

BOOK REVIEWS

women's studies serials, women's studies reference sources, content and access issues for women's studies serials, and international views of women's studies serials. Thus its scope is wide, with appeal to a diverse range of interests.

Throughout the work, the theme of neglect and paucity of specific resources relevant to women's studies emerges. There is, of course, the problem that the subject is a comparatively recent one. This is clearly illustrated by the fact that electronic databases devoted to women's serials have only recently emerged and that, as yet, there are few serials on the Internet.

This is a work written almost exclusively by librarians. Many aspects of collection management are covered, including the way in which journals are used and the information seeking behaviour of lecturers and students. The unique Popular Culture Library at Bowling Green State University is the subject of a short but illuminating discussion of how the women's magazines collection is managed and used. Several papers reveal the ongoing problems of under-representation, such as the cerebral discussion of cataloguing, which shows how women's studies traditionally have been excluded from cataloguing practice and offers ways of re-evaluating how to teach the subject in the light of heightened awareness of women's issues.

The work makes no secret of its American bias. However, there is a welcome concession to the wider world, with articles on women's studies serials in Ireland, the International Information Centre and Archives of the Women's Movement in Amsterdam, and on women's magazines and the spread of mass culture in South East Asia. All three are interesting and informative, and broaden our perspectives.

Who is the work intended for? It is difficult to see who, other than serials librarians and information studies departments, would really spend much time with it.

The former have probably already perused its pages via the *Serials Librarian*, in which it was simultaneously published in 1998. Women's studies departments and their librarians should heed carefully the helpful evaluation of four different electronic products. The two bibliographic CD ROMs, *Women's Studies on Disc* (WSD) and *Women's Resources International* (WRI), are critically evaluated in terms of their contents and ease of searching. Likewise, the two full-text databases, *Contemporary Women's Issues* and *Women 'R'*, are rigorously analysed and helpful guidance is given to enable librarians to select the most appropriate source for their particular circumstances.

There is useful material for information studies students, especially in the models of sound methodologies, for example, in the articles on women's studies in tables of contents online and on the analysis of citations in dissertations. However, some

articles demonstrate how easily painstaking research can seem rather arid, as, for example, the paper on women's studies in reference books, which analyses the number of reference books appearing in given years but fails to address their quality. There is much in this work that is useful and interesting but I would not regard it as an essential purchase for institutions other than information and library studies departments.

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Financial and Cost Management for Libraries and Information Services, second edition

Stephen A. Roberts, *Bowker-Saur, East
Ginstead, 1998, 406 + xxv pages, £45, ISBN 1
85739 089 X.*

I was not familiar with Stephen Roberts' 1985 book *Cost Management in Library and Information Services*, of which the present book is a much expanded second edition. 'During the process of revision ... the need to make fundamental changes of principle ... was addressed.' The revision recognises rapid change in the managerial and economic environment by an extensive review of the context and of the literature. Roberts is rightly concerned at the apparent lack of interest and of progress in the profession in this area. His appreciation of this weakness is sound and displays an excellent sense of balance. Few would disagree with his finding that 'In the majority of libraries a regular management accounting system (which would be real time and online) is still a dream, and one of which some librarians still have to be convinced of the value, appropriateness or necessity' (p. 230).

In outline, the book is well organised with eight chapters starting from 'Context', proceeding through financial management and costs, and concluding with some economic considerations and 'practical application'. Each chapter has quite extensive lists for further reading, which bear the hallmark of course reading lists, and are none the worse for that. But, rather confusingly, only some of these lists are included in the overall 'References'. There is a general glossary and 41 pages of appendices, which could have been more specific and up to date. The index is minimal.

There is little specifically on electronic and networked services. If Roberts' view in 1997 was that the situation was too fluid to include at that time, I would not disagree. His general principles can, in theory, readily be applied to new electronic developments as they become established.

Despite the clear formal structure, the book is not easy to navigate and contains a good deal of repetition. I think the reason for this lies in its attempt to

be four books in one:

- 1 Principles of cost and financial management
- 1 Particular features and problems in library and information services
- 1 The vital importance of better cost management in LIS: why so little progress in the 1990s?
- 1 Extensive review of the literature in the UK and USA since 1970

Looking at these aspects in turn, the 'principles' are well covered — with some inevitably superficial excursions into economists' territory — with plentiful suggestions for more reading.

The 'particular LIS features' suffer from a reluctance to get into the detail of typical examples in national, public, academic and special libraries. There is, for instance, hardly any reference to the importance of CIPFA and the HEFCs/SCONUL in supporting or specifying cost methods for public and academic libraries, respectively. There is full explanation of 'time study' work measurement — very sound, but not, in my experience, much practised in libraries. The opportunity is missed to illuminate the principles of capital costs by reference to the recent 'asset valuation' changes in UK local government — the headache in recent CIPFA Statistics.

To discover the main reasons for the lack of progress since, say, 1984 is a major concern. Even further back, it appears that Morse in 1968 identified the need for cost data in computer systems in much the same way as did PROLIB/PI in 1995. After a tide of published work in the 1970s and 1980s much less appears to have been published in the 1990s — although Roberts omits to mention the important addition on Costs to the IFLA standard on performance in university libraries¹ and the even more important EC PROLIB 'Toolbox' manual.² Surprisingly, he views 'Keys to Success' as having 'considerable and well deserved acclaim by the UK library community' without mentioning the much more satisfactory work on special libraries that Griffiths and King went on to produce in 1983.³

There is no doubt that librarians need more help from LIS academics and from professional accountants

than they have yet received. This case is well made — though the ways ahead need more debate. Almost certainly the solution is not for every library manager to apply general principles to develop their own custom-made system: that would involve far too much effort. Much more promising would be for them to copy a best practice case already developed or to apply something developed for their sector in their own country.

Finally, the bibliographies for the past 30 years are truly extensive and will be invaluable to researchers. However, the general reader needs more indication of each item's quality and significance.

The reader is taken as far as generalised information allows — though more by way of illustrative examples would have helped. Roberts' renewed attempt to kindle the flames of enthusiasm that burnt originally in his work at CLAIM in the early 1980s is welcome, and readers new to the subject should be inspired to use this book as a springboard to further endeavour. The book incorporates a valuable summary of academic work over three decades. Meanwhile, there are clear openings for publishers to encourage more specific texts and to analyse real case studies than has been possible here.

¹ Poll, R. & Boekhorst, P. (1996) *Measuring Quality: International Guidelines for Performance Measurement in Academic Libraries* Munich: K G Saur (IFLA Publications 76, prepared by IFLA Section of University Libraries & Other General Research Libraries).

² Ward, S. et al. (1995) *Library Performance Indicators and Library Management Tools (PRO-LIB/PI)*. Luxembourg: European Commission, DG XIII-E3, EUR 16483 EN (often referred to as 'The Toolbox Study').

³ Griffiths, Jose-Marie & King, Donald W. (1993) *Special Libraries: Increasing the Information Edge*. Washington: Special Libraries Association.

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A word from the Editor

Books Review Editor for *The Electronic Library* is Anne Morris of the Department of Information and Library Studies, Loughborough University of Technology. We are always seeking new contributors to add to the existing pool, and anyone interested in writing reviews of 350-500 words can contact Dr. Morris. There is no fee but reviewers can keep the book if it is useful to them.

Review copies may be sent to the Publisher, or direct to Anne Morris:

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