The Serials Directory: An International Reference Book, 5th ed. EBSCO Publishing Staff. EBSCO Publishing, Birmingham, AL (1991). li + 5448 pp., $319/set, ISBN 0-913956-51-1.

With this edition, the *Serials Directory* has expanded to include more than 130,000 periodical, annual, and irregular serial titles. Information for the directory is derived from the CONSER database, EBSCO's own internal file, and responses to publisher questionnaires. Updates are published twice annually to maintain currency in cessations, new titles, title changes, price, frequency, and other pertinent information.

The directory is compiled in an easy-access three-volume set. Volumes 1 and 2 are arranged first by subject and then alphabetically by title. Volume 3 is an index arranged by title, ceased title, and ISSN. A list of subject headings is provided for quick orientation, and a subject cross-reference guide is available to facilitate searching. Title listings include, among other standard bibliographic data, varying forms of titles, variant access titles, publishers' names and addresses, telephones, fax numbers, and editors. The LC classification, Dewey Decimal classification, NLM classification, CODEN designation, inclusions in indexes and abstracts, peer review, advertising, and book review information appears when relevant. Entries may also include alternative physical format availability, such as CD-ROM, online, and microfiche.

The *Serials Directory* provides easy-to-read, comprehensive information for U.S., Canadian, and some foreign language titles. It is an excellent companion to *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory* (1991), and it should prove to be a valuable resource tool for most libraries.

REFERENCE

R.R. Bowker Staff. (1991). Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory, 1991–1992, 30th ed. New Providence, NJ: R.R. Bowker.

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Keyguide to Information Sources in Online and CD-ROM Database Searching. J. Cox. Mansell, London and New York (1991), xiv + 247 pp., £45.00, ISBN 0-7201-2093-4.

Cox has written a guide to the literature of online and CD-ROM database searching that includes both the print literature and selected databases that cover sources such as ERIC, LISA, and PTS PROMT. In the introduction and the first chapter, Cox gives a sketch of the origins and early development of online information systems and the more recent development of CD-ROMs. He compares and contrasts online and CD-ROM development. While this is a brief section, it covers the basics well.

The main text is divided into three parts: Part One consists of five chapters which survey the literature of online and CD-ROMs. These chapters characterize the literature from several points of view including languages, type of publication (book, journal, etc.); they also cover database directories and corporations and nonprofit organizations in the database field. Cox surveys books, journals, directories, conference proceedings, and reports, and he gives a brief but informative bibliometric analysis of the literature. While he includes databases covering online and CD-ROMs, he generally excludes the publications of online hosts, database producers, and CD-ROM vendors. Many of the works discussed in this section also have individual annotations in the second section. The introduction and the first five chapters constitute the strongest part of the book; they give an intelligent overview of the literature of database searching.

The second section is a selected, annotated, 450-item bibliography organized around standard major topics: "The Database Industry," "Downloading," "End Users," etc. The author states that "The emphasis throughout is on publications which serve as introductions, overviews, pointers to further information or continuing sources of news or analysis of developments" (p. 112). Each entry consists of a number, a complete citation, and an annotation. The annotations generally read well and tell what is pertinent about each work. They may be as brief as a single sentence or as long as a substantial paragraph, depending on the complexity and importance of the work discussed. The entry numbers are used to make cross-references to related works (as, cross-references between print and online versions of the same work). The coverage is heavily English language, but a few non-English publications are included. While Cox has attempted to choose sources that will have relatively long-term value, this section will still tend to become outdated rather quickly. Even so, it is a good source

for the novice, for students and teachers of database searching, and the database searchers such as reference librarians.

Part Three seems an afterthought. It is a very brief, address-only listing of some 100 organizations such as online hosts. CD-ROM publishers, societies, industry associations, and print publishers. The entries are neither annotated nor do they include telephone numbers. Database producers, of course, are not included in this short list. Much better directories of organizations appear in other database reference sources (such as those Cox discusses in his third chapter).

In the prefatory matter, Cox has an informal but useful glossary of terms related to database searching. His book concludes with a 13-page index which contains page-number references to the first section and entry-number references to the second two sections. It is a good index with subheadings, explanatory phrases, cross-references, and, where appropriate, references to both the narrative chapters and the annotated bibliography.

Cox's book is somewhat similar to an earlier work, Greg Byerly's *Online Searching: A Dictionary and Bibliographic Guide* (1983) (annotation number 12 in Cox). Of course, Byerly's book, which was published in 1983, is largely out of date. If you want a current introduction to the literature of database searching, then this is just the book for you, given that you have a large book budget. *British Books in Print* listed £45 as the price and that seems very expensive.

REFERENCE

Byerly, G. (1983). Online searching: a dictionary and bibliographic guide. Littleton, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited.

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Opportunities for Reference Services: The Bright Side of Reference Services in the 1990s. B. KATZ (Ed.). The Haworth Press, New York, London, and Sydney (1991). 213 pp. $29.95. ISBN 1-56024-137-3.

Published originally in journal form as *The Reference Librarian*, No. 33 (1991), this collection of brief essays treats a wide variety of topics under four subtopics: Reference Librarians at Work (6 essays), Tools of the Profession (7), The Public Served (4), and Points of Debate (1). The authors are, by and large, active reference librarians and administrators, and their discourse reflects their practical bent. Though footnotes exist, the essays are largely autobiographical or reflective in nature, and could not by any stretch of the imagination be called the fruit of research. This highly disparate set of essays has ingeniously been pulled together under an ambiguous, but nonetheless cheerful title that emphasizes opportunity and the bright side of reference work. The first essay, James Rettig's "Joy is Bustin' Out All Over," says it all.

Why would anyone criticize a publication on reference work that is so uplifting and positive in tone? Goodness knows, reference librarians need some good news, after the gloomy reports by Charles Bunge and William Miller in the mid-1980s, and the crippling budget cuts facing them today in almost all institutions. It seems downright mean-spirited to question so joyful a work. And yet . . .

And yet, this reviewer felt more than a few nagging doubts when reading this "how I run my library cheerfully" set of reports. The first question is whether this volume is necessary. These sprightly contributions to reference literature have already entered the publication stream via a recent issue of the journal *The Reference Librarian*, also edited by Bill Katz. Is it necessary to produce the same material in hardback form? And is it quite fair to make the prior publication something of a secret, acknowledged only in very small type on the verso of the title page (and rather deep in the LC cataloging data relating to this hardbound form of the essays)? In these days of reduced library budgets, we suggest that it is highly questionable practice to entice libraries to purchase such republishing at all, and certainly not without rather more fair warning about the nature of the publication than is given here and in other Haworth publications of this genre.

It is, in fact, rather surprising that an editor of Bill Katz's stature in the library world would identify himself with a commercial project of this dubious nature. A comparison of this compilation with the other and rather more insightful work of this gifted communicator, who has never been shy about discussing quality, makes the connection all the more puzzling.

A second objection to the collection has to do with the coherence of the set of essays. While all are upbeat, they have little else in common. The subtitles are a clever attempt to give some coher-