

# **I**NTTEGRATION IN THE **L**IBRARY **O**RGANIZATION

**Christine E. Thompson**

E d i t o r



# Integration in the Library Organization

Christine É. Thompson  
Editor

*Integration in the Library Organization* has been co-published simultaneously as *Journal of Library Administration*, Volume 29, Number 2 1999.



Published by

The Haworth Information Press, 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580 USA

The Haworth Information Press is an imprint of the The Haworth Press, Inc., 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580 USA.

*Integration in the Library Organization* has been co-published simultaneously as *Journal of Library Administration*, Volume 29, Number 2 1999.

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Cover design by Thomas J. Mayshock Jr.

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Integration in the library organization / Christine E. Thompson, editor.

p. cm.

Published also as v. 29, no. 2 of the *Journal of library administration*.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7890-0966-8 (alk. paper)–ISBN 0-7890-0984-6 (alk. paper)

1. Library administration. 2. Reference services (Libraries)–Management. 3. Processing (Libraries)–Management. I. Thompson, Christine E. II. *Journal of library administration*.

Z678 .I564 2000

025.1–dc21

00-024542

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*Integration in the Library Organization* has been co-published simultaneously as *Journal of Library Administration*, Volume 29, Number 2 1999.

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## ABOUT THE EDITOR

**Christine E. Thompson, PhD**, is Head of cataloging and Professor at the University of Alabama. She is also Adjunct Professor of cataloging at the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies. She has authored several articles on cataloging and research methodology and has recently had a chapter in a library management book published by Greenwood Press. She has reviewed books and computer software for *Library Resources & Technical Services*, *The Armchair Detective*, and *American Reference Books Annual*.



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# Integration in the Library Organization

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# Introduction

Christine E. Thompson

## BACKGROUND

The integration of public and technical services has been a continuing subject of discussion in library circles for quite a while. Throughout the history of librarianship the relationship of these two functions of a library has ranged from very cooperative to very closed and non-communicative. The gradual integration has been termed as cooperation, interaction, integration, a "holistic" approach to librarianship, the "graying" of lines, and the "blurring" of lines at various times throughout its long history. This volume will look at the current status of this integration, which I have referred to as the blurring of the lines.

One of the earlier studies of public and technical services integration appeared in no. 9 of *The Reference Librarian* published in 1983. A series of articles edited by Gordon and Sally Stevenson explored the "interaction" of public and technical services from the viewpoint that interaction was necessary but the librarians in both "specializations" were placed into positions of historical context that made this interaction problematic. Gordon Stevenson asserts that "widespread and radical change seems rather unlikely in the near future."<sup>1</sup>

Despite Stevenson's dire prediction, in only eight years another volume of *The Reference Librarian* revisited the issue of the blurring of the lines between public and technical services. This volume was edited by Gillian M. McCombs and titled "Access Services: The Convergence of Reference and Technical Services" and appeared in 1991. McCombs stated that the previously mentioned statement by Stevenson had been proven wrong and that the papers within her edited volume were evidence of this proof. However,

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[Haworth co-indexing entry note]: "Introduction." Thompson, Christine E. Co-published simultaneously in *Journal of Library Administration* (The Haworth Information Press, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc.) Vol. 29, No. 2, 1999, pp. 1-3; and: *Integration in the Library Organization* (ed: Christine E. Thompson) The Haworth Information Press, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc., 2000, pp. 1-3. Single or multiple copies of this article are available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service [1-800-342-9678, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST). E-mail address: [getinfo@haworthpressinc.com](mailto:getinfo@haworthpressinc.com)].



she warned that the 1990s would be a difficult time if libraries were to be successful in completion of our mission of total information access. To achieve that success "it is imperative that public and technical services redefine both their own roles and their relationship in order to provide the services needed by patrons through the year 2000."<sup>2</sup>

This volume will look at ways that libraries have approached this redefinition of roles for public and technical services and assess the current status of integration and/or interaction. Changes within libraries have been profound and numerous since 1991 and it is time to ascertain how well these changes are positioning libraries to meet the challenges ahead in the 21st century.

### **SCOPE**

The papers within this volume are designed to respond to two basic questions: "What is your library doing to blur the lines between technical and public services?" and "How much and to what extent has the library profession integrated both public and technical services into one service-providing organization?"

Both of these basic questions may be broad enough to require a full symposium to answer, but the papers within this work should provide at the very least some insights into how far we have come from the historical "job curtain" between the two library units. It is said that in order to know where you are going, you must first know where you have been and where you are now. If that is the case, then this broad consideration of the blurring of lines between cataloging and reference, collection development and cataloging and reference and acquisitions, etc., should help provide some direction to good service for our patrons. It will without question enlighten the reader about the current status of integration of the two parts of any library.

### **ORGANIZATION**

This volume organized into five sections, with a separate introduction before each of the sections.

Section I presents an historical perspective to the changes in the profession that have contributed to greater integration.

Section II presents three very intriguing philosophic statements concerning the responsibilities of public and technical services and the effect of dualism on the library and the profession.

The issues of management in a blurred environment are placed into perspective in Section III.