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Book Review

Harrod's Librarians' Glossary: 9,000 terms used in information management, library science, publishing, the book trades and archive management. Eighth edition. Compiled by Ray Prytherch. Aldershot: Gower, 1995. xiii, 692 pp. ISBN 0-566-07533-4. £ 75.

Harrod's Librarians' Glossary has become an institution. The first edition was published in 1938, subsequent editions in 1959, 1971, and 1977. Since then, the editorial rhythm has been accelerated, for next editions were to appear in 1984, 1987, and 1990. Beginning with the 5th edition in 1984, Ray Prytherch has been in charge of compiling the glossary. It is not only its size that makes the new edition look totally different from the first; the 1994 edition confirms the trend set by the previous edition: it remains the definitive librarians' glossary, because its scope has been extensively widened to reflect the diversity of aspects inherent in contemporary librarianship. The subtitle lists but some of them, most notably, perhaps, information as well as archive management. In order not make the subtitle look too baroque, some subject areas could not explicitly be mentioned there, for instance preservation and conservation, which have become major concerns to the profession in recent years. Both terms, however, are extensively covered in this glossary.

What is a "Glossary"? Let's turn to *Harrod's* for an answer: "1. An alphabetical list of abstruse, obsolete, unusual, technical, dialectical or other, terms concerned with a subject field, together with definitions. 2. A collection of equivalent synonyms in more than one language." (p. 280). -- A "Review Copy", or "Press Copy", on the other hand, is defined as: "A copy of a book sent by the publisher to a newspaper or magazine for the favour of a review." (p. 554) We are convinced that the present glossary exclusively deals with terms of a technical kind (rather than any of the others); and it is easy to grant the favour of a review if the book is as good as this one.

The book is solidly bound (which must be mentioned these days even if heavily used and heavily priced reference works are concerned), the layout is clear and the typopgraphy is easily readable. The texts of entries are not hampered by numerous "qq.v.", being the plural of "q.v.", an "Abbreviation for *quod vide* (Lat. 'which see')" (p. 529): references of this kind are elegantly avoided simply by providing a capital letter for words which have entries of their own in this glossary. If there were anything like a "Plug and Play" for glossaries,

Harrod's would come very close to it. "Plug and Play", by the way, basically means "that a PC can be unpacked, plugged into the power supply and used immediately." (p. 502)

Although some 9,000 terms are listed in this glossary, which makes it possibly the largest of its kind, it would have been easy to include many more items. One of the most difficult tasks in compiling such a book certainly is to decide which terms can be omitted. It is, perhaps, a compilers's nightmare to be charged for omitting a certain term, and the only way to tackle these charges is to make it quite plain, as Mr. Prytherch does, what the emphasis is, which in this case is decidely English. Omissions of terms may be due to various reasons: there is so much specialist terminology, changing very rapidly; there is a mushrooming of abbreviations and acronyms; there are many terms which are used only in particular countries; and, frankly, there is an awful lot of jargon: if you desparately want to know, what on earth is a "Cybrarian" - *Harrod's* won't tell you and you'll have to look elsewhere. However, you may find it helpful to be told that the term "Cyberspace" is credited to the novelist William Gibson and "can be thought of as the ether-world (as opposed to the nether-world) occupied by the messages, files and data that circulate around the Internet."

To more serious matters. As for Internet itself, there is a one-page entry providing concise information on its history as well as its present size and structure, rounded up by some essential titles for further reading. Of course, the reader is guided to numerous terms related to "Internet".

It seems that there is abundant information on bibliophile and printing terms. Things that might be missed are a q.v. from "Wiegendruck" to "Incunabula" or, to be more important to an English minded glossary, an entry for "Copy-text". Anyone, however, interested in short-title cataloguing in the English literature, will be astonished to come across "Pollard and Regrove" and miss an entry on Wing's sequel to Pollard and Redgrave's catalogue.

As said before, the glossary also includes entries on computer technology for libraries as well as on bibliographic networks. It is quite understandable that entries on networks are kept to very short notices, particularly in cases of continental networks (such as PICA or REBUS/SIBIL). The description of North American networks is more comprehensive. As for storage and retrieval technology, as for computing technology in general, the glossary's English scope does not disturb at all. It is good to see that CD-ROM and other related media are duely mentioned (including "High Sierra").

Most useful is the inclusion of terms relating to British and North American institutions and associations in various fields, from librarianship to higher education. As long as the focus is Anglo-American, nothing can go wrong; however, some mistakes and inaccuracies turn up if German matters are concerned: a "Habilitationsschrift" does not only embody original research, but is the precondition to receive the *venia legendi*, the authority to teach and examine

at a Austrian, German or Swiss university; the "Deutscher Bibliotheksverband" is *not* the association of librarians (of which there are at least four major ones in Germany) but an association of libraries and library associations; the "International Society for Knowledge Organization (ISKO)", finally, should not be mentioned without the much more traditional and more comprehensive "Gesellschaft für Klassifikation", from which it split in 1989. Having said all that about German entries, I should hasten to add that the value of the glosaary had not been reduced if those entries had not been included at all. Future editions of the glossary should, perhaps, rely on the assistance of advisors familiar with the situation in different countries.

It is good to see that the glossary reflects the managerial implications of modern librarianship. Apart from short entries like "Job Sharing" or "Job Specification", we find half a page containing entries on "Staff appraisal", "Staff development manual" and the like. I wonder, however, whether it is really necessary to find this page on staff entries concluded by "Staff room", which is defined, would you believe, as: "A room reserved for the use of the staff for purposes of rest, refreshment and recreation." (p. 607).

Yet it seems unfair to point out the occasional printing mistake and some odd entries. We should not, therefore, concentrate on a handful of mistakes but keep in mind that about 9,000 terms are correct and contain a wealth of information. The new edition of *Harrod's Glossary* is a blessing. No disguise.

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