

The extreme searcher's internet handbook: a guide for the serious researcher. Randolph Hock. Medford, NJ: Cyberage Books (an imprint of Information Today, Inc.) 2010. 3rd ed. 339 pp. ISBN 978-0-910965-84-2 (pbk) US\$24.95.

Indexers, being generalists either by instinct, training or both, will find this book *extremely* useful! I use this word deliberately lest anyone think that the title refers solely to highly computer literate researchers. Ran Hock has written a user friendly and practical reference book for the general reader. He covers the topic in depth, clarifying nuances and introducing us to advanced techniques without getting us confused with overly technical language.

True to its title, this book covers an extremely broad range of information pertinent to serious researchers of the internet. And since serious users can be experienced or beginners, indexers and others of all levels of skill should find this book a worthwhile acquisition. Even the chapter on 'Finding products online', which may sound less immediately relevant, has practical applications for catalogue indexers.

The timeline at the beginning of the book provides a useful reminder of the sequence of web developments, and an informative history of how we have arrived at the present stage of technological advancement. If it all started after you had left school and when you were focused on your professional life, then it is interesting to learn exactly what happened when. If you are college age, then this is truly a history lesson clarifying what has taken place in your own experience. Already nearly one out of every four people in the world is an internet user, including 650 million people in Asia. Suggestions to guides to finding historical (pre-1991) information are covered in the early chapters. Ancient writings, technical journals, newspapers, internet archives, nothing is beyond your reach from this book.

The author divides 'finding tools' into 'general directories,' 'search engines' and 'specialized directories,' according to the increasing levels of complexity of the search. Directories are useful when the searcher has something very general in mind, whereas search engines prove more practical when specificity is required. If in doubt, start with a web directory. Included are practical tips on when to use quotation marks and when to use commas; when to use 'AND' and when 'OR'. Examples of directories cover all English language sources, as well as many other languages. It is truly global.

Two chapters are devoted to the subject of search engines, examining both basics and specifics, with explanations in layman's terms of such terminology as 'crawlers', 'metatags', and 'relevance-ranking', as well as: search options, phrases, titles, sites, links, language, 'by date', and 'metasites'; and, if 'Boolean search option' is likely to stall you, then there is clarification for the visually dependent in the form of an excellent figure. Hock also includes detailed profiles of the top search engines, Google, Yahoo!, Bing, and ask.com.

There follows a discussion of a variety of alternative interactive sources, such as discussion groups, forums, and newsgroups. In a world where we are now told our manners by 'Big Brother' on public transport systems, it is not surprising to find a few words on 'internet etiquette'. Most readers will be familiar with the points raised here, but nevertheless they are a useful reminder especially if you are not familiar with the latest terminology, e.g. the meaning of 'flaming' in this context!

We probably all have our favourite dictionaries and encyclopedia, but Hock gives a lengthy list of online sources that would be cost prohibitive for most of us to consider in book form, not to mention

utterly impractical given the size of our homes. Should you need maps, weather information, the Bible, Emily Post, Gray's Anatomy, zip codes, stock quotes, statistics, these and many more are at your finger tips here. And the list is global in its coverage.

Having covered searches for 'words', Hock turns to 'images', 'audio' and 'video', prefaced with a warning on copyright issues.

News resources being complex and extensive, Hock suggests the researcher think of whether they are looking for breaking stories, past events or automatic updates. Sources cover every country and include household names such as Reuters and the BBC as well as many lesser known sites of newsprint, radio, and television.

The final chapters discuss finding products and self-publishing online. And if that is not enough help, there is a glossary of terms for those of us more technically challenged and a useful URL list by chapter.

If you have insufficient time or inclination to browse online or in the book for what you are looking for, there is an excellent index (by Candace Hyatt) to lead you straight to your information – as one would expect from this publisher with prime contacts in the indexing world.

The layout of the book provides ample margin space for readers' notes, and many sample screens, tips and brief tables of comparative advantages. This is a "user friendly" text. There is a website solely for readers of the book with convenient links saving laborious copying of URLs. Questions in bold font followed by answers in easy-to-read paragraphs add to the ease of using this book. With the rapid pace of technological change, and the challenge of facing up to an infinite array of research topics, this is a highly practical reference book.

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