Thinking deeply upon indexes

In Library Review 41 (1) 1992, Ramesh Babu reports a study of users' opinions of indexes in works of philosophy, conducted in southern Indian universities and colleges.

Of the 200 respondents to the survey, 79% searched indexes by name, 88% by subject and 71% by theme. 59% preferred the index to be compiled by a professional indexer rather than the author or a member of the publisher's staff. 54% favoured single-sequence indexes. 69% felt the need of an introductory note; 71% wanted the inclusion of footnotes, illustrations and diagrams; 45% wanted forewords and prefaces included, and only 41% asked for addenda to be indexed.

Improvements suggested included typographical distinction between types of entry; thematic as well as name and subject indexes; and the inclusion of footnotes and scope notes in the index.

Managing the UDC

Having been managed since its inception nearly one hundred years ago by the organization created to sponsor it—now known as The International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID)—the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) has, since the end of 1991, become the responsibility of a new consortium. The founder-members of the new body are FID, BSI, and the publishers of UDC in Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and Japan.

The UDC is at present published, in whole or in part, in more than 20 languages and it is envisaged that such publication will continue, and also that other products and facilities, such as online information services, will become available. A computerized database, in English, French and German, is already being compiled, and once that is completed a variety of products can be derived from it, among them a revised edition of BS 1000M, the English text of the International Medium Edition of the UDC. (Although published in 1985, the tables are updated only to mid-1977.) Help in updating the text of revised editions of the UDC will still be sought from the dedicated users who have hitherto helped in its maintenance.

Non-equal IT pay

The results of the latest survey of salaries and benefits paid to members of the Institute of Information Scientists show that not only do women information professionals in the UK earn less than men, but the gap has widened since 1986. In 1986, the median total pay for women members of the Institute of Information Scientists (IIS) was £11,550: for men, the figure was £14,000. Women earned 82.5% of the equivalent male wage. By 1992, these figures had increased to £18,500 for women and £23,100 for men, and women were only earning 80.1% of the equivalent male wage.

Commenting on the findings of the survey, the compiler, V. Lelliott, points out, 'It may be argued that the sexes have different career patterns, but it is interesting to note that the differential seems to have widened recently in a continuing trend.'

However, among Fellows of the IIS and among student members, women earn more than men in the same category of membership.

The survey also examines the impact of other variables on the total pay of information workers. Changes in median pay show sharp differences between age groups, with large rises in pay occurring in the 25–40 age group and a noticeable plateau occurring between ages 40 to 59.

Salary level is also linked to the amount of time spent on information work: people who spend all their time on information work earn a median salary of £19,000, while those who spend under 60% of their time earn £23,000.

First-class fiction index

Hitler: the victory that nearly was is a good 'what if?' book covering one way in which the Second World War could have gone. It is more than just imaginative wargaming, and all the fighting related is both plausible and possible. The way the United Kingdom is persuaded to sue for an armistice is perhaps unlikely, but, that apart, it is well written, and demonstrates the narrow margins evident throughout the War, which in some cases could easily have turned another way.

The index is fascinating. The historical characters mentioned, such as Rommel, Guderian, Manstein, Freyberg, Auchinleck, and so on, are given full weight, and the military units, battles and ships come to life, not only in the text but in the detailed index. As a contribution to indexed fiction it is first class. No indexer is named, nor is one thanked, so we can but assume the author himself, who has a publishing background, is the one to be praised.

Hitler: the victory that nearly was, by Bruce Quarrie; David and Charles Publishers plc, 1988.

I. D. C.

[1 detect a touch of naiveté in the bland assumption that if there is no acknowledgement to an indexer, the author did it.—Ed.]