From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles

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Recommended Citation
Gilson, Tom (2015) "From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles," Against the Grain: Vol. 27: Iss. 1, Article 23.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.7005

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From the Reference Desk

Dirty Deals? An Encyclopedia of Lobbying, Political Influence, and Corruption (2014, ISBN: 978-1-61069-245-8, $294; e-ISBN: 978-1-61069-246-5, call for pricing) is a recent release from ABC-CLIO. Edited by Amy Handlin, this three-volume set is devoted to a fundamental but often disparaged and abused activity within the American political process. Lobbying and the resulting political influence, not to mention corruption that of comes with them, have been part of our democracy since the beginning, and this work sets out to clarify their roles and impacts.

Ms. Handlin attempts to accomplish her mission by employing a flexible approach in covering the topic. The Encyclopedia is designed so that each of the volumes can stand alone while at the same time hold together as a viable, integrated reference. The first volume provides an anthology of essays that deal with the three major themes of lobbying, political influence, and corruption, while the second consists of background articles on selected and relevant topics. The third volume excerpts numerous primary documents and places them in context and includes Federal laws, U.S. court decisions, Executive Orders, codes of conduct, and lobbyist registration documents.

The essays in the first volume lay a thought-ful and solid foundation in discussing basics like the origins and history of lobbying as well as up-to-date concerns like the role of social networking and overseas lobbying. Topics like campaign finance reform, the watchdog role of the press, and the roots and impacts of corruption are also given thorough attention. The essays are scholarly and replete with facts and informed opinion. Each essay also has an impressive bibliography, adding real academic value for serious researchers. The articles in Volume Two include biographies of people ranging from Jack Abramoff to Thomas Nast and Abe Fortas as well as entries that discuss relevant laws, concepts, events, and groups and associations. They are linked by “see also” references and have very brief lists of suggested readings. The primary sources making up the third volume are introduced by an overview, lending context followed by a substantial excerpt from the original.

Dirty Deals? An Encyclopedia of Lobbying, Political Influence, and Corruption offers students a well-rounded and thoughtful treatment of a unique and often hidden aspect of American politics. As such, it will complement CQ Press’ well respected and authoritative Guide to Interest Groups and Lobbying in the United States (2011, ISBN: 9781604264579; e-ISBN: 9781608717569, $215) on the reference shelf. And with each volume being able to stand on its own, the set could easily find a home in circulating collections. The set is available in both print and as an eBook.


The volume is organized by six categories including Setting up the New Deal; Unemployment and Relief; Women, Minorities, and Youth; the Bonus Army; Foreign Policy; and Culture, Crime, and More. Aside from the actual document, each essay follows a set formula and provides an overview, defining

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moment, author biography, document analysis, and essential themes. In any collection like this the selection of documents is a key factor, and this collection offers a diverse and representative mix. Documents range from an...
This two-volume encyclopedia fills that gap. Chapters address legal, social, political, and cultural issues of immigrant groups on a state-by-state basis and explore immigration trends and issues faced by individual ethnic populations..."

- *Earth’s Landscape: An Encyclopedia of the World’s Geographic Features* (Feb. 2015, 978-1-61069-445-2, $205; e-ISBN: 978-1-61069-446-9, call for pricing) is another two-volume set. It is authored by Joyce A. Quinn and Susan L. Woodward and “describes continents and oceans; individual mountains, islands, caves, and rivers; and ecological entities such as wildlife refuges and national parks. Each entry provides a geographic overview of the feature’s significance, location, description, geologic history, biota, protected areas, and environmental issues. But the coverage goes even deeper so that entries also discuss the cultural importance of each natural place...”

**Book Reviews**

From the Reference Desk

- *Political Handbook of the World 2015* (April 2015, 978-1-4833-7157-3; e-ISBN: 978-1-4833-7159-7, $395) by Thomas Lansford is another single-volume published annually. This reference will continue to be an ... “authoritative source for finding complete facts and analysis on each country’s governmental and political makeup. Compiling in one place more than 200 entries on countries and territories throughout the world, this volume has coverage of all major and minor political parties and groups in each political system. It also provides names of key ambassadors and international memberships of each country, plus detailed profiles of more than 30 intergovernmental organizations and UN agencies...”

ABC-CLIO Greenwood has a number of new titles in the offering.


Rowman and Littlefield is also publishing a couple of new reference works.

- *Encyclopedia of Christian Education – 2nd edition* (March 2015, 978-0-8108-8492-2, £215.00; eBook: 978-0-8108-8493-9, £215.00) is edited by George Thomas Kurian and Mark A. Lamport. This reference “explores the many facets of Christian education in terms of its impact on curriculum, literacy, teacher training, outcomes, and professional standards. This encyclopedia is the first reference work devoted exclusively to chronicling the unique history of Christian education across the globe, illustrating how Christian educators pioneered such educational institutions and reforms as universal literacy, home schooling, Sunday schools, women’s education, graded schools, compulsory education of the deaf and blind, and kindergarten...”

**Book Reviews**

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current trends in collection management, effects of digitization, and impacts on various library stakeholders. She even addresses the difficult topic of resistance to “rightsizing” by faculty and library colleagues.

Ward discusses and suggests that planning is the key to ensuring that the process of “rightsizing” your library collections runs as smoothly and efficiently as possible. The various aspects of the planning process are discussed from creation of the criteria that will be used to review the collection (withdrawal policy) to communicating and collaborating with colleagues throughout the project to disposal options for the materials that will be removed. She places emphasis on making sure that both the library and university administration support the process of “rightsizing” the library collections as well as collection retention partnerships among libraries.

After reviewing “traditional” weeding and deselecting procedures, Ward moves on to provide sample workflows for “rightsizing” your library collection. Given the various types of library materials that need to be “rightsized,” she provides sample workflows for journals, books, and microforms with suggestions for other material types like DVDs, VHS tapes, Audio CDs, LPs, and government documents. She concludes with information on next steps, advocating for setting up a plan for continuous evaluation in the future and celebration.

Rightsizing the Academic Library Collection is an essential book for librarians working towards a plan for reducing the footprint of the physical library collection. Given the rapid nature of change in technology, education, and our everyday lives, many people have clung to the idea of the “traditional library” as that entity that can’t or shouldn’t change. We have expanded our electronic resources holdings to meet the needs of today’s patrons, but we need to be open to the new vision of libraries as places for knowledge creation, collaboration, and interactive learning. Using the tools that are provided in this book can help any library move forward to reduce physical collections to allow more space for this new vision.

My only issue with this work would be, when comparing the amount of coverage given to journal and book de-selection, journal de-selection should be covered much more in-depth. Coverage for “rightsizing” book collections is covered but to a lesser extent. Unfortunately, for many of us the struggles that we have are with “rightsizing” our book collections not with journal de-selection. My hope is that after more librarians use the tools and suggestions within this book, more libraries will share their workflows for “rightsizing” their book collections so that we can eventually create a best practice that we all can adapt and use to address the uniqueness that each library has within their library collections. Also, finding ways for libraries to do this in-house without the cost of a consultant would be of great benefit to smaller libraries that cannot afford a consultant to provide the necessary data analysis.

Ward provides a great tool for librarians and libraries to plan and complete a “rightsizing” project. I hope readers of this book will take away that “rightsizing” does not mean libraries and librarians devalue books or that somehow we are abandoning one of our essential functions, to preserve scholarship, but that as academic libraries it is essential to evaluate and remove materials that are no longer helpful and accurate from our library collections for the sake of our students and faculty.

Ward is Head, Collection Management, at Purdue University Libraries in West Lafayette. This is her second book about collection management; she previously published *A Guide to Implementing and Managing Patron-Driven Acquisitions* for ALCTS.