

BOOK NOTICES

Peter Simmons & Alan Hopkinson. *CCF: the Common Communication Format*. 2nd. ed. Paris: Unesco, 1988. 196pp. (PGI-88/ws/2)

A specification of the CCF intended to permit systems designers to devise local procedures and computer programs for the exchange of files between organisations rather than to act as a staff manual for coding input. The CCF was prepared by the Ad Hoc Group on the Establishment of a Common Communication Format, with the support of Unesco. It is meant to provide a detailed and structured method for recording elements in a computer-readable bibliographic record for exchange purposes between two or more computer-based systems. This second edition, according to its Preface, only differs from the first edition in minor ways, prompted mainly by suggestions from users of the latter. Data elements have been added to accommodate the practices of diverse bibliographic agencies, some explanations and definitions have been improved, and lists of codes have been enlarged and brought up-to-date.

J. Pitrat. *An artificial intelligence approach to understanding natural language*. London: North Oxford Academic, 1988. 162 pp. ISBN 0 946536 28 7

This book, a translation from the French of *Textes, ordinateurs et compréhension* (1985), is intended for all those interested in natural languages and not just computer scientists. It has seven chapters: How computer programs understand; Representation of meaning; Knowledge bases for programs; The analyser; The generator; Pragmatic knowledge; and The state of research into programs that understand language. A short bibliography is also included together with an index.

Martha E. Williams, Ed. *Annual review of information science and technology*. Vol. 22. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1987. 437 pp. Dfl.210. ISBN 0 444 70302 0

The 22nd volume of this respected series includes the following literature reviews: Economics of information; Artificial intelligence and information retrieval; Natural language processing; Retrieval techniques; Statistical methods in information science research; Electronic image information; End-user searching of bibliographic databases; Systems that inform – emerging trends in library automation and network development and agricultural information systems and services. At the time of writing, ten of the authors worked in the United States, three in Canada (all in

the School of Library and Information Science, University of Western Ontario) and there was one lone European from Finland. The remainder of the world was not represented. This North American predominance tends to be reflected in the literature chosen for review. Of the almost 200 items listed in the chapter on End-user searching, for example, all but a handful are American publications. Nevertheless, ARIST remains an important starting point for any serious literature search in the field.