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The Public-Access Computer Systems Review

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PAPERS FROM THE NINTH TEXAS CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AUTOMATION,  
HOUSTON, TEXAS, APRIL 2-3, 1993, PART I

COMMUNICATIONS

Dreams, Devices, Niches, and Edges: Coping with the Changing  
Landscape of Information Technology

By Walt Crawford (pp. 5-21)

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Although some technological visionaries would like us to believe that their predictions must come true, the future is not inevitable. We should honor the dreamers, but harvest their dreams selectively. "Technolust" is common, but it can cloud our judgement. It's important to remember that many innovations fail. There are no universal technological solutions, but there are many niches that different technologies compete to fill. By choosing the right niche, everyone can be on some technical leading edge, but there is often value in staying on the "trailing edge." If they don't temper their predictions with realism, prophets of the electronic library can do more harm than good.

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The Virtual Library: Pitfalls, Promises, and Potential

By Dana Rooks (pp. 22-29)

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The virtual library is not the ultimate answer to everyone's information needs. It is merely another step in a dynamic and evolutionary process. The traditional print library and traditional library services will not disappear. But, as librarians, we must accept and adapt to the introduction of new techniques and systems. We must recognize the enormous potential of the virtual library, address the issues involved in its creation, and take a leadership role in integrating these new systems and services into our libraries.

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