September 1996

CD-ROM Reviews

Norman Desmarais
Providence College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Desmarais, Norman (1996) "CD-ROM Reviews," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 8: Iss. 4, Article 20.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2067>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

TestDriving CD-ROMS

Reviews of CD-ROM products

Column Editor: **Norman Desmarais** (Providence College)

Send items for review to **Norm Desmarais**, Providence College, 467 River Road, Lincoln, RI 02865. phone: 401-865-2241; fax: 401-865-2823 <normd_1@providence.edu>

Reviews by **Norman Desmarais** (Providence College)

ASCE Journals on CD-ROM

The American Society of Civil Engineers produces the ASCE Journals on CD-ROM which contains the entire contents of its twenty-two journals, including book reviews, editor's notes, etc. The 1996 disc will include three additional titles. The CD appears quarterly and includes all the print equivalents, whether they appear monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or irregularly. Each title requires a password to install; but, after installation, users can access the disc freely. Subscribers can also obtain a single password to install all the titles.

The text is all coded in SGML and has links to the bit mapped graphics. This seems the best compromise for storing large quantities of digitized text and including the accompanying charts, graphs, and illustrations that convey important information.

Readers can search the tables of contents of the individual journals, browse the index, or perform word searches. They can also obtain editorial information about each journal that includes instructions for submitting articles. The search engine uses the OPTI-WARE Retrieval Software and User Interface that permits expanding (or collapsing) the data structure down to the article level. Searchers can combine up to six terms from the word, author, or publication date fields with Boolean operators. They can also specify the relationship between the words, i.e. whether they should appear in the same document (default), within X words of each other (up to 99), or in the exact order. Readers can restrict or filter searches to exclude an entire portion of the database with the Scope buttons. Opting to scope or restrict a search at a high level of the hierarchies restricts all levels below it. Any level that will be included in a search will have a Scope icon next to it.

Upon retrieving an article, the reader sees the title, authors, and an abstract. He or she can also choose to view the outline or look at the illustrations (with or without the captions). Notes appear as colored superscript numbers; so the reader can view them quickly and toggle back and forth between the article, notes, and illustrations.

Selecting the book review section of a journal issue and clicking on Outline, a reader can get a list of titles, their authors and the reviewers.

Double clicking on any entry jumps to it immediately.

A bookmark feature lets readers place multiple bookmarks into the same document. It saves the title of the document as well as the location of the screen cursor when the bookmark was placed, permitting a quick return.

Double-clicking any word on the screen automatically searches for it without losing one's place. Readers can move quickly to the next or previous hit, which appears in red, at the touch of a button. This works only for single words and will not accommodate phrase searching.

Some of the windows may appear a little cluttered or confusing, especially when expanding

data hierarchies. Nevertheless, **ASCE Journals on CD-ROM** has many attractive features. It has a robust and flexible search engine, an easy-to-use interface, and quick-access navigation tools. Few titles designed for the Windows environment permit changing the font size or the type face. This one does — a welcome feature for aging eyes. Readers can also zoom the images from 50% to 200% magnification. Subscribing to individual titles on the CD costs a premium over the corresponding print counterparts. However, subscribing to all the titles, at \$3499, costs only \$100 more than getting them all in paper. One can also get both the print and CD-ROM editions for \$4398.

Hardware Requirements: IBM PC or compatible with a 25 MHZ or faster 386 processor, MS-DOS 5.0 or greater, MS Windows 3.1 or greater and MS Extensions 2.1 or greater, VGA or finer resolution monitor, 4 MB RAM memory (8 MB recommended), hard disk with a minimum of 2 MB free space, CD-ROM drive and controller card. (CD-ROM drives must have a driver compatible with the MS CD-ROM extensions.) Cost: \$3499.

Producer: American Society of Civil Engineers; 345 East 47th Street; New York, NY 10017-2398; Telephone: 1-800-548-ASCE (2723) or FAX: 1-212-705-7300; Internet: <marketing@ny.asce.org>

Microsoft Bookshelf 1996-97 edition

It's hard to believe that **Microsoft Bookshelf** is almost ten years old. Yet, each edition brings new content and new features. This year's edition includes features developed to meet the needs of users who want fast access to information. A new addition, the **Internet Directory 96**, lists almost 5,000 Internet resources worldwide and includes a brief description of each, identifying its audience and the address used to access the site. The Windows 95 version includes a hot link to the site; and the description often includes an image of the web page. Bookshelf includes the Internet Explorer 2.0 and one month of free access to the Microsoft Network. Users can also use their own net browser. Microsoft offers free monthly updates to revise addresses, delete old ones, and view new ones.

The feature bar now includes Address Builder, Year in Review and Advanced Find buttons, making these features easier to find. A new color palette makes it easier to find and view needed information. There are still many articles indexed under "A" and "The" which can get overlooked in browsing mode; but users can locate them quickly and easily in search mode.

Microsoft Bookshelf 1996-97 contains more multimedia elements than previous editions. This one adds more than 200 new images of musical instruments, animals, well-known paintings, etc., bringing the total to nearly 2,000 images. Audio clips from famous quotations and pronunciations to musical scores and national anthems total about five hours of sound. The disc also includes more than 100 video clips and animations on topics from news events to dangerous animals. The new edition includes the latest release of **The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1996**. It features improved organization and access from both the Outline button and the Contents tab, easier-to-read tables, a 1996 presidential election handbook, new U.S. census information, top news stories of 1995 and more. **The American Heritage Dictionary** includes more than 100 new words and 8,000 re-recorded pronunciations, many of which are proper names in languages other than English. **The Columbia Dictionary of Quotations** adds 120 new quotes from famous people past and present.

continued on page 46

Testdriving CD-ROMs from page 43

Four of the reference works included contain an Outline button that helps users focus on an otherwise broad topic by presenting a list of the categories and articles they can select from. These works also have new and updated outlines. Instead of searching all nine reference sources on the disc, users can select individual ones to search.

Windows 95 users can create their own shortcuts to any article, map, or Internet listing right on the desktop by using the new Create Shortcut function and the right mouse button. This can save time for those who need frequent access to a particular article or map. **Microsoft Bookshelf** also offers Windows 95 users a built-in shortcut to a special forum on The Microsoft Network.

A school edition, available to schools, libraries, and museums, includes a free Teacher's Activity Guide to enhance and extend the learning experiences in **Microsoft Bookshelf 1996-97**. The guide features a hands-on introduction and more than 20 student activities for exploring the weather, creating multimedia presentations, learning about music, etc. designed to help teachers integrate Bookshelf 1996-97 into their classroom curriculum.

Previous editions have included integration with Microsoft Excel, Word, and Works. This year's edition adds integration with PowerPoint; so users can copy text, pictures, and maps to create multimedia presentations easily. Future versions of PowerPoint will also include the Look Up Reference function to provide quick access to the Bookshelf references.

The fact that **Microsoft Bookshelf** has endured for almost ten years testifies to its importance and popularity. This is a tool that every writer should have on the desktop. The Internet Directory alone justifies a purchase.

System Requirements: Multimedia PC with a 486SX/33 MHZ or faster microprocessor, Windows 3.1 or later or Windows 95, 4 MB of RAM, at least 4.5 MB of available hard disk space, a Super VGA 256-color monitor, double-speed or faster CD-ROM drive. Sound card with speaker or headphones and a Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device strongly recommended. Internet access is required for **Bookshelf Internet Directory 96** updates and hot links. Macintosh version should be available by press time. Cost: \$54.95; \$10.00 rebate for licensed users of a previous edition.

Producer: **Microsoft Corporation**; One Microsoft Way; Redmond, WA 98052-6399; tel. 206-882-8080; fax: 206-93-MSFAX <<http://www.microsoft.com/bookshelf/>>

Pro CD Internet Directory

The **Pro CD Internet Directory** contains over 200,000 registered Internet domain names, IP addresses, World Wide Web and FTP sites (even inactive ones), along with company name, address, city, state/province, ZIP/post code, country, telephone number, SIC code, and registration date. Users can search any of these fields individually or in any combination.

This CD has the most powerful and flexible search software of any CD-ROM Internet directory on the market. Besides its ability to search any field with Boolean operators, it supports implicit right truncation as well as explicit left truncation, using the asterisk. Searchers can thus identify all 1647 educational institutions in the database by typing "*.edu" but this could be time consuming. A couple of sample searches took as much as five minutes each. Also, there's no way to cancel a search if one discovers an error part way into a search. While there's a Cancel button, it remains inactive most of the time. Clicking a button on the toolbar will tally all the hits.

The SIC field also supports truncation. Typing "11" will retrieve all codes with "11" anywhere in them, arranged alphabetically. There's no need to know the codes, though, as double clicking in the field will open a window which searches both the codes and the descriptions. This performs a fast "string search" with automatic left and right truncation. This can be a double-edged sword. While there's an entry for "cash wheat farms," somebody searching for "oat farms" will retrieve nothing. The listing is under "cash grain farms" with no cross

references. Searching under "oat" will retrieve anything dealing with coat, boat, goat, etc.

The display extends from left to right like a large spreadsheet that covers the width of just over two screens. Even so, some of the data gets truncated; so users can customize the display to adjust the widths of the fields or to hide undesired ones. The default font is 8 point Arial which users can also change to their preference. Enlarging the print size will also require widening field windows to read the text. Users can also configure their Internet browser to work in conjunction with the **Pro CD Internet Directory**. It supports Netscape Navigator, Spyglass Mosaic, Chameleon WebSurfer, and Microsoft Internet Explorer. For those who need Internet access, the CD includes the SiriusNet Internet Access Kit with the Netscape Navigator web browser.

Users can export or print as much of the database as desired. Export supports a variety of file formats for use with a contact manager, spreadsheet, or database. Users can also print listings in galley (fields separated by commas) or label formats or have the computer automatically dial a listing's voice phone or connect to its World Wide Web site or FTP server. With web sites changing so rapidly, this title will need periodic updates. It would be nice to have an online link to update addresses automatically. Windows 95 users may encounter some difficulty in running the **Pro CD Internet Directory** and need additional instructions to configure the ODBC drivers properly. Buyers can identify tech support web sites quickly and easily with this title. Savings in telephone bills waiting to speak to a technician could easily justify the \$29 cost.

System Requirements: PC with a 386 microprocessor, 8 MB of RAM, Windows 3.1 or later or Windows 95, MSCDEX 2.0 or later, mouse, color monitor, CD-ROM drive. Cost: \$29.00.

Producer: **Pro CD, Inc.**, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923-4520. phone: 800-99-CD-ROM. Internet: <customer.service@procd.com> <<http://www.procd.com>>

The Columbia World of Quotations

The Columbia World of Quotations is not just an electronic conversion of the **Columbia Dictionary of Quotations**. It is a new work involving more than 150 contributors and eighteen consultants from various disciplines under the supervision of three general editors. This hybrid disc includes more than 65,000 quotations along with the software for the Macintosh, Windows, and DOS platforms. We examined it using Windows 95.

The interface is deceptively simple. The layout and icons appear designed for the junior high school level. Yet, the search engine is quite powerful — clearly the most powerful of any disc of quotations. Researchers can enter a single word or multiple words from the quotation; or they can search by subject, author's last name, or title of the source. They can also limit searches by these categories which they can select by browsing or direct keying. Quotations are organized alphabetically by their first words; but the software permits reorganizing them by subject, author, gender (subsorted by author), and nationality. The same parameters can also serve to narrow a search. Advanced searchers can combine up to two author names with up to two of the 6500 subjects with the Boolean operators AND or OR. They can further refine a search by title of the source, gender, nationality or occupation or profession of the author or speaker. They can select a publication date, or an actor or character (for movies, plays, or novels). Thus, one can find all the occurrences of quotations of Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca* or what Zsa Zsa Gabor had to say about love ("A man in love is incomplete until he has married — then he's finished.") There's also a century parameter which is more deceptive than helpful. For example, entering 19 in this field will retrieve 1913, 1619, and other dates that include 19.

While the disc offers various search options, it appears to construct the indices "on the fly," resulting in slow performance. It also searches "noise" words. Keying "hill of beans" will locate all 36,842 occurrences of the word "of" before combining it with the other two. Further, entering U.S. in the nationality field searches for both characters separately rather than as a combination. The quotation display

continued on page 48

Test Driving CD-ROMs from page 46

screen shows the quotation along with the author's or speaker's full name and dates, nationality, and occupation, if known. It also provides as full a report of its source as possible to identify precisely when and where it was written or said. In the case of a line from the movies, it also shows the names of the character, the actor, the director, and the screenwriter for further verification, if necessary. The citation may also include an informative comment by the person who selected the quotation.

The **Columbia World of Quotations** offers an indispensable tool for those who need to use or verify quotations. It can help to verify: the exact wording of a particular quotation (e.g. "Play it, Sam" from *Casablanca* — not "Play it again, Sam," the title of a Woody Allen movie, who said or wrote something in the title of the work in which it appears, where in the work it appears, the date of the quotation (e.g.

when did George Bush say, "Read my lips: No new taxes"? — on August 18, 1988 in his acceptance speech. The **Columbia World of Quotations** also includes a couple of rare features. First, it supports reverse truncation as well as forward truncation. Second, the price covers unlimited user access over a network within one building.

System Requirements: DOS: IBM or compatible 486 or better computer, 500 K of conventional RAM, MS-DOS 6.2 or later using smartdrv.exe configured to cache the CD-ROM drive, MSCDEX 2.0 or later, CD-ROM drive. Windows: IBM or compatible 486 or better computer, 8 MB of RAM, Microsoft Windows 3.1, 12 MB of RAM, MS-DOS 6.2 or later using smartdrv.exe configured to cache the CD-ROM drive, MSCDEX 2.0 or later, CD-ROM drive. Macintosh: Macintosh 68030 or better, 8 MB of RAM, CD-ROM drive. Cost: \$350

Publisher: **Columbia University Press**, 562 West 113th St., New York, NY 10025, 1-800-767-7843.

Rumors from page 42

purchase of **Virtua**, a third-generation automated library management system. The KU Libraries in Lawrence will implement Virtua in the eight libraries on the Lawrence campus, including the KU School of Law Library and the Kenneth Spencer Research Library. The KU Medical Center will also install Virtua in two libraries located on the main Medical Center campus in Kansas City and a third at its branch in Wichita. Currently the KU Libraries in Lawrence use a locally-designed and developed mainframe-based system and the **Innovative Interfaces INNOVACQ** system. KU plans to install Virtua on the DEC AlphaServer platform running under Digital UNIX and the Oracle Relational Database Management System with a 512-user level license. KU is also replacing all terminals and older workstations in the Lawrence campus libraries with Pentium workstations running under Windows95™.

Don't forget — to find out the latest legislative trends affecting libraries and the ALA's stance on these issues, direct your web browser or gopher to: <gopher://gopher.ala.org:70/11/alagophwashoff> (Washington Office), or <gopher://ala1.ala.org:70/11/alagophwashoff/alagophwashoffitp> (Office for Information Technology Policy). Another way to access this information is to locate the **ALA homepage** <<http://www.ala.org/>> and choose "Offices" and then either "Washington Office" or "Office for Information Technology Policy," where you can access the gopher menus. And further from ALA, there is now an **ALA Council listserv** which gives access to documents of ALA Council. If you are interested in being a "fly on the wall," that is looking but not participating in the discussion, send email to <lgregory@ala.org>

Got an email message from **Jill Long** <JVLlong@rocky.clare-mont.edu> who had seen the table of contents of the June issue of **ATG** on **Acqnet** and wanted to know where the URL was that she could read the fulltext!

Pretty interesting. How many of you would use the fulltext to **ATG** online and why? Let me know at <strauchk@cofc.edu>

The **National Information Standards Organization (NISO)**, the leading developer of technical standards for publishers, information services, and libraries, has launched a home page on the World Wide Web <<http://www.niso.org>>.

And moving right along, The **U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS)** opened its home page and site on the World Wide Web at <<http://www.nclis.gov>>.

It's now uncommon to see PCs on the market without CD-ROM drives. This is just one of the reasons we are excited to have information from **Keith Renwick** <K.Renwick@umist.ac.uk> about CD-ROM technology acceptance and acquisition in his area of the UK. See this issue, page 81.

BettyAnn Evans (Creighton University, Technical Services Dept., Acquisitions) <baevans@creighton.edu> wants to subscribe to *Against the Grain*. Spread *Against the Grain's* word! We love you and new subscribers, too! (Hey, there's a rhyme in there somewhere ...)

NOW AVAILABLE! THE JOY OF PUBLISHING by Nat Bodian (Contributing Editor, *Against the Grain*)

"A celebration of the book ... and about the people who write, create, edit, distribute, and deal with them." —from the Introduction

"... assembles anecdotes, facts, advice, tidbits, and trivia in a collection that will provide book folk with pleasant browsing" — Publishers Weekly

"A distinguished book publishing veteran tells all in a new volume of fascinating facts, anecdotes, curiosities, and historic origins about books, authors, editors, and publishers." — The Huenefeld Report

June 1996, 240 pp. ISBN 0-912411-47-3. \$29.95 cloth

Publisher:
Open Horizons Pub. Co.
P.O. Box 205
Fairfield, Iowa 52556
Phone: 800-796-6130

Distributor:
Logan Publishers Consortium
1336 W. Randolph St.
Chicago, Illinois 60607
Phone: 800-626-4330

CORRECTION

Hey, y'all. I screwed up. Okay, so don't show any surprise. Anyway, this is serious. In the last issue (**ATG**, v.8# 3, June 1996, p.67), I ran the last two paragraphs on the page **in error**. These two paragraphs did **not** go with poor **Becky Garcia's** wonderful "Interop" conference write up. Those two paragraphs went with **Nancy Dennis's** NMLA conference write up which is in this issue, page 64. I was trying to cut and I pasted instead. Oops! Excuse me. And I apologize to Becky, Nancy, and all of you. How about, instead of three lashes with a wet noodle, I promise three encounters with the wrong ISSN?