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From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles

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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>

SAGE has recently published another encyclopedia in its collection of interdisciplinary reference works. Edited by **Teresa L. Thompson** of the **University of Dayton**, the *Encyclopedia of Health Communication* (2014, 9781452258751, \$525) is a three-volume set that consists of nearly 600 scholarly articles that attempt to reflect and define this “burgeoning” discipline from core concepts and theory through actual practice.

Articles cover key themes from every day and family health communication concerns to global health issues to the specifics of provider-patient interaction. There are also entries that discuss media coverage and advertising, health education, the impacts of technology, and the challenges of communication in public health and relaying health policies. Providing a conceptual framework there are individual articles that treat relevant theories that underlie much current and past research. In short, the coverage offered by this set is impressively diverse, with articles that can range from discussions of celebrity endorsements in health campaigns to politics and political complexities to the need for warning labels. The articles themselves are thoughtful, fact-filled, and informed by recent academic research. They should appeal to a diverse audience including faculty, undergraduates, and the serious lay reader. As is usual with **SAGE** publications, this set offers helpful value-added features that, in this instance, include a ten-page chronology, a glossary of terms, and an appendix of health posters, not to mention finding aids like a thematic reader’s guide, see-also references, and a thorough index. Each entry has a short bibliography, and black-and-white photos are interspersed providing visual breaks in what is generally a text-rich set.

The *Encyclopedia of Health Communication* offers interested readers and scholars a source of well researched and authoritative articles containing facts and context on numerous key topics. While it should help answer specific questions, it will also provide a solid foundation for further exploration. This set also serves another valuable function: it helps lend sense and definition to a diverse and growing field of study that borrows numerous components from other disciplines.

SAGE provides online access to this title via the **SAGE Knowledge** platform.

For further information see: <http://knowledge.sagepub.com/view/encyclopedia-of-health-communication/SAGE.xml>.

IGI Global has just published the third edition of the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology*, (2014, 9781466658882, \$3950). This latest version is a massive set that stretches over ten volumes with a total of 758 individual articles — some 95 additional articles above the total offered in the 2008 edition of this reference. All of the articles are original to this edition, and the scope has been expanded to cover a total of 100 topic areas or categories. The new topic areas include but are not limited to: Big Data, Digital Media, Engineering Science, Gaming, Hospitality, Travel, and Tourism Management, Materials Science, Psychology and Human Behavior, Robotics, and Sustainability.

Once again the encyclopedia is edited by **Dr. Mehdi Khosrow-Pour** and claims contributions from some 1,400 scholars and researchers representing “hundreds of prominent institutions throughout the world.” Rather than using the tradition A-Z subject arrangement the contents are divided into the 100 topic areas or categories mentioned above with the articles listed alphabetically within the categories. Access is provided by full tables of contents from all the volumes and a complete alphabetical list by article title as well as a general index referencing specific volumes and pages. All of these finding aids are reprinted in each volume lending to the overall bulk of the set.

In his introduction, **Dr. Khosrow-Pour** describes a rigorous submission process involving topic proposals and a review by three experts on a double blind, peer-review basis. In fact, this set resembles as much a collection of scholarly journal articles or chapters in multiple anthologies as it does an encyclopedia. Rather than emphasizing all topics both historical and current that might be seen as germane to information science and technology, the focus of the *Encyclopedia* is more on issues and concepts that are perceived as presently relevant to researchers. And while the articles are factual and descriptive they can also be proscriptive.

Each article follows a similar general format including an introduction, a background statement, and sometimes a literature review, which is then followed by a discussion of practical issues, problems, recommendations, future research directions, and a conclusion. Each article ends with an often impressive bibliography of the sources referenced and a selected list of additional readings, as well as brief glossary of terms. The articles themselves generally run five to six pages in length. The writing style is academic and technical with articles often including charts, tables, diagrams, and formulas, making the articles most helpful to those already somewhat versed in the topics being discussed.

The intended audience is not the lower-level undergraduate but rather those pursuing relevant majors, graduate students, faculty, and professional practitioners. Individual articles are often highly specialized including those with titles like Meta-Digital Accounting in the Context of Cloud Computing; Stochastic Neural Network Classifiers; Enhancing Service Integrity of Byzantine Fault Tolerant Applications; and Novel Algorithmic Approach to Deciphering Rovash Inscriptions.

Given its price, the *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology* represents a major investment for most libraries, and many will be concerned about justifying its purchase for their students and faculty. Fortunately, librarians and faculty liaisons can get a fairly good sense of what the *Encyclopedia* has to offer and make their own determination by pointing their browsers to <http://www.igi-global.com/book/encyclopedia-information-science-technology-third/76156>. Here they will find a complete list of the articles and by clicking on the article title can read a “chapter preview.” There are also links to sample PDFs consisting of the first two pages of the article. In addition, there is a search box where they can search to see if the topic areas most relevant to students and faculty are covered adequately.

As far as pricing goes we understand that the pre-publication discount has been extended to December 31, 2014, and those libraries that purchase the print set gain free lifetime electronic access to the *Encyclopedia*. The electronic version allows you to search the full text by keyword. The navigation interface is organized by categories. However, no alphabetical table of contents is provided nor is there real subject searching via established headings. As with other **IGI Global** titles, there is another purchase option. You can opt to buy access to the individual articles for \$37.50 each.

Guide to Reference in Business and Economics (2014, 978-0838912348, \$65) is the newest in **ALA’s** series of annotated bibliographies culled from the *Guide to Reference* database that supersedes the classic print reference of the same title. Edited by **Steven W. Sowards** and **Elisabeth Leonard**, this volume provides citations and evaluative descriptions of close to 800 selected print and electronic sources and is intended for use by both reference and collection development librarians.

Coverage includes sources of value for general business as well as a number of specialized areas. In fact, there are individual chapters listing resources useful for research in international business; economic conditions and world trade; company information; basic and specialized industry information; as well as sources related to occupations and careers; and those focused on a number of functional

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areas ranging from accounting to human resources to operations management.

Each entry provides a useful citation that includes ISBNs for print and URLs for Web-based resources. But perhaps more importantly, the source annotations offer informed descriptions including guidance on the scope and value of each resource. A wide variety of formats are covered including handbooks, encyclopedias and dictionaries, indexes, directories, statistics, biographies, book reviews, and statistics.

Authoritative, easy-to-use, and moderately priced, *Guide to Reference in Business and Economics* offers a manageable synthesis of sources drawn from ALA's extensive and highly regarded *Guide to Reference* database. It should find a place at reference desks and on the shelves of reference offices in academic and larger public libraries, not to mention special business libraries. Collection development librarians charged with building and maintaining business and economics collections will also find it a useful and handy guide to key sources.

Extra Servings

Salem Press has just released new editions that deal with important issue and fascinating topics:

- *Issues in U.S. Immigration* (9781619257085, \$195, Oct. 2014) is a two-volume set edited by **Carl L. Bankston III** and **Danielle Hidalgo**. This set's 230+ articles "examine the many issues surrounding immigration — from the earliest settlement of British North America in the seventeenth century through the immediate aftermath of the of September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks of the twenty-first century. It also places special emphasis on the many ethnic communities that have provided American immigrants..."
- *Ancient Creatures Unearthed* (9781619256873, \$235, Oct. 2014) "provides ... a comprehensive look on dinosaurs and ancient creatures that roamed the Earth more than 65 million years ago. Each entry includes key information either in chart or picture form that lists the name, pronunciation, and its meaning, as well as scientific classification, location of the fossil on a map of the world, estimated size in comparison to an average human, and the time period in which the animal existed. Extensive explanations of each animal follow, and include a detailed introduction, classification, anatomy, reproduction and population, intelligence, diet, behavior, habitat and other life forms..."

SAGE is also publishing a couple of new sets:

- *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research* (hardcover: 9781849200271; eBook: 9781473907324, \$350, Sept. 2014) is a two-volume set that "brings together the many strands of action research and addresses the interplay between these disciplines by presenting a state-of-the-art overview and comprehensive breakdown of the key tenets and methods of action research as well as detailing the work of key theorists and contributors to action research..."
- *Asian American Society: An Encyclopedia* (9781452281902, \$535, Sept. 2014) is a four-volume work edited by **Mary Yu Danico** that "provides a thorough introduction to the wide-ranging and fast-developing field of Asian American studies. Published with the **Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS)**, two volumes of the four-volume encyclopedia feature more than 300 A-to-Z articles authored by AAAS members and experts in the field who examine the social, cultural, psychological, economic, and political dimensions of the Asian American experience. The next two volumes of this work contain approximately 200 annotated primary documents, organized chronologically..."

ABC-CLIO has a few new titles including:

- *Dirty Deals? An Encyclopedia of Lobbying, Political Influence, and Corruption* (9781610692458, \$294), edited by **Amy Handlin**, is "a three-volume work ... covers the evolution and impact of lobbying, political influence, and corruption from the Colonial era to today. Volume 1 contains detailed scholarly essays on various aspects of lobbying, corruption, and political influence. Volume 2 comprises informative A-Z entries on people, events, laws, organizations, and legal decisions ... Volume 3 contains primary documents that include executive orders, court cases, state and federal lobbying forms, and codes of conduct related to lobbying, campaign finance reform, and anti-corruption measures."
- *Antarctica and the Arctic Circle: A Geographic Encyclopedia of the Earth's Polar Regions* (Hardcover: 9781610693929; eBook: 9781610693936, \$189), edited by **Andrew J. Hund**, is "a two-volume encyclopedia that lays a foundation for understanding global warming and other issues related to the North and South Poles. Approximately 350 alphabetically-arranged, user-friendly entries treat key terms and topics, important expeditions, major figures, territorial disputes, and much more..."

- *The Central Intelligence Agency: An Encyclopedia of Covert Ops, Intelligence Gathering, and Spies* (Hardcover: 9781610690911, eBook: 9781610690928, \$189) is a two-volume reference edited by **Jan Goldman** that "offers both students and general-interest readers a definitive resource that examines the impact the CIA has had on world events throughout the Cold War and beyond..."

Greenwood Press has just released a new reference work entitled:

- *The Brain, the Nervous System, and Their Diseases* (Hardcover: 9781610693370; eBook: 9781610693387, \$294) is a three-volume "comprehensive encyclopedia" edited by **Jennifer Hellier** that "provides a thorough overview of the human brain and nervous system — the body's "CPU and data network." It covers basic anatomy and function, diseases and disorders, treatment options, wellness concepts, and key individuals in the fields of neurology and neuroscience..."

Oxford University Press is publishing two more entries in its *Oxford Encyclopedias of the Bible* series:

- *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Ethics* edited by **Robert L. Brawley** (9780199829910, \$395) is a two-volume set that has "183 A-Z entries, written by more than 100 international authors, making this the authoritative resource on the subject. Articles are cross-referenced to other entries within the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Ethics* with a full index in the second volume."
- *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies* (9780199836994, \$395), edited by **Julia M. O'Brien**, is another "authoritative two-volume set that consists over 150 A-Z entries, written by an international group of scholars. Access to individual entries is enabled by cross referencing and a solid general index."

Cambridge University Press has also released an interesting title:

- *The Cambridge World Prehistory* (9780521119931, \$695) in three volumes and edited by **Colin Renfrew** and **Paul Bahn** "provides a systematic and authoritative examination of the prehistory of every region around the world from the early days of human origins in Africa two million years ago to the beginnings of written history, which in some areas started only two centuries ago..." 🌿