

## Bildschirm am Arbeitsplatz : Kurt Nagel (Ed.), DV Aktuell 1981, Oldenbourg, München, 1981

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To sum up: the flag of the title does not cover the cargo of the content. If, however, one forgets about the (relatively small) database part, there remains a recommendable text on practical methods ("méthodes pratiques") for file organisation and file handling.

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### **Bildschirm am Arbeitsplatz**

DV Aktuell 1981, Oldenbourg, München, 1981,  
192 pages, DM26.80

This pocket-format book on Visual Display Units (VDUs) contains 16 articles by 19 authors from German speaking countries. It is written in German. The complete "Sicherheitsregeln für Bildschirm-Arbeitsplätze im Bürobereich" (Safety rules for VDU workplaces in the office area), which now have official status in Germany, are given as an appendix.

Five of the articles from the book, together comprising about half of its pages, are concerned with the human factors or ergonomics of using VDUs. The other articles cover a wide variety of topics, from the influence of computer aids to administration on managerial style and structure to using VDUs in production control.

While reading this book, your reviewer was often rather irritated by the use of the word 'Bildschirm' in most of the articles: what the authors really mean, and deal with, is a complete data processing system which happens to be equipped with these, at present conventional, terminals. In contrast to their impressive sounding titles, such as "Volkswirtschaftliche Überlegungen zum Thema Bildschirm am Arbeitsplatz—unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Arbeitsmarktes" (7 pages), most articles are very short as well as superficial. Ten articles contain no references whatsoever, the remaining six quote mainly German sources. Some of the articles appear to be little more than software catalogues for a particular application. In one case the reader is told that it makes no sense to spend resources on developing and programming his own, individual information system, he

should instead try to use and adapt available software, like such-and-such from an (explicitly mentioned) firm. In the opinion of this reviewer advertising of this kind is inadmissible in a supposedly neutral book.

It must be acknowledged that the book contains quite a few interesting or provocative ideas—but most of these are not fully integrated in their respective texts. Fortunately, the last and longest article, by K. Buhmann, is a very good, thorough and well-written treatise on the ergonomics of VDUs and their use: it serves as an introduction to the appendix.

In conclusion, the great majority of the articles in this book are short and shallow. Most of them are written in an uncritical, optimistic style, sometimes bordering on that of commercial advertising. Contrary to the editor's claims in his preface, this book can by no means serve as a reference book in its field. However, for anyone interested in official rules and regulations about working with VDUs, the appended list of German safety rules with its excellent introduction is certainly worth reading and may justify the cost of the book.

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Alain CHEVALIER and Georges HIRSCH

### **Le Risk Management: Pour une Meilleure Maîtrise des Risques de l'Entreprise**

Entreprise Moderne d'Édition, Paris, 1982, 190 pages

Risk management is certainly a topical subject in the current business environment. Companies experience an increasing amount and variety of risks when operating under difficult economic circumstances. The book by Chevalier and Hirsch provides an extensive review of all possible kinds of risks a company could ever encounter. Risks are classified into three categories: parts of the book also, i.e. industrial and commercial risks, financial risks and international risks. The risk manager is the key figure throughout the book. His rôle and a more general approach to risk management are described in the final part of the book. This publication qualifies as an extensive review of the litera-