

**Hans M. Zell, ed..** *The African Publishing Companion: A Resource Guide*. Glais Bheinn, Scotland: Hans Zell Publishing Consultants, 2002. xi + 246 pp. \$130.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-9541029-0-6.



**Reviewed by** Gretchen Walsh

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## Not Just for Publishers

*The African Publishing Companion: A Resource Guide* is a reference work for publishers, librarians, and researchers that was published in 2001; it is updated and supplemented by an online version available to individuals and libraries that own the print version. It features a number of directories: African publishers' email and Web addresses; book trade and allied associations; book development councils and other book promotional bodies; reproduction rights organizations; authors' and writers' associations; organizations, donor agencies, and networks supporting African publishing and book development; principal dealers and distributors of African books (outside Africa); major booksellers/library and educational suppliers in Africa; African book fairs and other book promotional events; book industry training courses and training institutions; and African book and literary awards. The section on "Schemes, Book Series, and Other Projects Supporting African Book and Journal Publishing" goes beyond a bare-bones directory by supplying

extensive introductory matter about the organizations listed.

In addition, bibliographic citations are given for books-in-print, bibliographic, and other reference tools; journals and magazines/book review outlets; sources for African book publishing statistics and publishing capacity; a guide for researching African publishing; a bibliography of main issues and topics in African publishing; and a chronology of key dates in the development of indigenous African publishing. The print version has an index, while the online version is searchable.

Hans Zell is a name that should need no introduction to those with an interest in African publishing. Long a publisher of high quality reference works and tools that serve publishers, libraries, and researchers alike, such as *African Books in Print*, *African Book and World Press*, and the quarterly *African Book Publishers Review*, Zell has written on the development of publishing in Africa, and was a major impetus to the founding of the African Books Collective, a consortium of

African publishers formed to market African books more effectively outside of Africa.

This book and its online companion are aimed at a mixed audience: African and other publishers, librarians seeking ways of adding African publications to their collections, and researchers of the African book trade and publishing industry. Mixed as it is, this is still a relatively limited potential readership, and any book aimed at such a small group is likely to have problems finding a sufficient market to succeed. In reality, this work is so useful to such a broad spectrum of readers that it should be on the shelf of every library and every research institute office.

#### Note

Purchase of *The African Publishing Companion* includes access to the online version, regularly updated: <http://www.africanpublishingcompanion.com>.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at <https://networks.h-net.org/h-africa>

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