

LOCAL RESOURCES ARE LIMITED

As just indicated, no library supported by some relatively small community (university, corporation, city, county, or state) can afford to obtain all published information and to analyze and classify it so that any part is readily identifiable and quickly available for use. Even if they could, this would obviously be a wasteful duplication of effort. The only solution is to enlarge the community that shares access to the information so that the cost, being more widely spread, can be afforded. For overall economy and accessibility to all, an integrated system based on the nation as a single community is required; a system that deals with all forms in which information is published, all types of information, and all fields of knowledge. It is taken for granted that each local community will continue to provide for itself most of what that community requires, and that the national system, which each community supports in part through its taxes, will not replace the local effort but only augment it by providing for all what can be afforded only if all share in supporting it for their common use.

It is readily apparent that bibliographic analyses—catalogs, indexes, abstracts, and the like—can easily be supported and shared nationally (and even internationally). It is this ability that has already made possible such significant tools as *Chemical Abstracts*, *Mathematical Reviews*, *The National Union Catalog*, *Psychological Abstracts*, and all the others. Experience such as that provided in the United States by the National Library of Medicine and the Center for Research Libraries, and in England by the National Library for Science and Technology, has also demonstrated that libraries and scholars across the nation can effectively share in using many kinds of publications that they cannot afford locally provided that they are readily, and assuredly, available from such a central location geared to serving the nation-wide community whenever those publications are needed locally.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ACTION IS REQUIRED

The foregoing sections assert that maximum access to information is in the national interest, that present systems are inadequate, that concerted and comprehensive planning must occur, and that local resources as presently constituted are limited. It is evident that a national base of operations is in order, and it follows that the federal government is the most logical body to carry responsibility for a problem requiring nation-wide support and coordination; indeed it is precisely to provide an instrument for *national* affairs that a federal government was established.

The distinction bears making between the total "national" information problem and the "federal" information problem. The latter has been the subject of several studies in recent years: While directed in some respects to national needs, these have inevitably been influenced by agency requirements, notably R and D effort in science and technology, and the viewpoints therefore tend to be restricted. But no central agency now exists within the federal government with responsibility and authority for cognizance of the total information problem as it affects all the nation. Certain provisions have been made according to discipline (medicine, agriculture), mission (nuclear science, space, defense), branch (legislative), etc. Other provisions have sprung up in the private sector because of demonstrated need (engineering, metals, translations). Information, however, is not divisible into mutually exclusive areas or forms. Final responsibility cannot be so based or excessive duplication and yawning gaps will continue to appear in the structure of our information resources.

Furthermore, such assignment (or default) of responsibility encourages proprietary philosophies, both within the government and without. While this may generate and is generated by enthusiasm, it does not necessarily work toward the overall welfare. The expenditure of money, time, effort and emotion by a single group or body, without some overall direction, feeds this proprietary character of development, and the passage of time hardens the situation. The very essential elements of compatibility and coordination are growing increasingly remote even now.

A final factor requiring the federal approach is the necessity for providing geographical equivalences in accessibility.

BOTH PRESENT AND LONG RANGE NEEDS MUST BE MET

The magnitude of all requirements in total information needs makes it certain that the most advanced technologies must be utilized, including those now known and those yet to come. Many of the newer means of recording, analyzing, storing,