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BOOK REVIEWS

Fry, Bernard M., and White, Herbert S. *Publishers and Libraries: A Study of Scholarly Research Journals*. With special additional material by Marjorie Shepley. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, D. C. Heath, 1976. 166p. \$14.00. LC 76-22234. ISBN 0-669-00886-9.

"The purpose of this study is to report on the viability of the journals' system for communicating scholarly and research information." This direct statement, the first

sentence in the authors' introduction, is an eye-catcher. One immediately expects, particularly from the phrase "viability for communicating information," a thorough, penetrating analysis and appraisal of the journals' success, failure, past, and future from sociological, psychological, political, and economic points of view. Such a study could have enormous ramifications. But the authors soon make it clear that their study is solely economic. Their specific objectives were:

1. The gathering of data in the principal areas of economic interaction between

publishers and producers and libraries as customers for scholarly and research journals.

2. The development of these data into proposed joint actions by publishers and research libraries aimed at achieving cooperative and reasonable results agreeable to both communities.

Every librarian is familiar with the economic trend of journal prices, and nearly everyone would like to know the ultimate effects of this trend. The questions of interest to the reviewer, then, are (1) whether the authors have accomplished their objectives and (2) whether the information they have given us is useful.

The economic trend itself needs no additional documentation. Ample statistics are available elsewhere. The authors were much more interested, as we are, in documentation of the effects—such things as reallocation of book funds to journals, the cancellation or decrease of subscriptions, alternatives to subscriptions, such as network dependency, and actions taken by publishers to increase revenues and reduce costs.

The research methodology was a survey of journal publishers and academic, public, and special libraries for 1969, 1971, and 1973. The authors took great pains to assure that the libraries and publishers were randomly selected from various strata of size and type. Yet, as in so many statistical studies, the unit of analysis (i.e., the unit about which inferences are made) was never specified. If libraries were the population sampled, libraries would be the unit of analysis, as indeed they were in some tables. Journals, however, are also the population of concern and, therefore, should be the unit of analysis, as indeed they were in some tables. Confusion arises, however, because in some cases the unit actually analyzed was other than libraries and journals, e.g., the year, library size, or discipline.

The authors also wanted their sample size to be large enough to assure statistical confidence. But they performed no statistical tests, though they assiduously report their *n*'s for means and percentages, their principal analytical statistics. These statistics cry out for some kind of significance test. Analysis of variance or, at the very least, cross-tabulations with chi-square

would have been appropriate. Their conclusions will stand or fall, therefore, on the reporting of means and percentages.

Readers will want to evaluate conclusions for themselves. Some examples are:

1. Publishers' need to secure revenues from libraries is not matched by libraries' ability to supply those revenues.
2. Economic problems of journals and libraries are not caused by wild and uncontrolled increases in the publication of new journals.
3. There is no strong evidence that a price increase of a journal is a factor in its cancellation, but the increase may result in cancellation of some other journals.
4. In a laissez-faire system, where journals survive or perish on decisions of the marketplace, university presses and others not for profit would be hardest hit. Moreover, entire subject disciplines, such as the humanities, would not retain their viability.
5. The price-budget imbalance is not brought about by excessive or substantial profitability by publishers.
6. The situation for university presses is disastrous.
7. There is clear evidence of increased activity in networking, cooperative acquisitions, and interlibrary lending and that these activities affect purchasing decisions and, therefore, publishers; but there is no evidence that lending causes cancellations.
8. There is wholesale reallocation of budgets from books to periodicals.
9. Cost savings from cooperative cataloging is being diverted to acquisitions.
10. Advertising, page charges, and subsidies are decreasing; therefore, publishers must raise subscription prices.
11. Repackaging of publications in monographic format had the greatest level of response, particularly from commercial publishers.
12. Little economic impact of alternative publication formats, such as microforms, can be ascertained.

Have the authors accomplished their objectives? They have certainly collected

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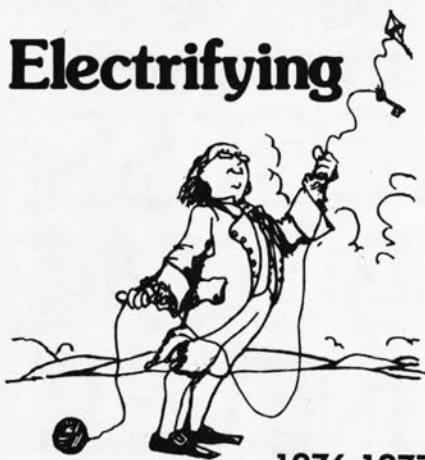
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much economic data and have organized them in a presentable fashion. They have not analyzed the data in a rigorous fashion, though they make no claim for having done so. For the most part, then, they have accomplished their first objective.

Apart from the observations that libraries, publishers, and authors should be subsidized, probably by the federal government, and that continuing research be conducted to establish continuing dialog, the reviewer found little to indicate that the authors had "developed the data into proposed joint actions." Accomplishment of their second objective, then, is less apparent.

The authors include an impressive list of project contributors: an advisory committee, consultants, and panel of reactors, imparting the impression of credibility and authority. An interesting table on alternative methods for disseminating scientific articles was authored by Joseph Becker.

The reviewer does not wish to demean the importance of this book on the basis of its methodological limitations. It is the first of its kind on a serious economic problem. Its conclusions, whether methodologically justified or not, are intelligently drawn with considerable insight and provide us with much to ponder. It is a useful book.—*William E. McGrath, Director of Libraries, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette.*

National Information Policy. Report to the President of the United States. Submitted by the Staff of the Domestic Council Committee on the Right of Privacy. Honorable Nelson A. Rockefeller, Chairman. Published by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, Washington, D.C.: Govt. Print. Off., 1976. 233p. \$4.65.

This is a landmark document in the nation's evolution to a post-industrial society. This report is the product of a committee charged by former president Gerald Ford in March 1976 to review and define information policy issues, to determine the status of various information policy studies underway in executive branch agencies, and to report on how the federal government should organize itself to deal with information policy issues. The major recommendations of the committee were: that there