

stood explanations of the term being explained. The definitions are primarily basic explanations rather than detailed expositions. For example, in 'binary to decimal conversion', the meaning is explained without any explanation as to how conversion is done.

There is no doubt that one of the major problems facing those concerned with information technology is understanding the jargon. It is the very use of this jargon which has created such an aura of mystery and a barrier to understanding in relation to information technologies. This dictionary will certainly help the newcomer to the field, as well as providing a useful source of reference for those already in the field and perhaps in doubt as to the precise meaning of particular technical terms. In this sense, the dictionary performs a very useful function, and certainly fills a gap that has existed for too long.

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Venture Capital and Technological Innovation in Australia by *J.M. Bennett, R.E. Cooke-Yarborough, G.C. Lowenthal (eds.)*
(NSW Division of Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science Incorporated, Sydney, 1982) pp. xi + 171, \$13.00.

This book contains all eighteen papers delivered during an ANZAAS Symposium on venture capital and technological innovation in Australia held in Sydney on 20 February 1982. The Symposium aimed to 'display a range of facts which both explain and offer a solution for Australia's failure to be an early leader in the development of technologies which offer significant economic or social benefits'. Such an aim is, of course, very ambitious, not only because innovation is itself a complex topic, but also because of the complications introduced when the Australian situation is considered.

The papers are assembled under four sections: the roles of governments and statutory instrumentalities; case studies; the roles of the private sector; and other constraints and stimulants to development. This broad coverage provides more scope for identifying problems and disseminating information than for getting down to the more difficult task of offering solutions to problems. The book covers most of the important issues relating to venture capital and technological innovation in Australia and this is largely due to a few very good contributions. However, one important omission from the collection is discussion on the effect that direct foreign investment has had on Australia's technological capability.

The theme of venture capital is central to about half of the papers. The five case studies of the experience of small high technology enterprises or individual inventors in obtaining venture capital provide some very useful insights. This is an area about which very little is known in Australia. The message from the case studies is not conclusive — some entrepreneurs have been more successful than others in obtaining venture capital. Those who have been successful in this respect see no particular shortage, whereas the unsuccessful ones call for more government assistance.

The section on the role of the private sector contains some interesting observations on venture capital in Australia and financial institutions. The clear message from this section is that the venture capital market in Australia is extremely unsophisticated and 'ad hoc' when compared with the US. However, this failure is not seen to be entirely due to the structure and attitude of the Australian financial system. There are many other contributing factors, such as government policies which influence industry and technology, tax policy and the capability and attitude of Australian entrepreneurs and industry. These final points are discussed in the other two sections of the book, which relate to the role of governments and other constraints and stimulants to development.

The influence of government policies on technological innovation is a major focus for four papers. These papers summarise a range of technology and innovation programs provided by the Federal, New South Wales, Western Australian and Victorian governments. In themselves, they represent a useful summary of programs, even if they do not explore new policy issues. The papers show that State governments have an important contribution to make to technological development. However the important policy issue of State/Federal co-operation and co-ordination was not discussed in any of the papers.

In my opinion, the best paper in the collection is that by Peter Stubbs (University of Manchester). Stubbs looks at some problems in the exploitation of high technology for Australia. He points out that there is a high concentration of R & D performed in the public sector in Australia compared with other advanced countries, as well as a pronounced emphasis on basic research and a low emphasis on development work. He also observes that Australian manufacturing industry has not found it easy to tell the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) what it would like CSIRO to do and suggests that this may be due to doubts by industry's research and development personnel that CSIRO can devolve much of its budget or personnel into manufacturing industry proper. It is interesting to compare this observation with Paul Grant's (CSIRO) paper which makes reference to a number of CSIRO inventions which experienced difficulty in being taken up by Australian industry. Another two issues touched on by Stubbs are the influence that industry policy can have on technological performance and the need for Australia to be more selective in the areas of technology it chooses for development. These last two points are very important and in discussing these Stubbs raises a number of significant policy issues for consideration.

The papers in this book were presented in February 1982 and since that date there have been changes of government at the Federal level as well as in a number of States. While some of the factual information about State and Federal technology and innovation programs may now be a little dated, the problems and issues raised in this collection of articles have not changed. In this sense, the book represents a useful collection of papers which highlight some of the key issues and problems relating to venture capital and innovation in Australia. However, the reader must expect to do a little work in drawing the various themes together. There is some degree

of overlap between topics discussed under the four headings used in the book and this makes the job of analysis a little more difficult.

For those wishing to canvass the issues involved in this field, this book is a useful start. It is perhaps best to look elsewhere for possible solutions.

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Australian Office Administration, second edition, by *James Saville*
 (Macmillan Australia, 1983) pp. 300, \$14.95.

The first edition of this book was published in 1977 and has provided a useful resource for teachers and students in office administration. The recently-issued second edition is the subject of this review, which will examine the level and content of the book, as well as changes which have been made since the first edition.

The author is a lecturer in the Department of Management Studies at Sydney Technical College, and the book is most appropriate for Technical College, and perhaps College of Advanced Education Associate Diploma-level courses, for which it is obviously written. *Australian Office Administration* covers a broad range of topics, dealing, as its cover notes suggest, "both with people and with the technical aspects of office administration". The book is designed for those aspiring to become office managers or supervisors, and the content is divided under four main headings: (a) 'The office environment', (b) 'Offices and people', (c) 'Creating the physical environment', and (d) 'Towards greater efficiency'.

'The office environment', which serves as an introduction to the book, examines why offices exist and the functions they serve. It provides a clear exposition of a variety of organisational structures, as well as suggesting informal structures, which might be found within the office. It also introduces two themes which recur throughout the book, the challenge of technology and the need for office managers to understand the changing values found in society at large, and to be prepared for them to be reflected in changing values within the working environment. It concludes by setting out the characteristics displayed by an effective office manager.

This comparatively short section is followed by one of the two major areas focussed upon in the book. 'Offices and people' addresses the question of staffing, from selection to development, motivation, discipline and evaluation. Much of this appears to be unchanged from the first edition, but there is a sub-section devoted to health and safety in the office, which reflects a development both in the focus of attention of trade unions and of others concerned with the well-being of office workers. This has only comparatively recently attracted much interest, an interest perhaps a result of the burgeoning of women's studies combined with the prominence given to advances in office technology. Ergonomics, the possible dangers of visual display units, noise and stress are covered, but the potential dangers of the various chemicals now used in office