

2. The problem of access to information is equally urgent for all fields of knowledge and not only natural science and technology; it includes no less importantly and no less urgently the information in the social sciences and the humanities.

3. The volume of information is so large that a great proportion of an individual's needs can be met only through library-information centers (which are here defined as any store, in any form, of information intended for the common use of some community of users).

4. The volume of information is so large, and is growing so rapidly, that even every community of users cannot afford to support for their own use a library-information system that can acquire, analyze, organize, and house, all of the information to which that community from time to time needs access.

5. The only practical solution to this dilemma, regardless of the techniques used (whether automated data processing, microforms, conventional publication forms, or a combination of these) is a system operating nation-wide that makes it possible for every library to do two things: identify readily the publications containing the information the patron wants and then to provide him, within a reasonably short period of time, with a copy in some form of all publications thus identified. Such a system can be achieved only by organization and coordination at the national level at least.

6. Since it is in the national interest, meaning by this the interest of all citizens, to assure ready access to information by all elements of the economy, and since this can be assured only by organization and support at the national level, therefore support by the federal government as necessary to assure such access is not only justified but is its obligation.

7. The essential framework for effective federal action is now lacking because there is no agency within the federal structure with either the responsibility or the authority to see that an adequate solution is developed and implemented to serve all fields of knowledge and all users.

RECOMMENDATION

8. Therefore our recommendation as the essential first step toward an effective solution is that there be established within the federal government a single agency with the responsibility to assure that there is ready access to information by all elements of the economy, to develop the most effective techniques and methods for accomplishing this goal, and that it be given the continuing budget support and operating authority that will enable it to fulfill this responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

In March of 1966, at the invitation of Robert Vosper, President of the American Library Association, representatives of the American Library Association, the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Association of Research Libraries, the Council of National Library Associations, the Federal Library Committee, the Library of Congress, the Medical Library Association, the Special Libraries Association, and the American Documentation Institute, met in Chicago to consider the *Recommendations for National Document Handling Systems in Science and Technology* as proposed by the Committee on Scientific and Technical Information (COSATI) of the Federal Council for Science and Technology. The discussion at this meeting indicated a consensus that the recommendations made by COSATI, purely aside from the merits or demerits the individual proposals made, were basically inadequate to the real needs of the situation by virtue of their limitation to science and technology. Not only did they fail to consider the urgent needs for improved access to information in the social sciences and the humanities (which is not attributed to any lack of awareness or understanding on the part of COSATI but only to the limited charge given it) but in the opinion of those present this failure vitiated even some of the proposals made by COSATI. The close and essential relationships between the physical and biological sciences, the social sciences, technology, and the humanities, prohibit clear-cut divisions between them, and most libraries are therefore compelled to serve all of these fields to at least some extent. Any real improvement in their service to any field must therefore involve their total system. This does not mean that all fields will be served in precisely the same way, or that different techniques and methods may not be employed to best satisfy different needs, but only that these must be systematically compatible and coherent if any field, including those in science and technology, is to be adequately served.