

H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



The Internet Directory, Version 2.0. Fawcett Columbine.

Reviewed by Robert Hawk Geeslin

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User Level: Beginner to Advanced <p> Braun (or Harris-Braun), does a good job of collecting, categorizing, and indexing thousands of entries, many cross-referenced when a resource needs listings under various headings. Before the World Wide Web explosion of 1996, the internet's greatest resources were the Newsgroups and the Mailing Lists with Online Library catalogs beginning to emerge as a resource of value. E-mail, of course, is ubiquitous in a discussion of the net, yet the author takes some care, in the introduction, to differentiate "communications" from "connections." He devotes three pages to e-mail, tacks on mailing lists and newsgroups in another page, and devotes less than a page to Talk and IRC, combined—as he should. Users of the resources covered in the book will not need the commands for using IRC, nor the addresses of the servers. They will need to be fluent with e-mail. <p> "Connections" includes Telnet, FTP and Archie, Gopher and Veronica, and WAIS. The World Wide Web gets a page, but the capacities of servers and browsers now in use were not even guessed at when this volume went to press. The author devotes over five pages to Netiquette, ending the Introduction with the admonition, "Don't e-mail your password to anyone for any reason." <p> The body of the reference material is categorized by subject, with subcategories, and resource types listed under them, so "Education" has subcategories like "Administration," "Home Schooling," and "Journals." Under the subcategory "Journals," Academe This Week, a Website, and Interpersonal Computing and Technology, an E-Journal based on Listserv technology, are the two listings. A listing begins with a sequential reference number, followed by the name, a brief description and the methods of access. Listserv instructions for subscribing are included for e-zines, e-journals, and other resources which are, at their root, listservs. E-mail addresses of list owners, zine

and journal publishers, and like contacts, are given. Continuing the example, the listing for the IC & T Journal shows the subscription information, Zane Berge's email address, and the gopher site for the archives. That's pretty complete. <p> After 10,182 resources are listed and cross referenced (where appropriate), the author introduces Online Public Access Catalogs with instructions on using the common commands for the menu and search systems. Some 1,400 library systems are then identified, alphabetically by name, with telnet instructions for logging on. No attempt is made to give information on the major holdings or special purposes of the collections. <p> The alphabetical index is 100 pages, and the book is readable, albeit printed on newsprint. <p> Contents: The CD-ROM <p> Additional information is available on the CD about many of the sites. The following excerpts, taken from the book and the CD-ROM, will illustrate how much additional information has been added: <p> The Book: <blockquote> 4216 BR Cafe: Book Review Cafe: place for kids to discuss what they're reading. Mailing List, moderated. (http, gopher, email, and archive information follow). </blockquote><p> The CD: <blockquote> 4216 BR Cafe: BR Cafe welcomes K-12 students' messages of two kinds: those requesting an individual with whom to discuss a book or discussion of the book itself for the general forum discussion. In order to participate in discussions, or simply to post a request for a book-reading e-pal, you must subscribe to the BR Cafe list. When you provide your subscription request, it is sent to the list moderator, who checks your e-mail address against those who have submitted reviews to the BR Review list. If found, you will be manually added to the list of BR Cafe subscribers. If not found, you will be asked to provide a book review for the BR_Review list. In other words, you provide a book review as your "ticket" into the book conversations in BR Cafe. Mail-

ing List, moderated. </blockquote> Since the book is as large and as heavy as a portable computer and since the real information is on the CD, why cut the trees? The CD is the real product. <p> The Promise: <p> Registered users of the printed and CD-ROM version have access to the entire contents of the CD and any future additions and updates at the Random House Web Site (<http://randomhouse.com>). <p> If you need the information, I suggest you buy just the CD-ROM. <p>

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