

A Design Manual for User-Oriented Small Company Libraries

By Robert W. Ditmer (June 1996)

PREFACE

We live in a changing world—a world in which yesterday's solutions cannot solve today's problems. To those in the fields of landscape architecture, land use planning, urban planning, architecture, and resource management, this is more than apparent. The number of new approaches to land use control and management have begun to proliferate in an attempt to answer the problems that have been created by traditional methods, especially since World War II.

This is also true in the area of library design. Traditional methods have been quite satisfactory in the past because most libraries were above a minimum size. But the proliferation of the need for small libraries within small firms and companies has created the need for new solutions to the problems of information control and management.

The manual that you now hold in your hand is an attempt to address those problems. The first two libraries ever designed by the author were approached from traditional viewpoints. The first one was successful—it involved a collection of over 70,000 documents. The second one was a failure and had to be redesigned—it was simply too small for traditional methods to work. Since then an innovative approach has been developed and used successfully, especially in the case of the RSWA Planning Library in Philadelphia—a library which originally contained about 4,000 items when designed, and eventually reached a size of over 30,000 items.

So a special thanks goes to John Rahenkamp for having the insight to support the development of a library which was able to become an invaluable resource in the planning field.