

Book Reviews

Carl Keren and Linda Perlmutter, eds., *The Application of Mini- and Micro-computers in Information, Documentation and Libraries*. Proceedings of the international conference on the application of mini- and micro-computers in information, documentation and libraries, Tel-Aviv, Israel, 13–18 March 1983. Amsterdam–New York: North-Holland, 1983. xx + 802 p. 118 fig. Indexes. US\$85.00 (in USA and Canada), Dfl.200.00 (rest of world). Hardbound. ISBN 0-444-86767-8. LC 83-17197. (Contemporary Topics in Information Transfer, vol. 3).

This book is volume 3 in a good series “Contemporary Topics in Information Transfer” published by North-Holland (Elsevier Science Publishers). Firstly a compliment to editors and publishers: catching about a hundred papers, together with session summaries, in a little more than half a year is a very good accomplishment which will have taken a few nights of work.

The conference consisted of sixteen sessions covering virtually all aspects of library automation and related applications. The technical papers contain a wealth of information and illustrate a wide variety of approaches to information automation. As such, they are the latest in this field—as far as it is possible, in this profession, to have the latest on paper. On top of these, there are very readable and authoritative keynote addresses by Salton, Lancaster, Choueka, Kochen, deSolla Price and Rauch, which lay the foundations and put the subject in a much wider context.

This review, therefore, can be very short: the book is a simple must for every information manager who is involved in automation projects (and who is not?).

Cor van de Weteringh

K.R. Brown, ed., *The Challenge of Information Technology*. Proceedings of the forty-first FID Congress, held in Hong Kong, 13–16 September 1982. Amsterdam–New York: North-Holland, 1983. xii + 356 p. 37 fig. US\$51.00 (in USA and Canada), Dfl.120.00 (rest of world). Hardbound. ISBN 0-444-86646-9. LC 83-4217. (FID publication number 662).

These texts were edited after the Congress was held, and the volume published in May 1983—which is a reasonable period of time for conference proceedings. As with any proceedings from any conference, the book shows that the papers (in

this case, some sixty of them) have a large variance in quality. Two main themes emerged: 1) the role of the information intermediary, and 2) the problems and progress in third-world countries. Here are interesting—and some challenging—papers on the first subject from reputed experts such as Mikhailov, Gray, Artandi, Yates, Neufeld, Brenner and several others. On the second: many useful case-studies from Mexico, Argentina, Nigeria, Malaysia, China etc. There are also papers from Japan, highlighting that country's progress.

One critical remark on the flavour of the conference: its attendants were information people and librarians. They tend to concentrate on their contributions from the field of bibliographical information. However, information as a general commodity, nowadays, is much wider in its scope and coverage. One of my messages, over the last few years, has been that information people might be the pioneers on the road to total resource management. In that respect, the book is a little bit disappointing.

Nevertheless, it is interesting reading and, certainly, value for money. I would recommend buying it if you work in a large information organization or have to cope with problems of introducing information systems in non-receptive environments. For the average information professional the book is, however, a bit far from his daily chores.

Cor van de Weteringh