ONLINE BOOKS: CONVERGENCE BETWEEN BOOKS AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

THE NET RESULT, SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY. IBM & Community Development Foundation. *1997. http://www.uk.ibm.com/community/uk117.html*

DOWN-TO-EARTH VISION, COMMUNITY BASED IT INITIATIVES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION. IBM & Community Development Foundation. *1997. http://www.uk.ibm.com/community/uk171. html*

DIGITAL LIBRARIES–SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONERS. Mark Watson. *1998. British Library, http://www. nisw.org.uk/digital/digital.html*

THE ISSUE OF ONLINE BOOKS

Reviews in *JTHS* are divided into Book Reviews, WWW Sites Reviews, and Software/CD-ROM Reviews with each section having its own Associate Editor. Good structure, you would think, were it not that these different information platforms tend to blend and converge. This review of three online books illustrates this convergence.

Let's face the truth. Over the past decennia or even centuries, academic publishers have been an organized, legitimate rip-off for academicians and scholars. We academicians provide publishers with texts for free or for a symbolic royalty. We then buy texts back at a very high and ever increasing price. Our only reward, unless we're lucky

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enough to become one of those few academic mega-sellers, is a publications record in support of our professional career. The 'publish or perish' ethos of academia is what keeps academic publishers in business.

True, we haven't had many alternatives. As an individual or an academic department, you could organize your own low-cost printing or rely on the services of a commercial lay-outer and printer. Then, you also faced with the task of marketing, dissemination, invoicing, etc. . . . In addition, you risk the academic community not valuing your publication and the publication having no, or a negative impact on your professional career.

Enter the Internet. You write your article or book using a word processor that can save text in different formats, including HTML. Every academic institution has a web server. Consequently, it's easy to upload the fruits of your hard labor onto the World Wide Web and have it available immediately, to anyone, anywhere. Add a bit of graphical design and a strategy to let colleagues know about your work (through listservs and links to other sites), and who needs academic publishers? However, it may not be that simple.

EXAMPLE 1: IBM ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION

In 1995, IBM launched a series of projects to encourage debate on the information society. One of these projects, a UK national working party on social inclusion in the information society, was carried out in close collaboration with Kevin Harris of the London-based Community Development Foundation. The findings and conclusions of this working party are available in *The Net Result. A*n overview and description of running projects are available in its sequel, *Down-to-Earth Vision.* Both publications are unfortunately out of print, but available through the World Wide Web.

The Net Result describes the major issues of the information society and the changing social context before dipping into the interaction between both. Following their analysis, the authors highlight two developments that are critical if the information society is to enhance social inclusion. In paragraph 3.34, they state: "for this to happen, there will need to be:

1. Widespread, user-friendly and inexpensive access to the information highway;

2. A focus on helping to raise people's information awareness and enhancing their skills to analyze, interpret, repackage and publish information.''

It is safe to assume that within a short time, the market can only gain from widespread access, and consequently, will ensure that every household has Internet access through their computer or television set (requirement #1). Hence, human services are most interested in a discussion of society's information needs (requirement #2). Requirement #2 is far more critical for avoiding social exclusion than anything else.

The authors label the second requirement the 'information capability' of citizens. From the perspective of social inclusion, this requirement is probably at least as critical as the access to technology and the skills to use it. The broadened discussion in this report is welcomed because it goes beyond the more widespread but narrow interpretation of citizen's information capability. However, since the discussion of information capability is the report's 'competitive advantage,' it deserved a more prominent position in the report and a more in-depth analysis concerning its origins and appropriate strategies.

Recognizing that information capability is more critical to enhancing social inclusion than mere access to technology and basic computer skills is not without consequences. It implies that providing public points of access to the Internet, the equivalent to public telephone booths, is an inadequate strategy. To find appropriate strategies, we may even need to go back to developments completely different from the telephone booth scenario, such as to sociolinguistics research on social class and restricted and elaborate language codes or to research on the media and the knowledge gap.

Apart from this general line of thought and the main conclusions of both reports, there are many snippets of interesting ideas and catchy metaphors. Unearthing these precious insights alone is worth the effort of closely reading the documents. For example, in section 1.9.ii of *The Net Result,* the authors raise the issue that any cost at the point of use of information becomes a barrier to access. "This means that certain categories of information, which could be considered essential for people to participate in society or for them to get support in times of need, should be paid for universally in advance, through taxation." They call this the '999' principle. You do not have to pay to call the

emergency services. This idea is a welcome expansion of the debate on universal access and the '999' reference makes for a catchy metaphor.

EXAMPLE 2: DIGITAL LIBRARIES FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

The National Institute of Social Work (NISW) in London has a long-term tradition of providing social work practitioners and scholars with information in raw formats (publications) and in digested formats (consolidated reports). For those not familiar with the institute or its indexing and abstracting service, called Caredata, NISW's Web site is worth visiting.

NISW launched this research project on behalf of the British Library Research and Innovation Centre. The project's purpose was to identify recent developments in the field of digital libraries and how these developments may impact special libraries in the social welfare sector. The project covers barriers (maybe a better term would be 'challenges') for both special libraries and social work practitioners in terms of resources, skills, and technology. Consequently, this report fits nicely with both the theme of online books and the information capability concept of the IBM report.

The concept of 'special libraries' is not commonly understood by non-librarians. The report refers to:

> libraries which are neither public libraries nor libraries in the academic sector. As such, special libraries can range from large units in multinational corporations to one-person libraries in small voluntary organizations.

Since academic libraries are often the practitioner's source for international journals and publications, it was surprising to see them excluded from this definition. Unfortunately, in this definition and elsewhere in the report, parochial battles exist between special libraries (yes, indeed, such as NISW) and academic libraries. While substantial difference in terms of resources and infrastructure (including access to digital networks) may exist from the user perspective, there are no strong arguments to justify drawing such a demarcation line between both types of libraries.

The report outlines the 1997 state of affairs of technology availabil-

ity in special libraries and highlights that the lack of staff time and skills are probably more critical barriers to digital libraries than mere access to technology. Likewise, the section on the survey of practitioners highlighted the role of funding, skills development, and the need of changing managerial attitudes.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the many issues involved in bridging the gap both between real libraries and digital libraries and between research and practice. Since the publication of this report, the UK Department of Health has initiated large-scale initiatives of digital libraries that will not be limited to medical staff but encompass social workers.

Moving beyond the concerns of this report on digital libraries, one wonders whether the further dissemination of the Internet into human service agencies will make the concept of a library obsolete. The NISW report provides a thrilling overview of studies into information behavior of social workers, going back to a 1923 accusation of social workers not reading any professional literature. One may regret it, but the consistent message of this research is that practitioners prefer verbal and informal media. Nothing new here, given other research such as Mintzberg's 1973 study into information behavior of managers and Donald Schön's work on the reflective practitioner. Reflecting on all this, one wonders whether the interactive elements of the Internet (email, chat-rooms, . . .) will not have a more profound impact on professionals' information behavior than accessible libraries and full text publications.

LESSONS FROM THE THREE EXAMPLES

We welcome the arrival of online publications as it democratizes the access to information. Consequently, our hope is that academicians will soon free themselves from the yoke of academic publishers.

Naturally, on-line publications as a new media come with a range of glitches that need sorting out. Among those is the obsoleteness of page numbers and indexes. As users have control over font size and page sizes, you can no longer rely on page numbers for guiding colleagues to a paragraph or section of great interest. For example, a paragraph number was used earlier when citing the '999' metaphor in the IBM report. For authors of online publications, the message is to include clear chapter, section, and paragraph identification.

In general, online publications could do with increased layout and design. The IBM report is made available as a PDF file that replicates the original attractive design of the printed version. For the typical computer printer, this design is far less appropriate. The NISW digital library report is very basic in design. This makes for readable prints but is cumbersome to download, because each section is a different Web page. Why not provide a button on each cover page of on-line publications enabling the downloading of a printable complete document?

Once printed, online publications (well, ok, offline from then onwards) are more cumbersome to archive than traditional books. Books tend to fit nicely on bookshelves and support each other in standing upright, a bundle of printed pages less so. However, I feel confident that in due course we will not only have a desk printer but also a small office book binding machine that enables us to comfortably package printed copies of online publications.

Finally, there is the problem of link-rot. A document might be available at a certain web address one moment and might well be gone the next. It might have disappeared altogether for legitimate reasons or just moved to another address. Apart from a plea for authors to notify readers if and where documents can be found, there seems to be little we can do about link-rot. As a reader, you might try searching for the document through one of the web search engines, but that is often a tedious task.

Jan Steyaert, PhD
Senior Consultant
Fontys University of Higher Professional Education
P.O. Box 347, 5600 AH Eindhoven
The Netherlands
J.Steyaert@fontys.nl

HIGH TECHNOLOGY AND LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES, PROS-
PECTS FOR THE POSITIVE USE OF ADVANCED INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY. Edited by Donald Schön, Bish Sanyal, and William
Mitchell. *1999. MIT Press.*

This collection of articles is the result of a colloquium in the spring
of 1996. However, it is only two and one half years later that the fruits
of this academic gathering have become available. Elements beyond
the efficiency of the publisher account for this delay, such as the
unfortunate death of the lead editor. It is frustrating that these precious
insights and critical strategies to fight social exclusion were not avail-
able sooner. Fortunately, there is hope for the future. MIT press is
experimenting with online publications, as can be seen by pages on
their Web site for Mitchell's other book on technology and the city
(http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-books/City_of_Bits/).

Approach the book as you do a triptych: take in a first view of the
whole, then focus on each of the three parts, then revisit the whole.
The first part of the book explores how low-income communities will
be affected by the changes surrounding the new information technolo-
gies. The second part of the book describes five initiatives using
technology to benefit low-income urban communities. The third and
final part of the book presents a synthesis.

PART 1: TECHNOLOGY AND LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

The first part of the book explores how low-income communities
are affected by the emerging information society and contains con-
tributions by Manuel Castells, Peter Hall, Julian Wolpert, William
Mitchell, and Leo Marx. Although some of the sections (for example,
the discussion on telework beginning on pages 52, or references to
Britain's Prime Minister Tatcher on page 63) give the impression of
being outdated, none of the arguments have lost strength. They are still
very true. A change of Prime Minister or increase in bandwidth
doesn't have a rapid influence on the dynamics of society.

Commonalties across the five contributions in this section include
the importance given to education, both as a factor inducing inequali-

ties and as a strategy to reduce them. This analysis indicates that this is not a book trying to go along with the latest hypes or suggesting high-tech "quick fixes" for societal problems. The analysis leaves one wondering how many years, or decades, it might take before any strategy targeting low-income communities might show results.

PART 2: STRATEGIES

The second part of the book provides ten accounts of strategies that reduce social inequality by embracing information and communication technology. Being more descriptive, these chapters are more dated by changing technology than Part 1. The contributions are sub-divided in sections entitled 'question of access,' 'governance and advanced information technology,' 'entrepreneurial potential,' 'the educational computer' and the 'community computer.'

The last section is less grounded than the analyses in Part 1, as it centers on social cohesion rather than social exclusion. An interesting debate is opened on the national versus neighborhood information infrastructure. Unfortunately, the debate gets tangled up by mixing the concepts of 'community' and 'neighborhood.' A discussion on how virtual communities interact with real communities and with locality would be more appropriate and welcomed.

PART 3: SYNTHESIS

The final part of the book consists of a single concluding chapter. It opens with the telling phrase: "there are no technological fixes for America's inner-city problems; social engineering has its limits, policy outcomes rarely, if ever, match policy objectives and policies are rarely crafted neutrally by the dictum of so-called public interest."

Those who are looking for quick solutions have been warned. How-

ever, those able to suppress their urge and taking the time to read the book will find it provides new energy and ideas for their own thinking. Those concerned or interested in social exclusion in cities and approaching that issue from the perspective of the policy maker, community worker, or scholar will benefit greatly from reading this book. It will validate and ground their existing ideas in the analysis of the issue and/or provide new ideas for initiatives. Given the North American and UK background of the contributions, the material is relevant on both sides of the Atlantic.

Jan Steyaert, PhD
Senior Consultant
Fontys University of Higher Professional Education
P.O. Box 347, 5600 AH Eindhoven
The Netherlands
J.Steyaert@fontys.nl

JTHS (formerly *CHS*) has been remiss in not reviewing *Both Sides, Technology and Human Services* immediately after its appearance. We are correcting that oversight in this issue. Historically important, *Both Sides* is the first World Wide Web publication of a human services book, and despite it's age, is still addressing relevant topics; indeed, key issues will remain salient for many years. The subject of web publication and e-books, in the context of information access and presentation, is just beginning it's development. Freely accessible over the web, this book has been, and will be read by many scholars and students of information technology and human society. I recommend to you, the book and the review by Mona Acker.

Richard L. Reinoehl, Associate Editor

BOTH SIDES: TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN SERVICES [On-line]. Edited by Jackie Rafferty and Bernd Kolleck. *1995*. Available: *http://uhura.asfh-berlin.de/infoneu/enith/index1.htm*

Available via a Web browser or on disk in DOS and Windows versions Contact: Alice-Salomon-Fachhochschule fur Sozialarbeit Karl-Schrader-Strasse 6, 10781, Berlin-Schoneberg, Germany.

INTRODUCTION

Both Sides: Technology and Human Services is a collection of 16 papers first presented at the Fourth Conference of ENITH (European Network for Information Technology in the Human Services) in Berlin in September of 1994. ENITH's claim to be a network sharing the idea that ''the implementation of Information Technology should advantage human service users and professional case workers as well as the IT industry and business sectors'' (Introduction, p.1) is borne out to a great extent by the content of this ''book.'' It brings together those in the caring professions with the growing technological advances in information technology that they might exploit to the advantage of their practice and their clients/patients.

But this is no ordinary book in the sense that it may be purchased from one's local book dealer as a bound sheaf of pages. In fact, it cannot be bought at all. The publisher, who had hosted the ENITH conference, decided that since email had played such a prominent part in the genesis of the papers that formed the book, this technology should be used in its promotion and dissemination as well. Thus, the collection was published on the World Wide Web (WWW) in hypertext and also in disk format. To make a publication freely available to anyone in the world with Web access is truly a revolutionary idea in a time of increasing capitalist globalization. The authors and publishers are to be commended for their generosity when they could be flogging the publication for profit. They expect that readers would select those papers of most interest and download only what they wish to keep. They retain the copyright and prohibit photocopying and distributing for profit, but permit printing for the reader's own use. Such web publishing raises a number of interesting questions related to copyright, format and the usability of the material which, will be addressed later.

OVERVIEW OF CONTENTS

The 16 papers are divided into four "chapters" each bringing together papers touching on a common theme.

Chapter 1 is the "Introduction," which outlines the intent of the editors and publishers and summarizes each paper in a brief paragraph. These summaries allow the reader to jump directly to a paper of interest using a hypertext link.

Chapter 2, "Support for Clients," includes papers which focus on tools directly impacting on the citizen or client of services.

The first paper, "Privacy and Social Work" by Eric van Hove, points out the inherent tensions between citizens' heightened awareness of their privacy rights and enactment of privacy laws on the one hand, and the nature of the social services which " . . . are stuck with a holistic mandate which necessarily converts them into prying busybodies" (p. 5) on the other hand. The answer to the conflict, van Hove asserts, lies in depersonalized professionalism, a response which might be viewed as overly simplistic.

Joseph K. Anthony in the second paper writes of the "Application of Modern Technological Advancements (Like Computers) in Care

Professions in Developing Countries, with Special Reference to India.'' In less than two decades the current 50 Indian schools of social work have embraced technology, advancing from virtually zero use to having it serve as a basic tool permeating social work education and subsequently agencies. The problem, he explains, is that with increasing recognition of the advantages of computerization as a tool for both social workers and clients, especially with the disabled, there remains inadequate supporting infrastructure and awareness. He describes the establishment of a center for ''disabled studies'' to advance and disseminate knowledge on disabilities and its intersection with information technology.

The third paper in this chapter addresses ''People With Impaired Functions and the Use of Technology.'' Hein de Graaf's thesis is that only a small segment of the general population is using information technology due to a narrow approach to marketing, i.e., the focus on ''YUMMIS'' (Young Urban Male Machine Idolators). The goal of YUMMIS is to own more megs of power. What about other populations such as women, elderly, handicapped, poor, uneducated, minority and third world people? The focus, he asserts, needs to be on the tools people need and the services they need to solve problems, rather than on the selling of esoteric machines. Further, it is important to develop tools which compensate for impairments. He concludes by describing a support center in the Netherlands which assists handicapped persons to use computers for their own needs.

''GIDS: A Documentary System for Storage and Retrieval of Community Information'' is explained by Veerle Kersten in the fourth paper. In translation, GIDS is the Community Information Documentary System in Belgium, a public library electronic database system for local community information and documentation. It's purpose is to spread information on politics, culture, and social services in an easily accessible format, geographically and technologically, and free to the public. A strength of this program is the use of adaptable, full-text documentary software distributed free by UNESCO to non-commercial organizations, and therefore, easily available to developing countries.

Berndt Kirchleschner introduces a user-friendly self-explanatory social advice program in the fifth paper, ''Client Advice Software: A Counselling Program (SOLDI).'' He starts from the premise that people receive far fewer benefits than they are entitled to due to lack

of knowledge of their entitlements. He then tested SOLDI, a text-based program as a solution. It is an easily used computer program which calculates social security benefits. Using 15 different institutions throughout Germany between June 1987 and February 1988, the author sought to uncover in which situations and with which categories of clients the program worked best. Although clients' responses were generally positive, the program was not substantiality adopted. Social workers were opposed to clients using it for two main reasons: (1) fear of giving up their competence to machines, and (2) suspicions that clients would demand "what is rightfully theirs" and "abuse of the system," i.e., if clients know their entitlements, they may demand them. This view, Kirchleschner claims, stems from a common German fear of clients abusing benefits.

Again from India and addressing the needs of disabled people, Joseph E Varghese, in "Computer and Employment for the Disabled in Developing Countries with Special Reference to India," touches on some of the same points previously made by Antony. Varghese takes the view that before promotion of modern assistive devices can be undertaken in India and the developing world, the disabled population must be given access to education and rehabilitation along with publicity and public relations. He advocates international cooperation and assistance and describes the establishment of the new Asian Network for Computer Application and Human Services (ANITH).

Chapter 3, "Support for Agencies," collects papers around the theme of theory and tools that support professional workers and managers in social welfare.

There has been a quickening of the pace of change in the organization, management and delivery of statutory health and social welfare services in Europe. With this has come a recognition that "the biggest problem was the totally fragmented nature of the existing knowledge base . . . mirrored by a similar lack of understanding of the detailed workings of the care process in practice by those directly involved" (p.1). Responding, B.R.M. Manning describes in "Managing Care in the Community: A Common Approach" a model which optimizes effectiveness and efficiency by matching resources to needs across a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency environment.

Joe Ravetz authors one of the longest and best written, albeit most political paper, "Technology and Power in Social Welfare: Models, Ideology and Information Technology." He describes and criticizes

British governmental policy which emphasizes a corporate business approach to social welfare management with its emphasis on customer-business relationships. "The relationship between the purchaser and the user in a transaction," he writes, "does not equate to a market relationship in which each party to the transaction has the potential of equal access to information, and enters into a open and consensual agreement (Wrigley, 1994)" (p.2). Beyond restructuring, what is needed is a change in organizational culture such that organizational models are compatible with professional knowledge and practice and a continuing emphasis on the value of technology.

The article by F.W. Meyer, F.O. Laus, and J. Thoben discusses "The Role of Knowledge Based Advice and Decision Support Systems in the German Welfare System–Sociological Remarks." They describe the growth of poverty in times of economic prosperity in Germany and the concurrent need for changes in a social welfare system characterized by hierarchy, inflexibility, lack of cooperation, alienating behavior and attitudes of the welfare officers, and geographical centralization of offices. They describe the development and application of artificial intelligence, its unrealistic expectations and its evolution into a decision support system to support the problem solving process of human experts. This evolution, they say, will assist in overcoming the problems enumerated, i.e., aspects of work organization would become more relevant, thus lessening bureaucracy; there would be an increase in cooperation between welfare officers and social workers and the centralization of welfare offices would be improved.

"Accuracy of Information in a Social Services Client Record Index" by Colin Barnes and four co-authors at the Coventry City Council Social Services Department in the U.K. advocates for routine electronic data quality audits and regular reports to end users in social agencies. Each of the country's 133 social service departments determines its own method of storing its client information with no national quality standards. A sample audit of one agency confirmed conclusions of two previous audit studies that error rates in computer records were at 20%, an unacceptably high rate. That more regular reports to end-users would improve accuracy is only a tentative recommendation drawn from the systems literature in commerce and industry.

E. Lambrechts writes about "Registration as a means of information gathering in social welfare: The example of the OCMW (Public Centre for Social Welfare) registration model in Flanders, Belgium"

(non-use of caps in original). Lambrechts describes the development of registration since its inception in 1976, its problems, and its computerization in the early 1990s. Computerization solved many of the problems and enabled new uses for the database, but also brought forth some new problems. These problems are described as the concern of social workers for protection of confidential information and the need of participating institutions for additional expert staff to help in the interpretation of the data collected. Despite these difficulties, Lambrechts feels the move to computers was a positive one.

Chapter 4, "Education," presents papers on the use of technology in human services education. Andy Bilson addresses the need to promote the use of information systems by human services professionals and how that might best be accomplished. In "A Constructivist Approach to Professional Training in the Use of Client Information Systems" Bilson discusses how the usual (representationalist) view of the nature of information must be challenged using a constructivist framework. He says "observers participate in the construction of reality that they experience" as opposed to a representationalist construction in which reality exists independently of the observer. He outlines how this theoretical approach should be applied to teaching social work students, and discusses why project oriented learning should be preferred to other forms of training.

Albert Visser of the Netherlands and Bryan Glastonbury of the U.K. have been involved with computers in the social work curricula of their respective schools for some years. In their paper "'The Media Mix Approach'–Information Technology as one of the Ingredients in Teaching and Learning Social Work" the authors explore the potential of computers and software as a new medium alongside the existing media as a mix of available teaching tools. They indicate that external influences, such as student and employer expectations and economic pressures, increase the importance of computer use in the curriculum. They contend that even while new technologies offer higher teaching quality and more attractive learning processes, questions are raised such as how to avoid exclusion of less advantaged students such as ethnic minorities or those with a disability.

Occupational therapy is a profession which promotes and restores health and well-being. Technological advances in general have enabled the development of a multitude of resources for the OT professional, but the computer and its specialist peripheral devices have

significantly expanded the possibilities of technology for therapeutic use. Nora Mogey discusses the importance of teaching information technology to OT students in her article "Teaching information technology as a therapeutic activity to first year undergraduate students of occupational therapy." She explores the challenges of developing an IT course at Glasgow Caledonian University in Scotland that aims to teach practical, conceptual, and critical skills so newly qualified practitioners will be able to select and use appropriate therapeutic software.

"International Transferability of a Curriculum on Social Informatics," by Herman van Lieshout describes a project to transfer a Dutch curriculum on social informatics in social work schools to schools in Flanders, Belgium. It's subsequent evaluation is also discussed. One outcome was the production of a general model of curricula transfer between European countries. A follow-up based on this model, to transfer the Dutch social informatics curriculum to a social work school in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, was planned.

The collection concludes with a selection from Ankara, Turkey. It involves the introduction of information technology into the curricula of schools of social work, heedless of whether they are in developing or developed countries. Nesrin Kosar and Erden Ürlü use their paper, "Preparation of Computer Usage for Social Work Education and Practice in Turkey," to present the results of a survey into the knowledge and attitudes of students, educators and social workers in the field toward the introduction of IT into the social work curriculum. With this survey they also hoped to convey to the respondents the need for the introduction of modern technology as soon as feasible. They found a positive response from all three groups. Several helpful proposals are put forth, such as: IT should not be a special course, but integrated into every course at all levels; a systematic approach is needed to the introduction of IT; students unfamiliar with computers should be given a brief introduction to IT; appropriate software in the language of the country and fitting its needs should be developed; and there should be ongoing evaluation.

EVALUATION OF THE CONTENT

Despite the age of the papers, they deal with still current issues. Indeed, this collection constitutes a significant contribution to the

knowledge base of information technology in social work and some allied professions. The papers describe a phase in the growing recognition of the importance of moving into the information age, but moving with caution. They remind us to keep the ethics and values of the profession in mind and that IT Is a tool to improve practice and education, not as an end in itself.

EVALUATION OF THE STRUCTURE

This collection is presented very much as a printed book, though without a cover. The initial page consists of the title, editors' names, and publisher, but a publication date is missing. The page also includes a table of contents showing the four chapters and their themes: Introduction, Support for Clients, Support for Agencies, and Education.

Page numbers are included within each paper, but there is no overall pagination. This is probably because of the hypertext structure and does not present a problem.

Each chapter may be accessed directly from the initial page or from within the Introduction chapter. Further, there is a link to each paper from the Introduction which is reached either by clicking on the author(s) name or the paper's title. Each chapter begins with a list of papers included with hyperlinks. Each paper ends with a hyperlink back to its beginning and a link to the chapter contents page.

I found hyperlinks clearly delineated and facilitated navigating between papers and to the Introduction with its synopses of papers. I could then easily pick a paper to read. The editors' goal was thus achieved.

I had hoped, though, that the editors had more fully exploited the potential of Web publishing. They could have provided a model for others to aspire to. I was disappointed. What I found was essentially a paperless book, albeit without cost, with few of the advantages of the traditional book. Links might have been made between ideas, one paper to another or where one had referenced another. Links would also be valuable from works cited in the body of a paper or references listed at the end of each that were themselves accessible on the Web.

An advantage of Web publishing is its ability to facilitate collaboration. A glance at the URLs on each paper give the impression that they originate from one of two countries, the United Kingdom (www.soton.

ac.uk) or Germany (uhura.asfh-berlin.de). Though nowhere indicated, I infer the editors are each situated in one of these countries.

Perhaps the technology detracted from the effort these editors could have used in insuring better consistency in the formatting of the papers, e.g., some did not include references, some used capitals in the titles and other not, a few included information on the authors, and some had an abstract but others not. One mentioned appendices, but they did not appear. These inconsistencies detracted only slightly from the readability of the papers, but it must be remembered, the editors did not have the goal to create an integrated volume.

So, does book publishing on the Web have a future? A few months ago a colleague emailed me an anonymous spoof of electronic publishing titled "Announcing the new Built-in Orderly Organized Knowledge Device (BOOK)." The spoof's value was in it's grain of truth. An example: "Compact and portable, it can be used anywhere–even sitting in an armchair by the fire–yet it is powerful enough to hold as much information as a floppy disk." I would add that it can be easily "used" anywhere, such as the bed or the beach, weighs less than a notebook computer, may be dropped without disastrous results and not much damaged by a child's spilt glass. My conclusion is that a book published on the WWW will have to go a long way to hold my attention. In fact, after reading just one paper of this collection, I printed out the rest to read in my spare moments, wherever I happened to find myself. Even if I had downloaded the material to a floppy or a one-inch state-of-the-art laptop hard drive, I would not have found the convenience and flexibility of the traditional book form. In printed form the volume ran 113 pages, single spaced in 12 point font. Further, I am not alone in experiencing eyestrain and muscle stress from extended periods in front of my computer.

Is the electronic book the answer? Both American and Canadian newspapers reviewed this new medium in August, 1998. One touted its advantages over the computer: "Few people want to read a whole book on a PC" (USA Today, Wed. Aug. 19, 1998, Money Section, p.1) and "Such a setup *[a book read on a PC]* requires that the reader be seated at a computer, which is impractical for book-length documents" (Globe and Mail, Aug. 9, 1998, Section C, p.1). The e-book is an electronic device slightly larger and heavier than a hard cover book depending on the brand, designed to give a book-like reading experience. It allows the downloading and storage of a number of books.

Though obviously handier than a computer, the reviewers in both newspapers conclude they have a long way to go to replace the book in ease of use. Perhaps if one is taking several boxes of books along on a sabbatical to a deserted isle (don't we all wish) the e-book would be an advantage with its enormous storage capability. Only a battery recharge source would make life absolutely perfect.

To create an affective e-book we should look, for example, to the user friendly, hypertext, multimedia encyclopedia on CD-ROM, which is becoming more sophisticated with each new release. Its strength lies in its multiple links enabling the user to explore information in a non-linear fashion, both within its boundaries and with the potential to link outside to the World Wide Web. This might not be appropriate for this "book" as a collection of papers from a conference. But, it would be challenging to require papers to be submitted in multimedia format and then multiple links made between them. In addition, functional demonstrations of software discussed in papers could also be provided for the "reader."

CONCLUSION

A free book, and one of the first published on the Web, *Both Sides: Technology and Human Services,* is well worth a visit. Despite my reservation, I do not entirely eschew text publishing on the WWW, particularly shorter pieces. In fact, I am faced with this same dilemma in a distance Web-based law and social work course I will be offering with the readings available on-line. I expect the students will print out much of the material. Since such a quantity of information is now available exclusively or most easily through the Web, we cannot ignore the medium. Our goal should be to learn how to use it most effectively.

Mona Acker, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Social Work
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0A2 Canada