
Martin Graef and Reinald Greiller’s book contains a detailed description of the activities involved in a computer center, from its inception to the point of maturity. The volume is organized into 10 chapters covering the widest variety of computer center concerns. The subjects and the sequence of their presentation are: Types of Computer Centers and Their Tasks; Organization; Operations Organization; Data Protection and Data Security; Computer Center Personnel; Aspects of Communication; Planning Control; Planning and Implementing a Computer Center; Cost and Price Planning; and Computer Center Handbook.

Each of the chapters is quite detailed and usually will contain discussions of the advantages and disadvantages relating to a particular topic. Many of the chapters provide the reader with methods to quantify areas of concern. For example, Chapter 7, Planning and Control, has formulas for the efficiency rate of the central processing unit, the periphery efficiency rate, the efficiency rate of the main storage unit, and others.

Throughout the volume there are many helpful checklists, sample forms, lists of considerations in planning, and sample position descriptions. For example, in Chapter 8, Planning and Implementing a Computer Center, there is a discussion of factors to consider in space planning. This discussion is divided into factors relating to the computer room, data entry room, shipping room, stockroom, and archive for magnetic storage devices. These sections include proposed floor plans, square footage recommendations, environmental conditioning recommendations, and so forth.

There are two areas where the book appears a little weak. The first is the language. The book is a translation from the German so it is difficult to determine the source of the weakness, but an example is on page 166, where the authors are describing causes for loss of data and programs and state: “This includes losses incurred through deliberate theft or the intervention of a higher power—for example, fire, water, or radioactive damage.” Another example is on page 3, where the authors state: “Two points of view are possible with respect to the computer center’s disposition towards job orders.” The sentences are often long, and because of the way the language is used, the volume is difficult to read. The other area of weakness is the limited consideration of distributed processing. The basic orientation of the volume is toward the central computer room, complete with data entry clerks working for the data processing unit.

In summary, this volume is very complete in the discussion of all aspects of traditional computer center planning and operation. It should be of assistance to those in the process of planning or operating a large computer center, enabling them to plan without leaving “any stone unturned,” or operating with the greatest efficiency.

Steven J. Altig
Internal Revenue Service

Erratum

In the July 1986 issue of Computer, the title of a book reviewed by Paul Gray appeared as Review of Micro Database Management: Practical Techniques for Application Development. It should have been Micro Database Management: Practical Techniques for Application Development.