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Technical Services

Technical Services is the acquisition, classification, cataloging, and processing of library materials. These responsibilites indicate the importance of Technical Services departments.

An efficient Technical Services department is vital to every library. Without proper administration and diligent, responsible staff members, departmental inefficiencies can create great consternation among not only the Public Services staff but also the library's patrons.

The complexity of Technical Services departments varies from library to library. The intricacies of Technical Services departments at large university and research libraries are beyond the capabilities of small and medium-sized libraries. However, the advancements and utilization of technology that result from the efforts of these departments impact upon even the smallest libraries.

Janet L. Hartzell of Allen County Public Library presents a personal observation about the Indiana library community in "Technical Services in Indiana in 1983: An Informal State of the Art Report." One technological change that is affecting Technical Services is the utilization of computers, and Hartzell states that "the salvation for many Technical Services departments has been the microcomputer." She also remarks that many Technical Services librarians are functioning "as adjunct members of Public Services." This is certainly not a recent development for all Technical Services personnel, but it clearly indicates that when funding restrictions occur, Technical Services personnel have the versatility to perform adequately outside the perimeters of their own department.

The complexity and changes of a single department, Automated Processing Department at Indiana University Libraries, are examined by Todd L. Butler of Indiana University Libraries in "Cataloging in Search of Catalogers: Contributed Copy at Indiana University—Past, Present, and Future." His narrative of this department begins with 1975 and identifies and explains the numerous variables effecting change. Butler believes that additional changes will be mandated by technological advances and that the result will be "change in the next decade of a degree similar to if not greater than the degree of change that has occurred within the past decade."

In "Acquisitions with DB MASTER," David L. Cooper of Noblesville Public Library presents a library director's frustrations and satisfactions with a software program. He explains two methods for proceeding—"the way I did it" and "the way it should be done." Librarians who have done it "the way I did it" will empathize immediately with Cooper and perhaps chuckle at his misfortunes, as their memory banks momentarily but vividly recall the past. Librarians who have yet to do it—take notes!

The final article in this issue is "Policy Manuals" by Deanne Holzberlein of Ball State University. Holzberlein states the necessity for developing policy manuals and identifies and explains the basic elements of a policy manual. She places the responsibility for deciding whether or not "having a manual is worth the effort required by its preparation" upon Technical Services personnel. Holzberlein realizes the value of such a manual, and perhaps her illustrations and concise presentation will assist Technical Services personnel to evaluate or reevaluate their opinions about policy manuals.

Although Technical Services receives justifiable attention in library schools, most students gravitate toward Public Services areas, where they have the opportunity to interact directly with library patrons. The articles in this issue reveal the activities in Technical Services departments and the opportunities and the challenges confronting Technical Services personnel. All librarians and library school students will reflect at some time upon the importance of Technical Services departments, as the results of the work efforts of Technical Services personnel are affecting, and will continue to affect, the quality of Public Services that libraries offer to their communities.—RT