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to the global free market where the slogan seems to be "every man for himself".'

Such a wide-ranging book inevitably spreads itself unconvincingly thin on some issues. Pacific journalists would be disappointed in the superficiality and errors of a section dealing with the rapacious logging industry.

For example, Dixit refers to 'one Sarawak-based timber giant' now controls nearly 90 per cent of Papua New Guinea's log exports. Why be so coy about naming Rimbunan Hijau when he happily names the many European and North American transnational corporations? (Actually, he finally does name the company but in a different context).

And this assertion would provoke laughter if not editorial anger in Papua New Guinea: 'Domestic media criticism of these logging operations have been muted since the Malaysians bought off the Port Moresby daily, the *Post-Courier*.' (p 108)

Post-Courier is a Murdoch daily; Malaysian-owned *The National* is the paper with the logging connections.

Finally, Dixit appeals to journalists to be part of the developing world's solutions, not its problems. He advises them to rely on a code of ethics, a moral framework as a guidepost.

And, unsurprisingly, he agrees with the message of Filipino media educator and editor Vergel Santos who argues: 'Forget objectivity, focus on fairness.'

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Global networks and news beyond Utopia

Information Technologies for Newspaper Publishing in Asia and the Pacific, Edited by Belinda Hopkinson. Paris: UNESCO, 1997. 198 pp. ISBN 92 310334 4. Unpriced.

FOR MANY in the communications industry, the development of the Internet is seen as a revolutionary creation that ranks with the invention of the printing press more than 500 years ago.

It has already had a dramatic affect, even in the South Pacific where journalists are leapfrogging into this technology. The two largest daily newspapers in the region, *The National* and the *Post-Courier*, have had online editions since last year and Internet media courses have begun in Papua New Guinea.

The days when all a journalist needed to report, especially in societies organised around village life, was a pencil and paper have long since gone.

Today, as more people become interested in what is happening out-

Hopkinson, the book's first chapter, a general outline of information technology and implications for Asia-Pacific journalists, by Alan Boyle, foreign desk editor of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* newspaper in the United States, is perhaps the most useful for its message to Pacific journalists.

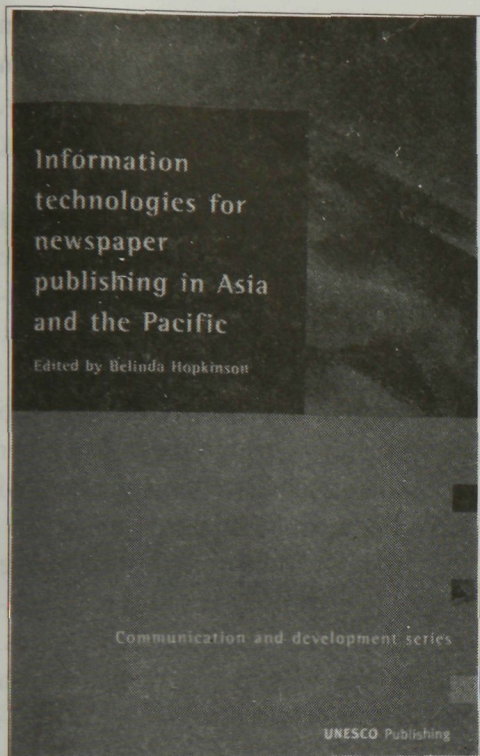
Boyle argues that journalists in the region should improve their understanding of the new information technologies (p 19). The development of global networks are important, but even more vital is the fact that the flow of information is becoming increasingly international.

Using computer networks, a Papua New Guinea business journalist, for example, can gather information about trade policy as easily and as cheaply from Washington, DC, as from Port Moresby. And the same information sources are just as accessible to journalists in Suva, Canberra and Wellington.

'The information revolution blurs not only national borders, but also the distinctions between formal and informal journalism,' says Boyle. 'Each network user has the potential to become an electronic publisher, a source of information and opinion, a guide or a gadfly.'

'For journalists, the result is a wide array of sources, a free flow of information and a greater opportunity for contacts with "unofficial" sources.'

Boyle sounds a warning, after all 'the global network is no Utopia'. He emphasises the serious concerns about



side their village, province and South Pacific nation, more and more technological expertise is required to satisfy their interest.

Information Technologies for Newspaper Publishing in Asia and the Pacific is a timely book which puts the technology revolution in a useful, practical context for journalists and media managers.

Although the Pacific has been a 'relative laggard' in the field, it has opened up opportunities like never before for individual journalists to become independent publishers for a fraction of the usual costs (pp 16-17). And this can only be good for the plurality of information and democracy.

Edited by UNESCO's Belinda

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the uncontrollable distribution of pornography, hate literature and fraudulent or libellous information.

'The relatively unregulated, free-wheeling nature of unofficial network communication means journalists need to be on their guard. It is just as easy to pass along erroneous claims or uninformed opinion as it is to transmit truth' (p 21).

It is also important to remember that the Internet and the Web are 'interactive' tools — journalists who enter cyberspace communities do not remain detached observers or unquestioned voices of authority.

Chapter two, 'Computerisation and automation of newspaper publishing in Asia and the Pacific', explores editorial systems and newsroom management.

It outlines for case studies, including the innovative pre-publishing composition, picture processing and plate making of *Lianhe Zaobao* (a Chinese-language newspaper with a 200,000 circulation in Singapore), and the transition of printers (Mysore) Ltd to new technology, and 'news without the paper' (audiotex, videotex and electronic libraries).

Chapter three, 'Information management in newspapers', gives examples of managing electronic archive information, news databases (English and vernacular languages) and picture libraries.

The final chapter, 'Asian languages and information technology', covers language background in the

region, the technological influence on publishing in Asia and computers in the newspaper industry. Unfortunately, this chapter includes virtually nothing of value on the Pacific.

In fact, this is a major complaint about the book. While it claims to be catering for the Asia-Pacific, very little specifically deals with the Pacific Islands.

None of the case studies apply to the Pacific — even though a number of small publishers in the region would have made an ideal study.

Also, the bibliography and online appendices do not list any media resources in the Pacific Island states. Under the Web resource list, Papua New Guinea is not even listed at all — even though it has the only online daily newspapers in the region.

Fiji is listed, but simply a contact at the University of the South Pacific campus in Suva with no media link.

Nevertheless as a primer on the major information technology developments in the region, this book is very welcome.