

## Other reports

Library and Information Research (LIR) Reports may be purchased from Publications Sales Unit, British Library Lending Division, Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7BQ, UK. Details of some other LIR Reports are given below.

LIR Report 18. Clinton, A *Libraries and trade unionists: a report on needs and provision in public libraries and elsewhere*. September 1983. pp vii + 88 ISBN 0 7123 3027 5.

A concern among librarians to provide for a wider community and the broadening preoccupations of trade unionists were the stimuli of research into the information needs of trade union representatives. At the centre of this report are the details of two questionnaires enquiring into need and provision for information among trade unionists. One was distributed to trade union representatives attending courses in three contrasted parts of the UK and the other was sent to all public library authorities. The research also considered the use of resource centres aimed more directly at such users as trade unionists. The author is critical of the view that such information requirements merit only limited consideration. He draws attention to examples of good practice in fulfilling trade union need and makes some suggestions of acquisition and organisation policy. The report concludes with some proposals as to how trade unionists could make their own publications more widely known and draw more effective attention to their information needs.

LIR Report 19. Collier, M. *Local area networks: the implications for library and information science*. February 1984. pp viii + 45. ISBN 0 7123 3028 3.

Local area networks are systems allowing high-speed interconnection of computers within a restricted area. They facilitate distributed processing and indicate a trend away from large, centralised computers. Microcomputer networks are being offered as alternatives to minicomputers for substantial data-processing activities. This report, commissioned in 1982, gives definitions, describes concepts and introduces some of the techniques involved. The role of local area networks in library and information science is examined, current initiatives are reviewed and finally some suggestions are made for further research in the field.

LIR Report 20. Flowerdew, A D J, Oldman, C M and Whitehead, C M E. *The pricing and provision of information: some recent official reports*. August 1984. pp viii + 96. ISBN 0 7123 3029 1.

The purpose of this report is to examine the economic principles relevant to the issues raised in some recent reports considering the production and dissemination of information in electronic form. It also seeks to compare these principles with those stated or implied in the text of the reports and to draw any justifiable policy conclusions. Since the production and dissemination of information have some characteristics which resemble those of the production and dissemination of ordinary economic goods and services, some which resemble more closely those of other types of economic activity such as transport, and some features which can be considered unique, the authors examine whether this was being taken into account in these reports. They also try to establish whether new theoretical results were being used or new empirical evidence cited, which would have implications elsewhere.

LIR Report 23. *Information demand and supply in British industry 1977-1983*. October 1983. pp xxii + 118. ISBN 0 7123 3033 X.

Between November 1982 and April 1983 a study was conducted into the effects of the current recession on the supply of technical and commercial information services in British industry. The purpose was to see how industrial information services have adjusted and to investigate how information providers outside industry have reacted to any changes in demand from industry. Questionnaires were distributed among 238 library and information service units in industry, and among 305 external information providers of various kinds. More than half of these provided responses that were analysed. There is evidence that the pattern of demand for, and supply of, information in British industry has changed substantially, and possibly permanently, since 1977.

LIR Report 24. Rudduck, J and Hopkins, D. *The sixth form and libraries: problems of access to knowledge*. July 1984. pp xii + 126. ISBN 0 7123 3034 8.

The concerns of the project can be summarised in a statement by its director:

It is about the transition of pupils to studentship . . . moves from dependence on instruction to capacity for independent study — that kind of move depends on a change in the epistemology of the learner . . .

there must be a point when the person discovers something of the problematic nature of knowledge. Most people don't do that lower down [the school].

The project was designed as a multi-site case study programme involving teachers, students and librarians in 24 institutions covering a range of sixth form settings. The selection of institutions took account of the need to have access to different environmental and social settings and different levels of library provision. Interviews were the main method of data gathering, and they focused on a core of interrelated topics: academic study in the sixth form, pedagogy, books, libraries and the idea of independent learning.

LIR Report 25. Ratcliffe, F W with the assistance of Patterson, D. *Preservation policies and conservation in British libraries: report of the Cambridge University Library Conservation Project*. February 1984. pp xii + 134. ISBN 0 7123 3035 6.

The Cambridge Conservation Project had two immediate objectives: to establish the facts about preservation policies and practices in libraries in the UK and to identify the educational and training facilities available to librarians and practitioners. Nationwide surveys by questionnaires, interviews and seminars were among the methods used. The report makes recommendations for action in two areas, first within individual libraries, involving little or no additional expenditure and immediately applicable, secondly at a national level. Among the latter, the twin needs for cooperative action, for which no mechanism exists at present, and for a focal point for preservation, some sort of National Advisory and Research Centre, are of prime importance. The status, funding and location of the latter need further clarification but involvement of the British Library in any such undertaking seems essential to its success.

LIR Report 26. Teskey, F N. *Information retrieval systems for the future*. October 1984. pp viii + 72. ISBN 0 7123 3037 2.

In the first part of the report, the author describes those functions of free-text information systems regarded as fundamental by a number of users. He then goes on to look at some existing and proposed hardware and software methods for implementing such systems. Finally, he proposes a design for a new information retrieval system. Methods of implementing such a system are discussed and some possible applications are outlined.

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LIR Report 27. Barrett, R. *Further developments in optical disc technology and applications*. July 1984. pp viii + 34. ISBN 0 7123 3038 0.

During a visit to the USA in April 1983, the author updated information on current developments in optical disc technology and applications. He looked at developments in both the optical video disc and the digital optical recording disc. The data presented in the report are based on information given in the form of discussions and technical papers by staff of the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine and BRS Medical.

LIR Report 28. Templeton, R and Witten, A. *Study of cataloguing computer software: applying AACR2 to microcomputer programs*. August 1984. pp viii + 77. ISBN 0 7123 3041 0.

Using education as an example, this project established and tested some guidelines for the cataloguing of microcomputer software, based on an examination of Chapter 9 of *AACR2*. Over 200 programs were catalogued, in three stages, two interpretive and one of application. The results of the project include recommendations for bibliographic control, including guidelines for publishers, and for cataloguing standards, and a brief manual of practice for cataloguers.

*Designing an online public access catalogue [OPAC]: Okapi, a catalogue on a local area network [LAN]* is the final report of a two-year research project "Microprocessor networking in libraries" which was funded by the British Library and the Department of Trade and Industry, and based at the Polytechnic of Central London.

The aim was to produce an OPAC on a LAN, that would be readily usable without training or experience, without sacrificing effectiveness or being tedious for experienced users.

The result was a functioning prototype OPAC called Okapi, which has a number of distinctive features: use is eased by coloured keys and a lack of jargon; the system uses search decision trees to select a suitable action at each stage of a search, and it performs automatic Boolean and hyper-Boolean functions where appropriate. The OPAC was installed and evaluated in one of the Polytechnic site libraries.

There is a full description of Okapi under the headings: source file: indexing; search functions; user interaction and evaluation. There are also general discussions of these topics, and chapters on OPACs in general, LANs, and recommendations for future research.