Literature and Bibliometrics. DAVID NICHOLAS and MAUREEN RITCHIE. Clive Bingley Ltd., London 1978. 183 pp. (Published in the United States by Linnet Books, Hamden, Connecticut.)

One of the practical applications for bibliometric analyses is that they provide the type of data required to intelligently manage library collections. In the introduction, the authors state that "it is the intention of this book to provide a comprehensive, straightforward and practical guide to bibliometrics, with the emphasis placed throughout on the relevance of bibliometric analysis to practical library and information problems". One would expect, therefore, that this work should serve as a practitioner's guide to the conduct of bibliometric studies. Unfortunately, these expectations are not fully realized. The majority of the text is devoted to a repetitive discussion of the role played by various bibliographic parameters in the selection of a sample from all available literature. There is minimal discussion of how to conduct the study once the data is in hand. Of the nine chapters, chapter six which is devoted to citation analysis is the strongest. The chapter on sampling, however is quite superficial; the importance of sample size is stressed, but methods for determining sample size are not presented.

While one can appreciate the desire of the authors to create a non-technical work for a mass audience, bibliometrics by definition implies the application of mathematical and statistical techniques. The main shortcoming of the book is that the majority of bibliometric theory is not discussed nor is it cited in the text. For example, Bradford is neither mentioned nor cited, and while Kessler's work is included in the bibliography, it is not cited as part of the discussion on bibliographic coupling. An appendix summarizing the rudiments of bibliometric theory would significantly strengthen this work, as would the inclusion of a selected bibliography at the end of each chapter. This book will not serve the needs of the practitioner who is unfamiliar with bibliometric techniques and is seeking a comprehensive tutorial. NARIN[1] provides a better starting point. This book might well be included, however, as a supplementary reading for a course on collection management.

REFERENCES

[1] FRANCIS NARIN and JOY K. MOLL, Bibliometrics In *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* (Ed. by MARTHA E. WILLIAMS), Vol. 12, pp. 35–38. American Society for Information Science (1977).

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An Introduction to General Systems Thinking. WEINBERG, GERALD M. Wiley-Interscience, New York 1975. xxi, 279 pp. $19.00

Virtually every textbook on systems analysis, at least at the advanced undergraduate or beginning graduate level, starts with remarks on general systems theory. Few, of course, can afford to develop the topic so extensively as the present work.

But to characterize this work as a mere extension of the front end of a systems analysis course would cause us to miss some of its unique and intriguing features. First, the author's intended readership includes far more than system analysts, and indeed has much to offer to any thinker. Secondly, the approach is breezy and enjoyable as a result of which the author will never be accused of pedantry.

Two major features of this book stand out. One is the way the author emphasizes certain "laws about laws" as being core to the general systems program. A favorite: "any general law must have at least two specific applications" and "two exceptions as well". Another: the "eye-brain" law: "to a certain extent, mental power can compensate for observational weakness", and vice versa. A moment's reflection of these examples serves to instruct the potential reader to the basic nature of the approach. The work is replete with italicized comments of this type, and the reader can focus on them and their attending discussions, in almost direct-access mode.

The second major feature is related in large measure to the author's place in the overall spectrum of systems analysis. In another article [1], we argued that there are "... at least two major schools of thought on how best to derive benefits from abstractions and generalizations about systems". Briefly, one of these is derived from engineering sciences, operations research and industrial engineering. Some of the advocates of this point of view find that the success of their methods depends on avoidance of "diversions" such as "industrial psychology" and "motivational psychology". Presumably, the intent is get beyond what people say they do, to what they really do.