

EDITORIAL

Education for information was established to gather within one cover articles published around the world on education and training issues in the broad information area. That the decision to launch the journal was sound is borne out by the fact that it is now about to enter its eighth volume.

Since the journal's inception, interest in education and training has increased rather than diminished. The long-standing controversies discussed in the very first issue of *Education for information* [1] remain as firmly entrenched today, but new topics are assuming importance. One matter discussed in this journal has been that of the emerging market [2]. Whatever the relative significance of the emerging and the traditional markets, there can be little doubt that employment opportunities for qualified information professionals have expanded beyond the boundaries of the public and academic library. Opportunities for information specialists in the business world are growing, and this has been chosen for the first thematic issue of *Education for information*.

In recent years corporate organizations have become increasingly aware of the need for effective information systems to retrieve both externally-generated and internally-generated information. Large numbers of online databases, for example, are available to the business user who can exploit them for planning, intelligence and marketing purposes. Many companies are establishing internal computerized information systems which must be planned, installed, managed and operated. Information staff should be ideally placed to take control of such activities.

What special educational and training demands does the business world place upon its information staff? This is one issue addressed by the following articles. It is clear that the personal qualities of the applicant are just as important as any knowledge gained in an educational programme. The successful information manager must be able to interact with colleagues who will expect a confident, assured, effective communicator who can survive in the rough and tumble of the corporate environment, which may, for example, be radically different from that found in a typical academic or public library. To what extent such personal qualities can be nurtured in an academic programme is open to debate, but it must be important that the right kind of applicant is selected in the first place for such programmes. Seminar work involving case studies, role playing and the presentation of papers to a critical audience will be to little avail with the introverted, book-loving stereotype too frequently earmarked for library work by career advisors and teachers. The business world will in all probability be looking for more robust entrants.

The opportunities for a career in business information are currently not equally great in all countries but they are likely to become more significant everywhere during the 1990s. The articles in this issue derive from three countries on two

continents and provide some insight into the job market of today. The authors do not attempt to represent all viewpoints but present their personal thoughts on education and training issues; it is hoped that you will find them stimulating and thought-provoking.

The two major sources of personnel for business information services are the schools of library and information studies and the schools of business studies. An article in an earlier issue of *Education for information* discussed the differing approaches towards business information adopted by these two institutional types [3]. Each has something different to offer and it is no longer uncommon to find them collaborating within the same parent organization in order to maximize the advantages offered by each.

The business environment is both an important and often lucrative employment niche for information professionals and more attention needs to be paid to its educational demands in order that its opportunities are exploited fully.

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Editors

References

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- 2 N. Moore. The library and information workforce in the United Kingdom. *Education for information* 4 (1986) 93–101.
- 3 N. Roberts, T.D. Wilson and D. Ellis. Business information courses: a consideration of requirements. *Education for information* 6 (1988) 27–37.