This is an excellent book, offering readers a wealth of information on the fundamentals of computer graphics. It must have faults, the essays are too brief, the beautifully rendered computer images too few. It has relevance to computer graphics engineers, users, and artists, and to those with an appreciation of this new art form that is revolutionizing our current concept of visual communications.

Only with the general public's increased understanding and appreciation of the computer as a tool for productivity and creative self-expression will computer graphics gain real acceptance. David Em, the computer graphics artist responsible for the cover image on the book jacket, has often remarked on his hopeless dealings with art galleries that insist on displaying his works in their photography sections. This is not to say that the methods used to record images are not important. Of primary importance, however, is the ability of an individual to interact with a computer and to manipulate data and calculate enhancements. This interaction is clearly and precisely presented in The Computer Image.

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Reader Service Number 100

As stated in Jarett's preface, "This book was written to be a handbook, a continuing source of ideas for the design of a graphic management information system (GMIS).... It is not a book about the technology of computer-generated graphics; it is a book about how to apply that technology to improve the productive use of information by all levels of management as they make critical operating and strategic decisions." In large part, Jarett meets the goals that he sets for his text.

The first five chapters discuss various aspects of business graphics, including the differences between MIS and GMIS, standards for financial graphics, and designing a graphics management information system. The author has done an excellent job of describing the different types of chart designs, presenting these via standardized symbols, which are then used throughout the remainder of the book.

This discussion is followed by 10 additional chapters, each dedicated to a specific type of financial reporting area, such as cash control, accounts receivable, and long-term debt. The most appropriate chart format is presented for each area, and sample charts are provided to illustrate the effectiveness of graphical presentations of traditional reporting information.

Finally, the special requirements demanded for presentation-quality graphics are examined according to the specific presentation media to be used. Special emphasis is placed on peculiarities encountered when using certain types of output devices.

In Computer Graphics and Reporting Financial Data, Jarett attempts to convert all aspects of a management information system to graphical reporting. He is most effective in this when the graphics are used to compare actual performance with budgeted performance. However, some of the graphs produced are so busy that it is difficult to extract the desired information.

My most severe criticism of the book is that the quality of the graphics is inadequate for normal day-to-day use. The author should be commended for not presenting the examples using presentation-quality graphics. Instead, they are presented using inexpensive dot matrix printer technology—a technology likely to be found throughout a company using local workstations. However, the techniques used to emphasize current information over budgeted or previous reporting period information force some data to be partially hidden. With certain character fonts, this can lead to erroneous interpretation of the chart. This problem highlights the need to either select better quality output devices for everyday use or to back off from some of the rules for producing the charts.

Another weakness in the text is that there are proper times to use non-graphical reports, and these are not adequately addressed by the author. Certainly, graphical reporting techniques are not always the most advantageous mechanism.

I recommend this book to designers of management information systems who need guidance in incorporating graphical reporting techniques into their systems. Care should be taken to adapt the techniques described in this book to local requirements. If these techniques are adopted within a company, the highest levels of management will require extensive training and will have to provide support before implementation takes place.

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