Table 2 Disc transfers for a point overflow situation

Buffer combination		Number of disc transfers							
		HOME R	1OF R	2OF R	IND R	HOME W	1OF W	2OF W	TOTAL
1 HOME, 1 OVERFLOW	L1, L3	6	1	16	2	1	1	8	35
	L1 only	10	1	16	11	4	1	8	51
	L3 only	10	1	16	11	4	1	8	51
	NO INDEX BUFF	10	1	16	20	4	1	8	60
2 HOME, NO OVERFLOW	L1, L3	6	1	21	2	1	1	13	45
	L1 only	9	1	22	11	3	1	14	61
	L3 only	9	1	22	11	3	1	14	61
	NO INDEX BUFF	9	1	22	20	3	1	14	70
2 HOME, 1 OVERFLOW	L1, L3	6	1	13	2	1	1	8	32
	L1 only	8	1	13	9	3	1	8	43
	L3 only	8	1	13	9	3	1	8	43
	NO INDEX BUFF	9	1	13	19	3	1	8	54

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Book reviews

The BASIC Idea: An Introduction to Computer Programming, by R. Forsyth, 1978; 154 pages. (*Chapman and Hall*, £1·95)

This book is one of a number of recent introductions to programming and the use of BASIC. These introductions range in style from the most pedantic programming manuals to flashy, journalistic approaches that are breaking new ground for serious computing texts. The present book falls roughly in the middle of that range: the style is a reasonable compromise between the rival approaches and the reader is presented with an illuminating (and sometimes entertaining) range of problems and sample programs.

The whole presentation is in terms of the BASIC implementation for the DEC System-10; while compatability problems with other versions of the language are mentioned this is done in a somewhat haphazard way. The immediate execution facilities of BASIC are not mentioned—these can be helpful during program testing. With these reservations I liked the book and would certainly recommend it to those learning programming by using DEC System-10 BASIC.

PETER WALLIS (Bath)

Large-Scale Evaluation Study of On-line and Batch Computer Information Services, by A. Vickery and A. Batten, 1978; 176 pages.

This is a very carefully compiled report on the investigations into the need and suitability of a computerised library information retrieval service for the University of London. The points for and against are well presented, even if the enthusiasm of the authors is apparent. There is an irritating large scale use of abbreviations and, although they are defined, it is difficult to carry them all in one's mind when reading the report. The repetition of facts in the various sections is much more acceptable however, since without this the completeness of the presentation would suffer.

Inevitably aid is needed in information services since 'as the volume and variety of information expands the proportion immediately available in one institution contracts'. This rather specialised report will be of value to librarians, researchers, providers of systems and equipment, and providers of information services.

A. J. THOMAS (Sunbury on Thames)