

costs and benefits associated with it. This is followed by a chapter on selection of materials for digitization. This closes with a very useful four page survey of scenarios in which digitization should essentially not be undertaken at all – and given the fact that wrong project selection can result in expensive failures the warning signs and issues reviewed should be points well taken.

The third chapter raises the major stumbling blocks of legal issues – particularly with a round-up of what we are coming to regard as the usual suspects in information work of copyright and database right. Other potential legal pitfalls and problems (such as data protection and privacy; obscenity and pornography and defamation) are sketched in a few paragraphs. The whole area of legal issues is a major problem in digitization projects. There are a number of useful pointers and bullet point lists here but I felt that this important area of digitization lacked focus and depth. It seems to me that this was largely because the book straddles particularly UK and US interests, so this does not permit particularly in-depth discussion of important topics. The author is Assistant Director for Humanities Computing, Information Technology Services at New York University, so the book inevitably takes a American viewpoint on these issues or only addresses UK issues in a limited way, and I found this a bit unsatisfactory. There is virtually no discussion or significant mention of the important area in the UK and Europe of moral rights which are of profound concern in a digital environment. I have to say, therefore, that I found the discussion of the legal issues somewhat superficial. The chapter closed, nevertheless, with a short but interesting section on the sensitivity of dealing with cultural sensitivities in digitization projects based around sensitive materials.

The last two chapters of Part 1 deal with project management issues and the importance of collaboration. I found a great deal of useful and interesting material in the project management chapter and a range of very important issues (such as estimating, developing and controlling costs; outsourcing issues; staffing and human resource considerations; risk management and project planning etc.) are very well reviewed and explained. There are also five chapters in part 2 of the book and I again found a great deal of interesting, useful and informative material throughout. Many practical issues in digitizing collections are covered in this Part and specialist areas such as the digitization of, images, audio, moving images, and rare and fragile materials are all covered. There are many useful and educative practical examples and case studies presented or referred to here. A legion of key concerns are addressed more directly throughout

this Part including topics such as more on aspects of costs; finding funds and sponsorship; developing grant applications; the nitty-gritty of projects (managing workflows; equipment and technical issues; metadata, formats and technology standards; management of digital assets etc.); special collections and fragile materials, etc.

In terms of book navigation the book is well up to FACET's normally high standards in this area with a very good contents presentation and listing of topics, a very good index and with the book is well presented and printed. There is an extensive bibliography and well-referenced URLs and useful web sites throughout.

Although I was rather disappointed with the legal issues chapter (which in my view would have to be overhauled for a new edition) the book does covers a wide range of topics and provides substantial insight and guidance on an increasingly important area of professional information work. A further edition, I think, would also widen its appeal by addressing some of the more specific specialist needs and interests of the commercial and business sectors, or perhaps even other sectors who have other particular needs and requirements (voluntary or not for profit activities, for example). But anyone interested in the topic of digitizing collections will find a great deal of valuable material in this book, all the more value because at various points real experience of real scenarios and real problems shines through at key points.

**Laurence Bebbington**

**Introduction to modern information retrieval. 2nd ed.**

**G G Chowdhury. Facet Publishing. London. 2004**  
**ISBN 1-85604-480-7 474pp. £39.95**

This work is full of useful information in its text and the extensive references attached to each chapter. It has clear contents pages and an 8 page index that at first inspection feels a little thin. It's title is slightly misleading for it is not about information retrieval but IR systems. These are predominantly electronic systems though the author does place them in the immediate context the library systems from which they sprang in the 1960's and 70's . It is not "an introduction to ..." rather it is a manual, for the author - properly - throughout uses the vocabularies of the topics being discussed so an understanding of these is needed.

To use this manual adequately would need quite a lot of prior knowledge of the topics discussed. Also its order does not allow of a learning process and it seems to lack a structure. It declares "the user is the focal point of all information retrieval systems because the sole objective is to transfer information from the source to the user" - true of course. But why is this Chapter 10 Not Chapter 1 ? and why is it not followed by the chapters 21 and 22 on Natural [ i.e. of the users] language?. And it is here that the thinness of the index shows itself. I suspect that Boolean logic occurs in the text far more often than the 4 entries in the index to its major occurrences suggest; it would be difficult to pursue this concept and others in an alternative order to that of the author. Within these terms and for its lifetime - this is a much rewritten 2nd edition of a publication only 4 years old. - it is a very useful manual , but like an article in an encyclopaedia or an elaborate recipe in a cook book the reader may have to work at understanding the topic surveyed.

The book does not attempt to look at the whole spectrum of information storage and retrieval for that goes back some two thousand years. It does not even look at the recent outburst of information, print and literacy from 1450, even though one of the fascinating things about the growth of the Electronic Environment is the way the process is mirroring that of print - on a much faster time scale [which is part of the problem ]. The Internet and the Web are not the first widespread general access to information. That started in the 1870's with universal education, the growth of literacy and the popular press, followed by the radio and the cheap paperbacks of the 20th century and the growth of the library system as the machinery for open access to all this.

Information is transmitted knowledge; if it to be retained it must be in a document - the electronic file is only the latest container for these - and then disseminated; this is publishing. None of these processes are the business of the information practitioner though the more we understand them the better. The organisation of information in these documents for it to be retrieved is. To do this information must be stored in a collection; libraries are collections for a defined audience which can be as wide as the Nation of Great Britain. These then need organising to meet the users' demands. Part of this process is an intellectual technology - Indexing in its widest meaning. Finally these solutions will require a physical technology - shelves, filing cabinets, card catalogues, computers.

Of these elements it is the physical technology that is the most ephemeral - where now is the 5" X 3" card or the IBM main frame, the 45 r.p.m or shortly, the photograph on film ? Within the EE the emphasis is still upon physical technology and as

this is evolving so quickly the EE is finding a use for it after it appears rather than tailoring it to the needs as they evolve.

This book does mirror this: it is about "the latest developments and ... trends in research" [in IR ] (p445) and it is aimed primarily at library and information scientists not library practitioners. Research does produces new knowledge - what we did not know or were wrong about. But much research actually only tells us what we already knew more precisely and in measuring and defining this it does a useful task.

So the conclusion of the Human information behaviour research is only what any experienced reference librarian could have told. This book does discuss cataloguing and subject indexing but only insofar as they are reflected in the electronic environment. It does not look at them as solutions to the problems the IR research is defining which are not particularly new. Why did we need to invent metadata when, as the book acknowledges, librarians have been providing this to agreed standards for decades.

Librarians have been information engineers for a very long time. It was librarians that in the 1950's seized upon the value of the computer as a general purpose tool which led to the King report "Automation and the Library of Congress" -1963. Perhaps we should look harder at their existing solutions and enable them to evolve in this new electronic environment.

**Antony Croghan**

## **Books waiting for review**

The following books from Facet Publishing are awaiting reviewers - please contact Peter Chapman if you would like to do one (or more...)

Lee & Boyle building an electronic resource collection: a practical guide 2nd ed.

Brophy, Fisher & Craven Libraries without walls 5: the distributed delivery of library and information systems 2nd ed.