develop a methodology for measuring quality of information services. Those who rush to use his method, however, will discover, it to be a complex and expensive one, as he acknowledges. Schwuchow's rather involved methodology is followed by an equally intimidating set of considerations by Ulf Hanson, an attorney in Sweden, regarding the liability aspects of information service provision.

Both managers and researchers of information services will find this to be a rewarding work. It is not filled with easy answers for either but is an honest work that reflects and illustrates the problems—both metrologically and practically—that confront us if we are to begin to understand more fully the problem of quality in information services. One wishes that the editor had decided to include some of the discussions that surely followed these papers so that readers could benefit from seeing what "answers" the authors who had thought more fully about the issues, might have posed to these very difficult questions.

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