Preface to the First Edition

Although there is no lack of articles or books on various aspects of technical services operations, Tauber's *Technical Services in Libraries*, which appeared in 1954 and does not cover the many dramatic developments of the last 30 years, is the only comprehensive treatment of the topic for a professional audience. The present text is therefore intended to give an overview of current operations and techniques associated with the acquisition, organization for access, and physical processing and maintenance of collections of library materials. Typical organizational patterns and representive examples of work flow are included, but detailed procedures are not. Instead, each chapter provides published sources of further information.

The actual descriptions of technical services operations are based mainly on the practices of academic and research libraries, which for various reasons have tended to dominate change and codification in this area of library work. One of the major reasons is that the high costs of technical processing in large research libraries have generated much management interest and resultant research in order to gain efficiencies. The editor and contributors are of course aware that, given certain general objectives for technical services, organizational structures and procedures will vary from library to library, depending on size, specific internal objectives, and the nature of technical support and requirements. Nevertheless, we hope that the present volume will be useful to all library administrators, librarians, and library school students concerned with technical services, regardless of their affiliation.

Because the actual organization of technical services activities varies widely among institutions, for both philosophical and administrative reasons, we had to decide which activities to cover, in what depth, and in what order. We settled on the following structure. Administration, automation, and networking provide the framework within which all other technical services activities take place; these, therefore, are discussed first and in some detail. Acquisitions and bibliographic control, or cataloging, the traditional core activities, are discussed next, and again in depth. The chapter on preservation covers materials processing and collection maintenance activities, as well as weeding, storage, and preservation microfilming.

In order to avoid repetitive treatment of general principles that are common to all library materials, discussions of specific materials are covered in each functional chapter. Thus the acquisitions of serials are covered in a separate section in the chapter on acquisition; various methods of bibliographic control of serials are discussed in a section in the chapter on bibliographic control; and there is a subsection on serials binding in the preservation and maintenance chapter. There is also a section on serials control under the heading of automated applications to individual processing operations in the chapter on automation.

We decided to include a brief chapter on circulation-related functions because the current trend seems to be to shift circulation from public services units to technical services. This development is rooted in the historical practice of grouping materials-related functions together and has been furthered by the growth of integrated systems which mandate work flows related to a single master record in a common database (see Chapters 2 and 3). We decided not to cover collection development because the trend is to move this activity to a unit of its own, separating out the selection decision—increasingly the concern of subject specialists— from the actual acquisitions process.

The editors and contributors are of course aware that current information quickly becomes dated in a rapidly changing field and have therefore tried to indicate evolving trends. We have also, at the end of each chapter, included a section suggesting how to keep up to date on a given topic in addition to the usual list of references and bibliography. In general, we have defined specialized terms in the text. Readers are also referred to the 1983 *ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science*, edited by H. Young.

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