This is an important book. It defines, and provides a context for, preservation as a library function equal to cataloging or reference work. It is for seasoned, senior administrators, who have just realized the need for a coherent preservation program, and for novice preservation administrators, who have just been handed the task of starting one. Library administrators will find all the arguments they need to convince their colleagues and university officials of the necessity for allocating budget dollars for preservation; preservation administrators will find graphically illustrated organization plans, position descriptions, decision-making appurtenances, case studies, and enough technical information to point them in the right direction.

Morrow begins by succinctly describing the organic composition of library materials from books to videotape and why they tear, fade, crumble, warp, break, mold, or spontaneously combust. Enough scientific data is offered to underscore the arguments for the preservation practices offered, but not to impede general understanding by the intelligent reader. Discussions of preservation issues for each type of material focus on special problems, controversial points of view, and trade-offs between treatment options and costs.

The strength of Morrow's work lies in the chapters on how to develop a preservation program and case studies concerning conservation of rare and unique items. Administrators will find useful the budget and cost figures that appear throughout; this kind of data is elusive, and even more cost analysis would have strengthened the work. Morrow concludes with an overview of the latest technological experiments, including optical disk, deacidification, freeze and vacuum drying of water-damaged materials, accelerated aging tests, cold storage, and encapsulation. A final chapter describes the various organizations and funding agencies active in preservation matters.

Gay Walker contributed a chapter on preserving the intellectual content of printed materials, based on her very successful program at Yale. While she concentrates heavily on the process of preservation microfilming (or "microfiching"), there is a section on in-house photocopying that may be unique in the literature. In her introduction, Pam Darling, author of the profession's most readable preservation lore, gently but firmly explodes yet another myth. "The survival of thoughts beyond the life of the thinker gives significance to the human experience," she writes, "and so we are comfortable in believing that the materials on which we record those thoughts will live on after us. But it has never been true."


Trained conservators don't need this book. Libraries that have not yet accepted the preservation challenge do.—Nancy E. Gwinn, Research Libraries Group, Inc.


If one accepts the fact that Myers and Jirjees have developed a statistically valid research study, and they spend the great majority of this book explaining their methodology in such detail that this reviewer is convinced, then they have some important conclusions that every public service administration should find interesting. According to past studies, which have only been done in-depth for public libraries, telephone reference service is only about 50 percent accurate. These studies done in the Southeast by Myers involving forty academic libraries ranging from two-year colleges through universities and in the Northeast by Jirjees (in five, four-year state colleges with graduate pro-
grams) arrived at very similar percent-
ages, 50 percent and 56.6 percent respec-
tively. Variables, such as library budget,
collection size, service population, num-
ber of full-time professional reference li-
brarians, hours the library was open, and
physical facilities were considered to see
what impact they have on reference ser-
vice. The size of the library and the hours
open had a substantial association with
the number of correct answers, most other
variables had little or no significant rela-
tionship to effective telephone reference.

The method used in both studies was
unobtrusive measurement for the evalua-
tion of telephone service to factual refer-
ence questions. There are concerns about
the ethics of such a study but the authors
deal with these issues in a clear manner,
and the questions asked seemed fair and
certainly comparable to the type asked at
academic reference desks in the experi-
ence of this reviewer. The conclusions are
startling and important for planning the
future of telephone reference service in ac-
ademic libraries. Myers says “if academic
libraries can answer fact-type queries cor-
rectly only 50 percent of the time, they
should be emphasizing other aspects of
reference services that, one hopes, they
perform better, such as, readers’ advisory
service, guidance, and teaching.” Per-
haps, but reference administrators should
look carefully at their operations and
make improvements wherever possible.
Only 56 percent of the staff in Jirjees’
study offered sources of their information
to the patron. Staff attitudes can be im-
proved, programs for regular in-house
training in new as well as traditional
sources should be instituted, and written
reference policies are also necessary. Re-
ference staff need to think beyond their
own sources to those outside of their own
institution and certainly they must use
any staff subject expertise available on site
before answering negatively. If the staff
feel pressured by the immediacy of tele-
phone service then “call backs” should be
encouraged. It is not difficult to come to
the conclusion, as Jirjees does, that pa-
trons of this information age will not be
satisfied with only a 50 to 60 percent suc-
cess rate for their information needs. The
summaries of these two studies should be
read by all reference librarians, library ad-
ministrators, and educators.—Florence Kell
Doksansky, Brown University.

ABSTRACTS

The following abstracts are based on those
prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse of Infor-
mation Resources, School of Education, Syra-
cuse University.

Documents with an ED number here may be
ordered in either microfiche (MF) or paper copy
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from a recent issue of Resources in Educa-
tion.

Job Characteristics of the “Traditional”
University Librarian versus the “Learn-
ing Resource” Librarian. By Mary M.
Flekke. 1980. 29p. ED 224 487. MF—
$0.83; PC—$3.32.

This paper, compiled for a class at St. Cloud
State University, Minnesota, compares the job
characteristics of traditional university library
staff, who are most comfortable handling print
material, with the job characteristics of univer-
sity learning resource center staff, who handle
all forms of instructional media including such
nonprint materials as films, tapes, videocasset-
tapes, records, videodiscs, and realia. Differences in
service functions, education, duties, and com-
petencies for the two types of librarian are dis-
cussed, with mention of a progression from one
type of librarianship to the other. The develop-
ment of learning resource center specialists
from audiovisual librarianship is noted, and a
list of seven competencies for school media spe-
cialists is provided. Acceptance or nonaccep-
tance of new technologies in the field of librari-
anship, including computer technologies, is
identified as the major area of contrast between
traditional and learning resource center librari-
ans. A thirty-item bibliography concludes this
paper.