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Test Driving CD-ROMs: Review of CD-ROM Product -- Oxford English Dictionary Version 3.0

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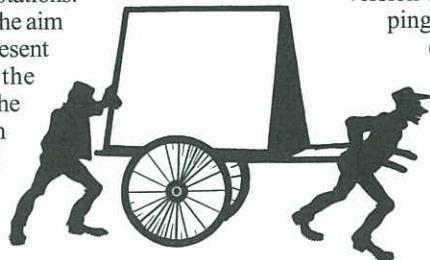
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Test Driving CD-ROMs

Review of CD-ROM Product — Oxford English Dictionary Version 3.0

by **Burton Callicott** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <callicottb@acadcomp.cofc.edu>

The Oxford University Press has recently come out with a new CD-ROM version of the celebrated *Oxford English Dictionary*. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the “*OED*,” it is perhaps the ultimate English dictionary. The second edition has over a half a million definitions and 2.5 million illustrative quotations. As stated in the preface “the aim of this dictionary is to present in alphabetical series the words that have formed the English vocabulary from the time of the earliest records down to the present day, with all the relevant facts concerning their form, sense-history, pronunciation, and etymology.” At 23 volumes that take up four feet of shelf space and weigh over 85 pounds, many would say that they have achieved their aim. Even for those who only have a passing interest in lexicography, the *Oxford English Dictionary* is a fascinating document and a truly unparalleled achievement.



“But a CD-ROM?!” you might ask, “who uses those anymore?” Well, considering that you can get the complete 2nd edition of the *OED* with updates for \$295.00 in a searchable electronic format, it could prove to be a great value and a very usable product at home or in a small to mid-size library (the print version is \$995.00 plus shipping). Version 3.0 of the *OED* has essentially the same look and functionality of the more expensive online version. You can get an idea of what it looks like by going to the *OED*'s Website <http://dictionary.oed.com/> and clicking on their “free tour.” The main difference between the online version and the CD is that there are links to news and a timeline for uploads of new words that are not available on the CD. As noted in the promotional literature version 3.0 of the CD, it offers the ability to use “the more powerful and flexible func-

tions—Boolean searches, extraction character searches, search by pronunciation, and many more useful options” that were not available on the earlier versions. However, perhaps the most important improvement version 3.0 has to offer is the ability to load the entire content of the CD onto a PC hard drive. This means that once the contents have been copied onto a computer, which is a fairly easy process (I was able to do it without any problems in any case), the disks are no longer needed for regular day-to-day use. As anyone who has tried to keep up with two or more CDs knows, especially in a library, this is a very good thing.

In order to have the *OED* on your PC, you do need to have suitable equipment and hard drive space in order to accommodate it. Specifically you will need at least 32 megabytes of RAM (preferably 46 MB's) and at least 1.7 gigabytes of hard disk space to install and run the CD-ROM. Most relatively recent computers should be able to handle the requirements of this product. Mac users may want to stop reading this review at this

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with a Windows® platform (95, 98, NT4, 2000, or XP). Those who have not been assimilated by IBM and its clones will have to rely on the online or the print version at this time and perhaps forever. According to *OED* reps, there are currently no plans to develop a Mac compatible edition. Another consideration, at least for potential library purchasers, is that for some reason, either technical or legal, the CD may not be networked such that multiple PCs can access the contents from a central location. I am happy to report that within these parameters, the CD functioned well on my rather standard issue Dell computer. The package includes a very concise, user-friendly manual complete with a license agreement and description of the sixty-day warranty.

One curious thing I noted about the CD version is that it defaults to having the “word of the day” enabled. This means that when you click on “search” you are presented with an entry for a word—a word of the day—selected by the disk. It struck me as a bit odd to feature an application with such a quotidian component, as it would seem to bring attention to the main drawback of having the dictionary on CD rather than online: the inability to get instant regular additions or emendations as you would with the online version. In other words, once the CD is “burned” and in your possession, it is virtually the same as having a monograph in terms of its ability to be updated. For updates you will have to buy new editions or rather, upgrades. (In this case, the upgrade is \$125.00.) I regard this as a very minor drawback, however, as the *OED* has never been known as a primary source for new words. You can easily find definitions and examples of words such as “d’oh,” “cramming,” and “gangsta,” in plenty of other sources online and in print. 🐼

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In Memory of Joseph C. Andrews

Joseph C. Andrews, 62, Head, Collection Management, University of Central Florida (UCF) Library, died June 24. Andrews studied piano and received his undergraduate degree in Music from St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, VA. After teaching for a short time, he went

on to receive three graduate degrees: two MLS degrees from North Carolina Central University in Durham, NC and, supported by funding from the Henry Luce Foundation, a Liberal Education degree from St. John's College in Sante Fe, NM. Andrews began his library career at the St. Paul's College library in 1971. He moved to Virginia Commonwealth University in 1979, where he served in a variety of positions including reference librarian, music librarian, acting head of reference and head of the circulation & reserve department. In January 1988, Andrews began working in the UCF Library as a Reference Librarian. In 1989/90 he became Head of the Acquisitions Department and later, in October 1999 assumed the responsibility of Head of the new Collection Management Department. Andrews was a staunch supporter of the diversity initiative movement and very active in the American Library Association, in which he was involved in several divisions, including the Association of College & Research Libraries; Association for Library Collections & Technical Services; Library Administration & Management Association/Library Organization & Management Section; Library & Information Technology Association; Reference User Services Association (formerly RASD); and the Black Caucus of the ALA. 🐼

Adventures in Librarianship — Misfortune

by Ned Kraft (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

ATG investigative reporters have discovered that the ALA Executive Directorate proposed but later abandoned an idea to distribute promotional fortune cookies at the recent summer convention. Sammy Feng, of Feng's Fortunes Limited, leaked the story to *ATG*. Mr. Feng is understandably angry about being left with tens-of-thousands of fortune cookies designed for a very specialized market. He had spent many hours coming up with gems such as:

- Be quiet in the library
- Your lucky number is 54782, in the library
- Go to the library now, or you'll be sorry
- You are a special person, and a librarian

Mr. Feng's fourteen-year-old son, Ray-Ray, assisted with the project and delivered a higher degree of creativity nurtured by seven years in Montessori school and two years in a military academy. “Dad keeps telling me I write well,” says Ray-Ray, “but I think he really means that I write legibly.” Ray-Ray's oeuvre includes:

- The stars are aligned to bring missing books back home... in one crushing wave
- Present a pleasant face to the world and you will be rewarded with sneering mockery
- All information can be found on the Internet... time to look for a new job
- You have no lucky number

- You will meet new people and never learn their names

Fortunately for Mr. Feng, his wife, Maria Contralto Feng, works part-time in Eastwood Public Library and added a level of expertise and insight to the project that he and Ray-Ray could not. Maria contributed:

- Serial titles change but you are not afraid
- The Friends of the Library are your friends too
- Your lucky call number is PR6053.O425
- MARC tags are inadequate to describe your many qualities
- The stars will align for love and for increased circulation statistics

Mr. Feng has advised *ATG* that these “limited edition” fortune cookies are available for a very low price, and he guarantees a shelf life of five years. “I don't like ALA,” says Feng, “because who is going to buy so many library cookies?” We thought for a moment, but could not come up with an answer. 🐼

