

McClure, Charles R. *Information for Academic Library Decision-Making: The Case for Organizational Information Management*. Contributions in Librarianship and Information Science, no.31. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1980. 227p. \$23.95. LC 79-8412. ISBN 0-313-21398-4.

Decision making, for some time the darling of management theorists, has finally made its formal debut into librarianship. Given the increasing complexity of academic libraries both in their organizational development and in their utilization of technology, it is no wonder that investigators should now begin to examine the process by which library management decisions are made. This is a useful and important research study, derived from the author's 1977 doctoral dissertation.

Several underlying assumptions of the study bear emphasis. "(1) The most important resource of the organization is the individual, and (2) every employee is a decision-maker" (p.186). McClure examines the patterns of factual information exchange among library staff members. He demonstrates that various staff groups access and utilize different types of information in a situation-specific manner. His concern, which is every administrator's concern, is that "if an organization employs twenty individuals who are contributing to the accomplishment of goals at only 75 percent of their potential, there is a loss of five positions in the organization" (p.171). He effectively argues that if more staff members have a wider and better selection of information on which to base their contribution to the total decision-making process, better and more responsive library services will be developed. This is not a new discovery, but what is significant in this book is that now there are empirical data to describe just how information is utilized in a number of libraries. Beyond that—without rehashing the old shibboleths about participative management—McClure provides practical guidance on how the opportunities for participation can be extended to more staff on the basis of enhanced "organizational information management."

The study draws on many of the most important user studies of management and

technical information that have been produced over the last fifteen years. It also incorporates some useful concepts from, and references to, recent research on communication in organizations.

McClure points up one important and possibly surprising fact that may reflect more on the libraries in his sample population than on general practice in the field. He states with regard to management information that "of primary importance is the consideration that for many libraries there simply are no internal or statistical reports" (p.165). I can see how this may be the case in some academic libraries, but in most that I have known either as employee or consultant there has been an overwhelming flood of internal reports. Perhaps the point is really that there are few up-to-date, problem-oriented reports effectively employing empirical data to support management recommendations. This is certainly the case, although ARL's SPEC Kits (Systems and Procedures Exchange) have helped to address this problem somewhat through the sharing of certain reports of general applicability. Computer-based management information systems (MIS) are also needed to provide detailed library statistical data on demand.

The final point is not a criticism of the study, which is outstanding within the scope of its coverage. The research, however, deals primarily with the factual components of information necessary for managerial decision making. It is doubtless understood, though not explicitly acknowledged, that there are other information components of decision making that may in some cases be as important as or more important than concrete facts, i.e., the values, experience, and purposes of the contributors, as well as the historical and political characteristics of the setting.—Robert S. Runyon, *University of Nebraska at Omaha*.

"Special Issue on AACR2." James Thompson, ed. *Alternative Catalog Newsletter*, no.21 (June 1980). \$5 (prepaid). ISSN 0161-7192. (Available from: Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD 21218.)

In February 1980, editors of the *Alternative Catalog Newsletter*—convinced that