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Publisher Profile-The McGraw-Hill Companies

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Publisher's Profile

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The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., Professional Book Group

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Robert P. McGraw, Executive Vice President, Educational & Professional Publishing Group

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Number of employees: 350+ in publishing operations at the Professional Book Group; For the corporation: 15,500 worldwide

Estimated number of books to be published by the Professional Book Group in 1996: 700

The McGraw Publishing Company was founded as a magazine publisher by **James H. McGraw** in 1899. Its first handbook, *Standard Handbook for Electrical Engineers*, was introduced in 1907. The **Hill Publishing Company** was founded also as a magazine publisher, by **John A. Hill** in 1902. The two joined forces in 1909 to form a book company, tossing a coin to determine whose name appeared first on the door. The companies merged all operations in 1917, following the death of **John A. Hill**, to form the **McGraw-Hill Company**. Today, **The McGraw-Hill Companies** is actually 116 companies, including such diverse organizations as **Standard & Poor's**, **F.W. Dodge**, **Shepard's McGraw-Hill**, **DRI** and magazines such as *Business Week*, *BYTE*, *Chemical Engineering* and *Aviation Week*, in addition to the book publishing operations

The **Professional Book Group** serves the professional, reference and education markets through books, software and home-study materials. It is comprised of:

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The **Professional Book Group** has been publishing the much-acclaimed *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science & Technology*, since 1960. The landmark reference work contains contributions from more than 20 Nobel Laureates. The reference set is now available in a highly-praised multimedia CD-ROM the *McGraw-Hill Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science & Technology*. McGraw-Hill will continue to produce reference CD-ROMs for libraries, with the next project, *GeoNavigator* (based on the 5-volume set *World Geographical Encyclopedia*), scheduled for April 1996 publication.

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limited to a fixed number of volumes; 3) inclusion of moving pictures and sound, which can complement and enrich printed text in ways still illustrations cannot; and 4) a price tag that is frequently much, much more affordable, i.e., multivolume print encyclopedias currently sell for between \$600 and \$1500, whereas the leading multimedia CD-ROM encyclopedias can be had for well under \$100.

In 1996, three multimedia CD-ROM encyclopedias dominate the American market: *Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia*, *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*, and *Microsoft Encarta Multimedia Encyclopedia*. *Compton's*, which has the distinction of being the first encyclopedia to include multimedia, was originally issued in 1989, followed by *Grolier* in 1992 and *Encarta* in

1993. Since that time, the Big Three have competed aggressively for top sales honors, with no clear winner yet crowned. As far as quality is concerned, *Encarta* (best interface and multimedia) tends to be the first choice of critics, followed by *Grolier* (best print content) and then *Compton's* (best text for youngsters). By way of documentation, see my article in *Wilson Library Bulletin* (May 1995, pp. 42+), which offers a detailed analysis of the three encyclopedias. More recently, three experienced librarians rated the encyclopedias in *USA Today* (November 1, 1995, p. 11D); two of the librarians "narrowly" chose *Encarta* as the best, one chose *Grolier*, and "all three experts found something they like and didn't like about each." Also, at the **Charleston Conference** this year I talked with **Norm Desmarais**, the reigning prince of CD-ROM reviewing in this country, and he volun-

teered that these rankings — *Encarta* first, *Grolier* second, *Compton's* third — concur with his own assessments.

Yes, encyclopedias have come a long way since Diderot's day more than two centuries ago, when his celebrated set of books helped instigate the French Revolution. But from another perspective, present-day encyclopedias are not that much different from their forebears: they continue to be at the center of another revolution, the Information Revolution.