

## ***Book Reviews/Boekresensies***

### **Future libraries future catalogues**

Oddy, Pat

London: Library Association Publishing

1996

ISBN 1-85604-123-9

Hard cover, 180p.

£35.00

As far as librarians go, cataloguers are more convinced than most that their efforts are undervalued. From experience they know that when budgets need trimming, bottom-line conscious administrators cast their eyes towards those who seem not to produce any tangible asset.

Reassurance comes in the form of *Future libraries future catalogues*. Pat Oddy, as Head of Cataloguing of the British Library is eminently qualified to offer not only reassurance, but also warnings to those who see a future library with no books and no catalogues. Her thoughts are sober and based on common sense and experience.

It takes a brave and knowledgeable person to preach caution, especially at a time when anything spoken against computerization automatically brands the author as a Luddite.

Oddy has divided her book into nine chapters. Each chapter is divided into numerous short sub-sections of not longer than five pages, each with it's own (sometimes witty) heading.

The possibilities for writing a technical, jargon-laden, preachy and ultimately boring book on catalogues, are obvious. However, Oddy has opted for the opposite and has produced a readable and enjoyable book without compromising her subject matter.

In short the following aspects are covered:

- Reasons to continue cataloguing
- The role of catalogues in the hi-tech environment
- Present standards *versus* market demand
- Cutting catalogue costs *versus* compromising quality
- Co-operative cataloguing and resource sharing
- Minimal level cataloguing
- The digital library
- The limitations of and misconceptions about computer catalogues

*Future libraries future catalogues* is required reading for library administrators, but compulsory reading for any head of cataloguing who needs ammunition to justify the department's existence and prove it's indispensability.

TIM SANDHAM

*Acquisitions Librarian, Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg.*