

Overall, this book addresses two great gaps in the market. First, it addresses the lack of attention to the differences in Asian and developing markets from the conventional wisdom which has evolved from OECD markets. Secondly, this book helps to fill the gaps in our knowledge about the sector and policy context of telecommunications in specific countries in the Asia Pacific region. The interest here is not so much on the country surveys of the advanced economies of the US, Japan, and Australasia - even though their representation in this volume is important to establish context - but on the markets of Asia which continue to be poorly understood.

Going to print on telecommunications is a hazardous business. The shelf life of many studies is short, given the rapid pace of sector development and change. How does this book fare? This volume was published in 1994 after a long gestation. Its intellectual framework was shaped as far back as 1988, when a conference of the authors was held. Not surprisingly, much of the actual data is not current, and the scene has moved on dramatically in many of the countries surveyed. For example, in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Indonesia recent developments since publication make the particular chapters look very dated.

But contemporary developments, since publication, will continue to be shaped by the legacy of sector origins, and of what might be described as the distinct policy cultures in these different country markets. It remains difficult to lay ones hands on good current data on Asian telecommunications, but the gaps are progressively being addressed, through publications from the ITU and APEC. It is far harder to find wisdom about the more intangible factors shaping policy approaches. The lasting value of this book is in its insights into the cultural and historical factors shaping the local market responses to global industry trends.

In general, this book reflects academic perspectives rather than the reflections of industry participants. Twenty-four of the thirty contributors are academics. Perhaps this explains why the book tends to lack the sense of urgency and of the difficult struggle to find new solutions, and new answers to old questions, of which industry participants are so conscious. Nonetheless, it is a start, in fact a major step forward, to find a book devoted to saying that the old answers will not do.

Terry Cutler

Cutler & Company, Melbourne

New Worlds in Information and Documentation edited by J.R. Alvaraez-Ossorio and B.G. Goedegebuure (Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1994), pp. x + 495, ISBN 0 444 81891 X

This book contains selected papers presented at the 46th Conference and Congress of the International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID) held in Madrid, Spain, in October 1992. Consistent with the Congress theme "New Worlds in Information and Documentation", the papers reviewed "new perspectives currently appearing on the information horizon", within the framework of FID's professional programme (p.v). The editors tell us that: "The selection of papers for these proceedings has been made on the basis of the international character of FID" (p.v). Accordingly, there are contributions from a variety of locations, including France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, the United States, Mexico, South Africa, Hong Kong and Japan. Australia is represented twice in the collection, in the shape

of Sandow-Quirk's paper on progress towards a national information policy for Australia, and Dickson and Tam's article on the origins and role of the technology management programs run by Deakin University in partnership with Box Hill College of Technical and Further Education. Contributors to the collection are drawn from the academic, corporate and public sectors, and from backgrounds including library and information science, information management and business.

The papers are organised under seven headings: Information Policy (Session 1), Information Science (Session 2), Information Technology (Session 3), Information Management (Session 4), Information Tools and Services (Session 5), Information for Industry, Banking and Finance (Session 6) and Professional Development (Session 7). However, the basis for the division between the topics is not always obvious. For example, Session 1 contains a quantitative analysis of the production of scientific articles written in collaboration between Latin America and Spain from 1984 to 1988. Yet another study of international scientific co-operation, this time between Southern, Central American and Caribbean countries during the period 1980 to 1990, has been included as part of Session 2.

According to the Preface, contributors to the Congress Proceedings were given the option of submitting their papers in either Spanish or English. Subsequently, in preparing the material for publication, the editors determined "that no linguistic corrections should be made" (p.v). The publication of the papers in this format does not detract unduly from the accessibility of the volume overall, as only 4 of the total of 46 papers are in Spanish. However, it is likely to cause some inconvenience for those with a particular interest in Session 5.

As the Conference title suggests, the common theme of the book is intended to be the opportunities and obstacles presented by new developments on the information scene (p.3). Not surprisingly, given the growth of the information sector in modern post-industrial society and the pervasive impact of information technology (IT), the scope of the papers is wide-ranging. Together with discussions of the application of new information technologies such as hypertext (Session 3), the book contains surveys of the information problems faced by business enterprises in ex-socialist countries such as the Republic of Slovenia (Session 6). The papers in the collection are a mixture of theory, policy and empirical research. Given the generality of the Conference theme, it is difficult in a short review to do more than indicate the diversity of the topics covered.

The contributions on national information policy in Session 1 are of particular interest and provide some useful international comparisons. Foldi's article looks at post-communist societies such as Hungary, where information policy must be redesigned to facilitate the transition from a planned to a market economy. Boon explains how, in the new South Africa, information policy, formerly approached from the perspective of a western, developed country, must now be formulated in conjunction with a developmental viewpoint. Included in Boon's paper are the results of a survey of the top ten problems and issues which need to be addressed in an information policy for South Africa, according to participants at a Conference on Library and Information Services for Future Development of Southern Africa. On the local scene, Sandow-Quirk argues that a national information policy for Australia must recognise the geographical and political reality that Australia is a European nation in an Asian environment. Her paper places particular emphasis on the need to treat information as a crucial economic resource for the nation. It is noteworthy that the failure to recognise information as a valuable asset for development also ranked as the most important problem among those identified by Boon's South African respondents (p.41).

Joan de Beer's paper, which further extends the analysis of the South African situation, should also strike a responsive chord with her Australian counterparts in the library science field. In her article, she emphasises the need for a library and information policy to redress

imbalances in the existing library and information structure, which is modelled on Anglo-American and West European traditions. While the existing library and information services more than adequately support education and research, South Africa lacks community-based library services adapted to the needs of the indigenous oral-based culture which makes up a large part of its populace. Concerns about the need for community-oriented library and information services have been voiced here in Australia too — as de Beer explicitly recognises (p.24).

Session 2 on Information Science contains a number of empirical studies including analyses, using bibliometric research techniques, of the rate of health research undertaken by the pharmaceutical industry in Mexico and the level of bibliographical control exercised over periodical publications in Latin America and India.

The treatment of information technology is given a fairly narrow focus (i.e. of the five papers in Session 3, three deal with applications of information technology in pre-dominantly library settings, and of these, two discuss CD-ROMs (Compact Disk Read-Only Memory), an automated reference tool which some predict will have as significant an impact on end-user services in libraries in the 1990s as did online databases in the 1970s).¹ The paper by Burton and Wong describes the use of videodisc technology to store and retrieve the Hong Kong Polytechnic Library's extensive slide collection on graphic arts and design. Bollman's paper outlines the technical and legal aspects associated with a project to network CD-ROMs initiated at the University of Graz in 1992. The second paper on CD-ROM technology, delivered by Alos-Moner *et al.*, compares the relative advantages of CD-ROM, online and print information sources in the Spanish and Latin American context. The advantages and disadvantages of CD-ROMs versus online access parallel those cited in the Anglo-American literature (e.g. CD-ROMs are not up-dated as frequently as online databases; on the other hand, CD-ROMs offer advantages over online systems, whose fee structure is usage-based, where databases are frequently accessed; technical difficulties are also likely to be fewer with a CD-ROM stand-alone workstation). What this review clearly demonstrates, however, is that the disadvantages associated with online searching may be particularly acute for Spanish and Latin American users (e.g. according to figures cited by the authors, 34% of calls for online searching in Barcelona in 1991 were interrupted because of technical difficulties; the connection rate to the United States from Brazil can cost as much as \$222 per hour).

As the literature shows, although technologies such as online databases and CD-ROMs have expedited the retrieval of bibliographical citations, access to the text of the documents identified is not necessarily enhanced — to the frustration of users.² Given these concerns, the omission from the discussion of information technology of its impact in the areas of document delivery and electronic publishing is unfortunate. It is in these areas that technological developments are attempting to redress the existing imbalance between information retrieval and information delivery. Some discussion of the application of information management systems would also have been welcome, especially, as elsewhere, in a paper presented for Session 6, Portela discusses the use documentalists and librarians in private enterprise make of information management technologies in their day-to-day work.

The coverage of information tools and services in Session 5 ranges widely. Campanile and Fazio describe the creation of a special national data bank of articles published by the Italian scientific community on the subject of AIDS; Guimaraes presents proposals for an indexing language suitable for the subject representation of Brazilian labour law; Suter *et al.* explain the features of the Argentinian Common Format for incorporating information into bibliographical databases. Unfortunately, three of the nine papers contributed to this Session are in Spanish.

Information management is the subject of eight papers in Session 4. Of particular note is Ferreiro's Keynote Address which identifies restraints to the implementation of information management concepts in Latin American countries. These include the absence of a conceptual framework for understanding information management, insufficient indigenous research, poor communication of findings, the ad-hoc diffusion of new methodologies, mostly from the USA and Britain, and inadequate professional education and training.

The theme of information management is taken up again in Session 7 in the context of professional development needs. Boon addresses the problem of designing a curriculum in information management relevant to South Africa. Training in the management of information resources also figures prominently among Zitara *et. al*'s proposals for a syllabus for the establishment of a centre of excellence for post-graduate studies for information professionals in Argentina. By contrast, the papers by Dickson and Tam, and Marcella, describe innovative course programs already in place at the Technology Management Centre, Victoria and Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen respectively.

In the remaining paper in Session 7, Froehlich highlights some of the ethical problems facing information professionals in an international context (e.g. whether access to information is a right, the growing gap between the information rich and the information poor; the paucity of databases containing information appropriate to the needs of developing countries, and the domination of the information marketplace by databases for which the English language is the only key to access).

The papers in this collection are of uniformly high quality. Despite some minor difficulties in reading papers where English does not appear to be an author's native language, the contributions in this volume offer some fascinating insights into the difficulties faced by information researchers in other countries. However, given the large number of papers in the volume, and the range of subjects covered, an introduction and overview by the editors would have been a helpful addition. The two year lag between the Conference and the publication of the proceedings in 1994 is also a little disappointing, especially given the pace of developments in areas such as information technology.

REFERENCES

1. W. Miller and B. Gratch, 'Making connections: Computerized reference services and people', *Library Trends*, 37, 4, 1989, pp.387-401, p.392.
2. *ibid.*, p.395.

Karen Sampford

Queensland Parliamentary Library

Work for All or Mass Unemployment: Computerised Technical Change into the 21 Century by Chris Freeman and Luc Soete (Pinter Publishers, London/New York, 1994), pp ix + 193, £ 35.99 (hb), £ 10.99 (pb), ISBN 1 85567 256 1

The problem about writing on the subject announced in the title of this book is that the whole notion of employment, and hence unemployment, has become almost too fuzzy to form the basis of well focused discussion. Such an assertion is, of course, an exaggeration but it points up a central issue which is never properly dealt with by the authors.