

BOOK REVIEWS

Basic FORTRAN IV Programming, by Donald H. Ford. Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1971. 254 pp. \$7.95.

FORTTRAN texts are now quite plentiful, so the main question in the reviewer's mind is: What does this book have to offer that no other book has? Regrettably the answer must be nothing. There are many other good FORTRAN books available. This has very little to distinguish it. That is not to say that it is not a good book. The quality of the book is good, the text is very readable, and there has been very good attention to the examples and proofreading. The book is suitable for an introductory course, or for self study. It does not go completely into all the features of the language, as these are usually best left to the specific manuals relating to the machines available.

The book does bring the student to a level where he will be able to use those manuals and the level where he will need to use those manuals. The book does come to the level necessary for the person who writes his programs with professional assistance.

The author has chosen ANSI Basic FORTRAN IV to be discussed in the book. In particular he relates this to the IBM/360 and 370 computers. This is a common language and is available on most machines with only minor modifications. This was a good choice for the level of book he intended to write, since he didn't want to go into the advanced features of the language. The author goes quickly to the heart of the matter in FORTRAN programming, so that the reader can start using the computer right away. The basic material is well covered and gives a good introduction to the more advanced features which are available on most machines. The examples are well chosen so that they do not require any specialized knowledge; therefore the emphasis can be put on the programming aspects of the examples. He also has very good end-of-chapter problems, ranging in difficulty from straight repetition of text material to programming problems which will require a considerable amount of individual work.

He has a good discussion of mixed mode arithmetic, one of the more difficult topics of FORTRAN to explain. He also has a good discussion of input/output operations, and an explanation of FORMATTing which is very good. This again is a difficult area of the language and has been well explained. Discussing each of the statement types in FORTRAN, he begins by giving the general form of the statement in a standardized way, which is very good for introductory purposes and for review and reference. The index in the book doesn't single these out, so somebody who wanted to use the book as a reference should make a self-index of these particular areas of the book where the general forms and statements are given. This is a good feature of the book.

Robert F. Mathis

Films: A MARC Format; Specifications for Magnetic Tapes Containing Catalog Records for Motion Pictures, Filmstrips, and Other Pictorial Media Intended for Projection. Washington: MARC Development Office, 1970. 65 pp. \$0.65.

This latest format issued by the MARC Development Office is similar in organization to the previously issued formats, describing in turn the leader, record directory, control fields, and variable fields. Three appendices give the variable field tags, indicators, and subfield codes applicable to this format, categories of films, and a sample record in the MARC format.

In addition to the motion pictures and filmstrips specified in the subtitle, the coverage of this format includes slides, transparencies, video tapes, and electronic video recordings. Data elements describing these last two have not been defined completely as the MARC Development Office feels that further investigation is needed in these areas.

The bibliographic level for this format is for monograph material, *i.e.*, material complete at time of issue or to be issued in a known number of parts.

Since most of the material covered by this format is entered under title, main entry fields (100, 110, 111, 130) have not been described. This exclusion also covers the equivalent fields in the 400s and 800s. Main entry and other fields not listed in this format but required by a user can be obtained from *Books: A MARC Format*.

This format describes two kinds of data: that generally found on an LC printed card and that needed to describe films in archival collections. Only the first category will be distributed in machine readable form on a regular basis.

One innovation introduced in this format that can only be applauded by MARC users is the adoption of the BNB practice of using the second indicator of title fields (241, 245, 440, 840, but not 740 where the second indicator had previously been assigned a different function) to specify the number of characters at the beginning of the entry which are to be ignored in filing. It is to be hoped that in the future this practice will be applied to books, serials, and other types of works as well as to films.

Judith Hopkins

U.K. MARC Project, edited by A. E. Jeffreys and T. D. Wilson. Newcastle upon Tyne: Oriel Press, 1970. 116 pp. 25s.

This volume, which reports the proceedings of a conference on the U.K. MARC Project held in March 1969, may be of as much interest in the USA as in Britain; although the intake of British libraries is much smaller and the money available for experiments much less, the problems of developing and using MARC effectively within these constraints are for this very reason of special interest.

A. J. Wells opened the Conference with a paper introducing U.K. MARC and closed it with a paper stating its relationship to the *British National Bibliography*. Points of interest are the need for standardisation among libraries (not surprisingly, this theme occurs throughout) and the differences between U.K. MARC and L.C. MARC (the latter being the odd one out, in its departures from AACR 67). Disappointingly, no hint is given of additional national bibliographical products that might come from MARC, such as cumulated and updated bibliographies on given subjects, or listings of children's books, etc. Richard Coward, with his usual clarity and conciseness, explains the planning and format of U.K. MARC, in which he has been so centrally involved. As he says, "we have the technology to produce a MARC service but we really need a higher level of technology to use it at anything like its full potential."

R. Bayly's paper on "User Programs and Package Deals" is disappointing, dealing only with ICL 1900 computers, and not comprehensively or clearly even with them. Two papers discuss the problems of actually using MARC: E. H. C. Driver's "Why MARC?", which concludes that "the most efficient use of MARC will be made by large library systems or groups of libraries," and F. H. Ayres' "MARC in a Special Library Environment," which concludes that eventually all libraries will use the MARC tape. Mr. Ayres discusses the proposed use of MARC at AWRE Aldermaston, and also gives a general (and highly optimistic) blueprint of the sort of way MARC could be used in an all-through selection, acquisition and cataloging system.

(The four American experimental uses of MARC reviewed by C. D. Batty—at Toronto, Yale, Rice and Indiana—are probably well enough known in the USA and Canada.) Keith Davidson's discussion of filing problems is first class—and his paper is just as topical as when it was written, because little progress has been made since then. Peter Lewis, in "MARC and the Future in Libraries," makes the point that whereas BNB cards provided a ready-made product for libraries, MARC tapes will merely offer them a set of parts to put together themselves.

Of special interest to American audiences may be Derek Austin's paper, "Subject Retrieval in the U.K. MARC," since the PRECIS system to which it forms an introduction may represent a major breakthrough in machine manipulable subject indexing.

MARC and its uses constitute one of the most rapidly developing areas of librarianship. Regular conferences of this standard are needed to review progress from time to time.

Maurice B. Line