From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles

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Given the above comments, it should be apparent that the Encyclopedia of Business Analytics and Optimization is not intended for a student or reader with a passing interest in the uses of big data in business. Rather it is a sophisticated and highly technical work that would be best utilized by advanced students, research faculty, or the professional analyst with a specialized concern about the current and future use of business analytics for sophisticated problem solving and decision making. In many ways it is structured like a multivolume handbook offering both theoretical and practical information and guidance. In any case, with the ever-growing capacity to gather and use big data to meet the challenges of modern business, this reference should be seen as a timely and useful tool by both serious researchers and practitioners.

However, while libraries supporting such complex needs and concerns should give it serious consideration, the set is not cheap. The list price for the five-volume print edition is $2,695.00 while perpetual access to the online version lists for $4,045.00 and combined Print + Perpetual access is $5,390. Fortunately, there is another option for cost-conscious libraries or those with the occasional request for this type information. Individual chapters can be purchased for $37.50 and a full list of chapters/articles is available on the IGi Global Website at: http://www.igi-global.com/book/encyclopedia-business-analytics-optimization/90651.

Many libraries may find this an attractive alternative to full purchase. In a number of instances patron needs may be met by the creative use of library budgets or interlibrary loan funds to acquire copies of chapters/articles for interested students and faculty.

Early this year Salem Press released the seventh edition of its standard Magill’s Medical Guide (2014, 978-1-61925-214-1, $425). Comprising nearly 1,200 articles with numerous sidebars, photos, and illustrations, this five-volume set continues to be designed for high school, public, and undergraduate libraries. Although accessible to the general reader, the contents are intended to be authoritative and comprehensive enough to be of value to students new to the topics covered or those doing basic research.

According to the publisher’s introduction the majority of entries from the 6th edition have been updated and there are 69 entirely new articles. Coverage of neuroscience and issues related to aging and genetic diseases have all been expanded. Naturally, the physical aspects of health and disease take precedent; however, there are also discussions of the psychological and emotional impacts experienced by those dealing with various conditions and disorders. Entries range from shorter 500-word definitions to full, in-depth essays of 2,500-3,000 words. They also follow a general format starting with basic information about the type entry being presented, the anatomy or body system affected, the specialties involved, and a short definition of the topic. Longer entries will also have a brief glossary of key terms. In the numerous entries that discuss diseases and disorders, subcategories like causes and symptoms, treatment and therapy, and perspective and prospects are covered. Entries on other topics are similarly divided and information presented under relevant subcategories.

The articles are authored by both medical scholars and physicians and reviewed by a panel of experts. More than offering self-help advice, these entries are scientifically grounded, fact-filled but to-the-point, and contain little or no jargon.

The finding aids are well designed and helpful. Each of the five volumes has a full table of contents listing entries alphabetically with the relevant volume and page numbers. In addition, each volume reprints two very useful topical guides. The first of these guides organizes entries under “anatomy and systems affected” while the other organizes them under specialties and related fields. The last volume of the set has a general index.

Purchase of Magill’s Medical Guide is a no-brainer for libraries that have found past editions valuable and it should find a new home in other academic and public libraries looking for a basic but authoritative medical reference. As is the practice with Salem Press, the purchase of the printed set entitles a school or library to free online access to the Medical Guide’s content.

Grey House has also released a new version of a popular and useful reference. First published by Gale in 1994, the Value of the Dollar 1860-2014 (2014, 978-1-61925-254-7, $155) is in addition, each volume reprint two costly historical tables relevant to the years covered. The chapters are then divided into short five-year subchapters that include a historic snapshot of key economic events, selected incomes, consumer expenditures, investments, standard job salaries, the cost of a food basket, and other selected prices. The data here is as fascinating as it is specific and it is well worth spending time examining it to get a sense of the economic and social environment of the years discussed.

A second section is new to this edition and covers pricing trends from 1910-2012. This continued on page 43
The Medical Library Association in conjunction with Neal-Schumann has also released a reference work with a solid reputation. Medical librarians will have no doubt welcome the new edition of *Introduction to Reference Sources in the Health Sciences* (2014, 978-0-8389-1184-6, $115). Compiled by Jeffrey T. Huber and Susan Swogger, this reference work has been revised and updated since last published in 2008. New chapters on point-of-care and global health sources as well as an opening section on health information-seeking behaviors are included in this new version.

The majority of the book is still devoted to discussions of bibliographic and informational sources that the authors feel are basic to providing quality service to medical staff and students. Coverage includes discussions of bibliographic sources for monographs, serials, government documents, conferences, and reviews as well as digital database resources. Informational resources focus on topics from medical terminology and statistics to drug information, consumer health, medical history, grants, and global health. There are also chapters covering formats like handbooks, manuals, directories, and biographical sources. All of these chapters come across as discussions, not merely annotated lists of relevant medical resources. Chapter authors provide context by offering an overview of the literature as well as descriptions of the specific sources being highlighted, and many of the chapters end with reading lists and/or references useful for further exploration.

**Introduction to Reference Sources in the Health Sciences** serves as an expert guide to specific sources but it also helps describe the medical reference literature as it continues to evolve. Not only are new issues and topics covered but a look at the sources listed confirms the obvious growth and expanding reliance on electronic tools, despite the number of useful print titles still being included. This book itself is available in an eEdition as well as eHandbooks. (See: http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=10970) But regardless of format, *Introduction to Reference Sources in the Health Sciences* will find its way into both personal and library collections. Professional practitioners as well as library school students will be in the market for their own copies, and academic and medical libraries may want both circulating and reference copies.

**Extra Servings**

CRC Press has released the newest version of a perennial classic:

- **CRC Handbook of Chemistry and Physics, 95th Edition** (ISBN 9781482208672, $169.95, June 2014) "continues to be the most accessed and respected scientific reference in the world. An authoritative resource consisting of tables of data and current international recommen-

dations on nomenclature, symbols, and units, its usefulness spans not only the physical sciences but also related areas of biology, geology, and environmental science…"

**Salem Press** has a standard title of its own that has made a recent appearance:

- **Cyclopedia of Literary Characters**, 6th ed. (978-1-61925-497-8, $455, 2014) now totals five volumes and "examines more than 29,000 major characters from 3,500 important works of literature. New to this edition are 245 characters published in popular works of fiction from 2000 to 2012…"

H.W. Wilson has a new title in print and one in the offing:

- **World Authors 2006-2013** (978-1-61925-467-1, $195, 2014) "presents biographical articles on over 350 critically acclaimed novelists, poets, dramatists, essayists, social scientists, and biographers who have published significant work from 2006 to 2013…"

- **Famous First Facts** (978-1-61925-468-8, $195, Dec. 2014) is now in its 7th edition and is "updated and expanded with new entries reflecting the latest developments and discoveries, and newly organized for easier access to information. The seventh edition includes more than 8,000 firsts, with more than 1,000 that are new to this edition…"

**Oxford University Press** just released a second edition of one of their respected multi-volume encyclopedias and has plans to release a completely new work:

- **Encyclopedia of Aesthetics** (9780199747108, $1195, Aug. 2014) was "originally published in 1998 in four volumes. Now revised and expanded to include over 800 entries (in six volumes), the Encyclopedia surveys the full breadth of critical thought on art, culture, and society, from classical philosophy to contemporary critical theory… Featuring 815 articles by distinguished scholars from many fields and countries… Over 250 new entries have been added altogether…"

- **Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Ethics** (9780199329910, $395, Dec. 2014) "explores the intersection between biblical sources and ethical issues, both historical and modern, through extensive analytical and constructive treatments of a wide range of topics by leading biblical scholars and ethicists... The two-volume Encyclopedia contains over 180 entries ranging in length from 1,000 to 7,000 words. With bibliographic references and suggestions for further reading…"

continued on page 44
CQ Press continues to publish wide-ranging policy related works:

- **Historical Guide to World Media Freedom: A Country-by-Country Analysis** (978-1-6087-1765-1, $150, Aug. 2014) offers comprehensive historical data on media freedom since World War II, providing “consistent and comparable measures of media freedom in all independent countries from 1948 to the present.”
- **Guide to U.S. Economic Policy** (978-1-4522-7077-7, $175, Aug. 2014) explores the development of U.S. economic policies from the colonial period to today and “delves into the federal agencies and public and private organizations that influence and administer economic policies.”
- **Science and Politics: An A-to-Z Guide to Issues and Controversies** (978-1-4522-5810-2, $150, July 2014) details health, environmental, and social/cultural concerns while looking “at the issues and controversies at the intersection of science and politics and investigates how historical and contemporary events, along with government regulation, have affected the practice of science.” This reference “covers this nexus of politics and science in 118 A-to-Z entries.”

September sees Bloomsbury publish a new four-volume set:

- **Food History: Critical and Primary Sources** (9780857854230, $890, Sept. 2014) is “… a four-volume reference collection which focuses on the widest possible span of food in human history, to provide a comprehensive survey of problems and methods in the field of food history. Bringing together over 80 high-quality essays drawn from journal articles, book chapters, excerpts, and historical documents and supported by introductory essays and a wealth of contextual material, this … new reference work combines contemporary scholarship with selected primary sources…”

### Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

#### Column Editor’s Note: Binge-watching television series is the new norm, as evidenced by a 2013 survey conducted by Netflix. A whopping 61% of those surveyed regularly binge-watch shows, and binge-watching behavior is relatively consistent across demographics. According to a TiVo survey conducted in the spring of 2014, *Game of Thrones*, the popular television drama inspired by George R. R. Martin’s series, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, is the third-most binge-watched series. Television programs and movies based on literary novels often spur a resurgence of interest in the original books — this year alone has seen numerous shelf-to-screen (big and small) titles such as *The Fault in Our Stars*, *Divergent*, *The Giver*, *Outlander*, and *The 100*. It is unsurprising, then, that libraries across the country have programs, blog posts, bibliographies, and read-alike resources pertaining to *Game of Thrones* and the *A Song of Ice and Fire* series. New reviewer Brandon Lewter examines another title to add to the list of *Game of Thrones* resources: Valerie Estelle Frankel’s *Women in Game of Thrones: Power, Conformity and Resistance*. Many thanks to Brandon for sharing his thoughts about Frankel’s title. Happy reading, everyone! — DV


Reviewed by Brandon Lewter (Interlibrary Loan Coordinator and Reference, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston) <lewtberj@cofc.edu>

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I started reading *A Song of Ice and Fire*, George R.R. Martin’s epic fantasy novel series, in 2005, around the time the fourth book in the series was published. Being a huge Tolkien and Lord of the Rings fan, Martin filled a void that had been empty in my literary life since high school, when I read the *Lord of the Rings* series a dozen times. My adult self really appreciates Martin’s R-rated writing, and his willingness to kill off his main characters in order to keep the plot moving and interesting.

By the time I finished the first four books in *A Song of Ice and Fire* it was 2006. I had a grueling four years to wait until Martin would publish the fifth installment in the series, *A Dance With Dragons*, in 2011. Fortunately, while I anxiously wait for Martin to publish the next book, I have had HBO’s television adaptation of the series, titled *Game of Thrones*.

Valerie Estelle Frankel has written a book on this television series, titled *Women in Game of Thrones: Power, Conformity and Resistance*, which examines femininity and the portrayal of women in the series, while sometimes drawing on Martin’s novels for comparison and analysis. While the television series, for the most part, stays true to the novels, Frankel argues women’s roles are more one-dimensional in the show, especially when compared to most of the men’s characters. Frankel’s makes her argument by breaking her text into three sections: the first, dealing with the controversial issues in the show; the second, examining and analyzing female archetypes and historical tropes found in the series; and third, which deals with the gender roles in Westeros, the fictional land where the series takes place.

From the onset of the text, I must admit I was a bit off-put by Frankel’s suggestions. Being a huge fan of the novel series and the show, I had never thought of the series as being sexist. Yes, there are many nude scenes of women, but there are quite a few nude scenes of males as well. Yes, some female characters are treated as lesser beings compared to their male counterparts, but this series is supposed to take place in a medieval-like time period where women were, for the most part, with the exception of royalty, treated as property. Saying the show is sexist is pointing out the obvious about the time period in which it takes place.

But then, after some consideration and discussion with my wife, I tried looking at Frankel’s text from a different point of view and I found she makes several great points that are, depending on your stance, quite appalling when it comes to the way women are portrayed in the show, especially when you know the great lengths Martin takes in the novels to empower women and make them dynamic characters. For example, as Frankel points out, the directors of the show do often show female nudity for what often seems to be no reason other than showing female nudity. Many scenes where females are nude are not in the novels and do not seem to further the plot or character development, where the scenes with male nudity often have a purpose, such as showing a male character’s homosexuality. Frankel goes on to make several other eye-opening points with her poignant analysis in this text.

*Women in Game of Thrones* is a thought-provoking read. Anyone who is a fan of the novel series or show should read it to get an interesting perspective that is backed up with convincing evidence. You do not have to be a feminist to buy what Frankel is selling.