

## BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

**The Extreme Searcher's Internet Handbook: A Guide for the Serious Searcher.** By Randolph Hock 4th ed. Melford: CyberAge Books; 2013. Softcover: 344 pages. ISBN: 978-1-937290-02-3. Price: USD\$24.95. Available from: <http://infotoday.stores.yahoo.net/extreme-searcher-4th-edition.html>

Randolph (Ran) Hock has worked as a reference librarian at MIT and Pennsylvania University and as an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University. He has written numerous books on using the Internet, and currently provides Internet training courses through his company, Online Strategies. The 4th edition of *The Extreme Searcher's Internet Handbook* comprises 10 chapters and includes a glossary, resource list, and a link to a companion website <http://extremesearcher.com/index.html>. This book lends itself to cover-to-cover reading for novice searchers, while those with more experience can consult individual chapters as needed. Occasional screenshots break up, and complement, the text, and tip boxes help searchers to determine when to use various types of search tools (e.g., a directory versus a search engine). The book contains a wealth of information beyond searching including capturing and editing images, storing and sharing photos, social and time management features, services of search engines (e.g., Google+, Calendar, etc.), and participating and publishing online. The 4th edition contains updated website descriptions from the previous edition, and includes new sections discussing recall and precision and fact checking.

The first chapters provide a chronology of the Internet and web and introduce the reader to basic categories of tools to search for content including directories and search engines. Hock presents a step-by-step method for approaching a search. He explains search commands including Boolean operators, prefixes, and wildcards; shares tips for web content evaluation; and broaches the topic of ethical use of information. Next, readers are taken on an extensive tour of four search engines: Google, Bing, Yahoo!, and Ask.com, describing advanced search features, providing examples of when a searcher might employ these, and alerting readers to potential limitations in search functions. Google is given a lot of attention; the author contrasts operations that can be done using advanced search features versus using the default search box and introduces the reader to the range of tools this major search engine has to offer. Given the volume of information in this section, a quick reference sheet for using major search engines would be a welcome addition.

An interesting discovery I made while working through this section was that using the resource options immediately below the search box in Google leads to a range of additional search tools specific to each resource type.

For example, if I search for “labyrinthitis” then click on Videos to narrow the search, I can then click on Search Tools to further narrow my results by duration, closed captioned, etc. If you narrow the same initial search to Books as a resource type, then click on Search Tools, you are presented with a different set of filters.

The next chapters lead the reader through searching a range of internet resources including discussion groups and forums, online reference sources on a range of subjects, multimedia (images, video, and audio), and news resources. A chapter on finding commercial products includes a section on finding product evaluations and shopping safely online. The final chapter is devoted to contributing content online using social networking sites, blogs and photo sharing sites, podcasting, and creating a website.

The author uses nontechnical language and analogy (e.g., locating an item by browsing in a department store versus asking a sales associate) to introduce and explain searching concepts. Some similar information appears in more than one chapter, which is of benefit to individuals electing to read select chapters; more novice searchers may also appreciate the reinforcement of concepts that have been introduced in earlier sections of the book. Resource descriptions generally indicate whether the resource is free or fee based. Some subscription-based products described in detail by Hock (e.g., Silobreaker, a subscription-based news resource site) may be inaccessible to readers, so screenshots would be helpful in those cases.

Because *The Extreme Searcher's Internet Handbook* covers a wide range of websites and touches on numerous topics, not surprisingly only a smattering of health resources are mentioned (Health Finder, Medline Plus, AMA's doctor finder, and the Yahoo! health section), and no discussion is specifically geared to searching for health information. Written and published in the United States, the content tends to be US-focused (e.g., doctor finder list from the American Medical Association, US statistics, Pandora for music), so searchers looking for Canadian or other non-US sources of information may find the geographic scope of resource lists somewhat limited.

There are a few aspects related to searching that would have been nice to see included: (i) a discussion of privacy issues related to internet searching including how to manage privacy settings and examples of search engines that do not track user search activity (e.g., Duck Duck Go); (ii) linking content from the chapter on publishing and participating online back to searching (e.g., providing tips for tagging photos or setting up blog preferences to enhance their findability); and (iii) given the prevailing interest in free images, movies, and music, more attention to the usage rights search feature in Google's Advanced Image search page and to describing freely available

sources for audio and video (e.g., Crackle, Sound Cloud, Internet Archive, Open Culture, TV Void) would be helpful.

*The Extreme Searcher's Internet Handbook* is promoted as a resource that offers something for both novice and more experienced searchers. Novice searchers and those with moderate experience in searching will find this book useful for building an awareness of a range of internet search tools, expanding their search beyond the Google search box.

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