Editorial

The fourth theme in my list of five factors of confusion in information jobs was alienation. I have to explain that—since it is a rather personal feeling which, undoubtedly, is a result of the peculiar structure of my own situation.

In the years 1973–1978, I had the job of an information manager in my organization. I was new in the profession and looked for new opportunities. The year 1974 was the start of the European ESA-network—which pioneered everything in the online world in Europe. That was a breakthrough ... and soon there we were, all the online freaks, engaged in long nightly talks about search strategies, log-on procedures, the vices and virtues of the proposed Euronet. However, involved as I was, I had the nagging thought at the back of my mind that this was not the generally accepted conception of an information manager's job: he was supposed to be the guardian of the library. Nevertheless, I was motivated, my bosses agreed and the gap between online freaks and information management widened by the day: alienation for both.

This new information technology, in the period 1978–1981, spread so rapidly that my bosses decided to discharge me of my information manager's duties and give me a special assignment as a spear-point in modern information technology. At that moment, my group and I could really jump in, and indulge ourselves in promising developments: word processing, mass storage, application of micros, everything which is being used now. Information managers, then, were still grossly ignorant, since they had to attend to their information and library chores: alienation galore!

In 1981 my bosses decided that I had played around with technology on such a level that I had to be their general automation expert. I felt alienated from my cosy information job, was dumped into automation—which still is a mixture of nearly everything. My bosses wanted me to write and implement an automation strategy. So I did, discovering that we did not need that, but, instead, an information strategy, a strategy for resource management. So we were back to zero. I'm now waiting for them to decide that we need a resource manager ....

How far am I, and are you, alienated from what you are expected to be in future: an information resource manager, managing the blood stream in the heart of our organizations?

Cor van de Weteringh