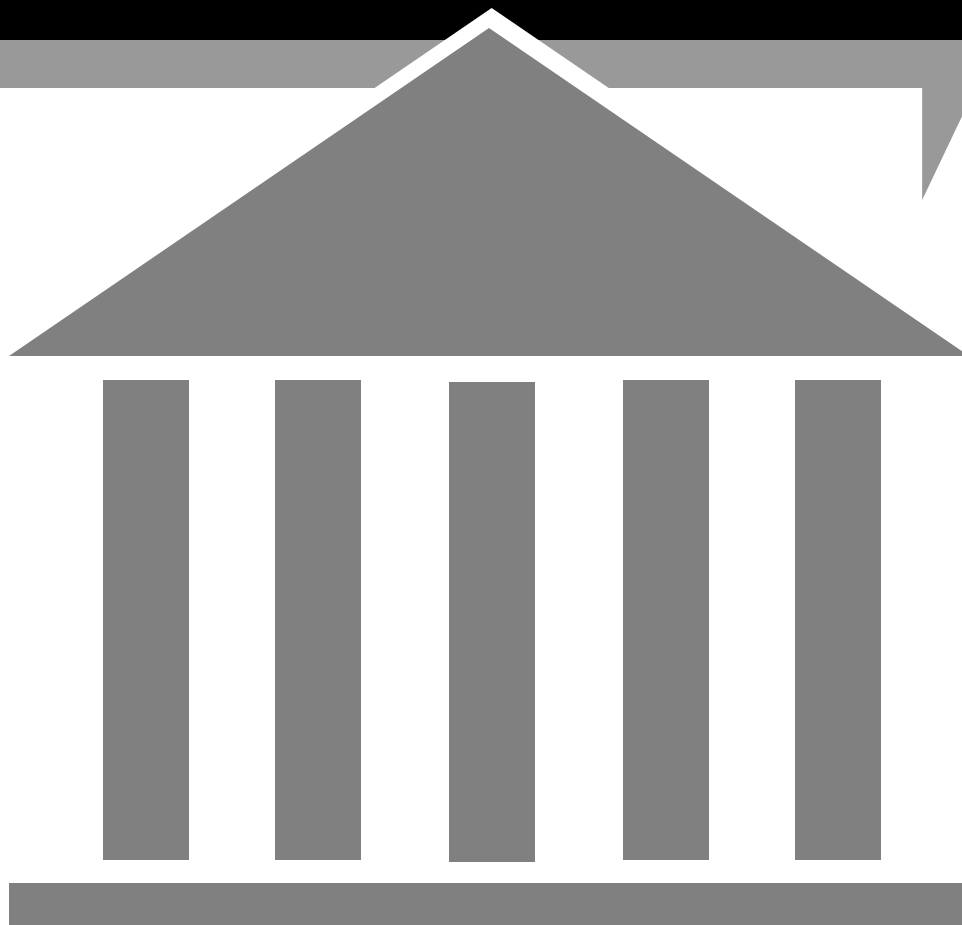




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Resources





DEAN'S DIGITAL WORLD

By Dean Tudor

Searching on the Internet: Hear the Latest

As readers will remember, one of my favourite researchers on the Internet is Tara Calashain. She is the author of "Google Hacks", which I reviewed here last time. She's also the owner of ResearchBuzz, a damn good site, which keeps up with the latest happenings on the Internet vis-à-vis web searches and resources. Her domain is www.researchbuzz.com. You can sign up for a free weekly newsletter and you can have lots of access to plenty of archives.

In many ways, Tara keeps Google up-to-date with her user searches and her explanations. She constantly reviews new techniques for finding stuff through Ask Jeeves, Yahoo, Libraries and Media. Just recently, she did a thorough analysis of free E-mail accounts at Gmail, Hotmail and Yahoo. She also has free PDFs for download, which attempt to keep her books and discourses up-to-date. One example of a PDF is "Seven Ways to Save Time Searching"; another is "Things That Yahoo and Google Can't Do". Brilliant material. Through her column, I found out about the metasearch for Trademark Regulations at www.marken-business.com. Here you can search for US, Canadian, Mexican, WIPO, EU trademarks. A great boon for due diligence searchers.

Her latest book is *Web Search Garage* (Prentice-Hall, 2005, 236 pages, ISBN 0-13-147148-1, \$28.99 paper covers) which was released in August 2004. Unfortunately, Prentice-Hall has fallen victim to the insidious trick of forward dating the copyright notice (here, 2005) in an attempt to promote the book's currency. Shame, shame... Tara wrote her first book about the Internet in 1996; this is now her third or fourth. It is mainly about

both how to frame queries and where the answers can be found. The table of contents show chapters describing search engines and their characteristics, plus browser capabilities (but nothing on Mozilla's Firefox, which came out too late for inclusion in this book). She has a

huge section on the "principles of searching" – ten of them, helping you find what you need faster. These principles of Internet search present strategies to do your searching efficiently, no matter what search engine or other search resources you're using.

She tells how to narrow searches to get a manageable number of results, while still finding what you want, to find experts and preexisting research for the topics in which you're interested, how to evaluate search resources for credibility, how to discover new resources and search engines relevant to the topics in which you're interested.

In addition, people use the Internet for about ten common search scenarios. She thus covers jobs, genealogy, people, audio-visual graphics and images, local information, medical information and drugs, kid-safe searches, purchases (consumers), ready reference, and, of course, news. The book has a nice layout, with chunks of information and sidebars somewhat like Dummy books. There is an index.

Certainly one New Yorker could use Internet searches. Earlier this year, an artist created a mosaic of historical figures for a public library in Livermore, California. Unfortunately, there were 11 misspellings, such as Eistein, Shakespere, Michaelangelo, and Van Gough. At first, the artist refused to correct the mistakes, even at city expense. But then she did, even though she felt put upon and suggested that complaints were directed at her



because she had made money for doing the commission.

Another of my favourite researchers on the Internet is free-lance librarian Marylaine Block, who writes a column called “The Finder’s Keepers” for *The CyberSkeptic’s Guide to Internet Research*. Her domain Web site has full details <marylaine.com>. She also puts out a free weekly newsletter Neat New Stuff (over 7500 subscribers; details at her Web site) which comments on new Web sites and their developments. She has ExLibris, an e-zine for librarians and other information junkies. ExLibris is more narrative, with interviews of other Web searchers and researchers, points of view on the Internet, and search strategies. Both these services have permanent archives at her site. She has good notes on how to analyze Web sites, and I would like to paraphrase them:

- ▶ look for an “about this site” page; this should explain the purpose, scope, sponsor, funding, credits. The Internet is all about trust and credibility.
- ▶ look for some element of selection criteria applied to any section of links. (In my own opinion, too many links are merely reciprocal).
- ▶ look for a site map or index for a sense of structure, of how to satisfy both searchers and browsers.
- ▶ look for navigation bars with some sort of topical outlines.
- ▶ look for primary functions, such as “original content” or a unique means of access, or “archives” or “directory” or “links”. Does it use any metasearch engines?
- ▶ drill your way through every topic in the navigation bars, checking to see if they are logical or related or both. Is the navigation intuitive and transparent?
- ▶ check on the currency of dates and the unbroken links.
- ▶ look for different services (e.g., different search engines) being provided to different communities (e.g., browsers, searchers, members, hobbyists).
- ▶ look for the unusual but informative linkages, which probably are hidden or buried; these may need to be highlighted.
- ▶ for heavy duty analysis, try running searches throughout the Web site and through the larger search engines such as Google, to see what can be traced.
- ▶ also for heavy duty analysis, keep a paper trail by either printing out a record of what you’ve done or saving screen shots to a folder.
- ▶ ask yourself questions: would I find what I need at this site? and would I find it easily?

The problem of forward dating has not yet reared its ugly head on the Internet, and logically there is no real need for it since currency is immediate and not fixed in print as a book can be. But I just got a couple of books from Wiley, a text publisher that uses forward dating. In the book business, information is fixed in print, chiseled in stone. There is no way to change it without re-printing the whole book. The matter is exacerbated by having to close off the book at some point so that it can be printed and indexed. It still takes a couple of months for an indexed book to be printed and released through the delivery systems. Add to this the forward dating concept and at some point, the book is going to be out-of-date in terms of its copyright notice.

One such book I got was *Canada: Year in Review 2004* from the Canadian Press and John Wiley (163 pages, ISBN 0-470-83529-X, \$18.99 paper covers). It is edited by Patti Tasko of CP. The overview topics includes politics, regions of Canada, business and finance, sports, crime, health and science, lifestyles, Canada on the international scene, arts and entertainment, obituaries, and oddities (why this?). There are lots of colour photos, all of which can be ordered separately (see the last page of the book). But the text and photos cover just to the beginning of September, at least for Olympic pictures and TIFF in Toronto. No specific dates are mentioned, just the month. There is no coverage for the last four months of 2004, nor is there any coverage for the last four months of 2003. That at least would have made a year or twelve months of coverage. Missing then are topics such as the sub Chicoutimi, the NHL lockout, the Giller prize, the US election’s impact on Canada. The book looks as if it was meant for schools and libraries. No index, of course. But at least the book was copyrighted for 2004.

Another Wiley book is *Canadian Global Almanac 2005 Edition* (912 pages, ISBN 0-470-83523-0, \$18.99 paper covers), an annual of some distinction. Almanacs are generally published with the date in their title, a date for which they can be USED, and not the coverage date. This almanac has “all the facts you need about Canada and the World”. There are 37 more pages than the 2004 edition, but the price has been increased by three dollars. It has all things Canadian, with lots of data squeezed into small print: economy, entertainment, famous Canadians, geography, government and politics, statistics, science, sports, plus global and world events. The current events for 2004 section has been moved ahead in the book, but it is still actually just October 1 (2003) through September 30 (2004). Thus, no Chicoutimi, no Gillers, no US election. It does mention specific dates. And, sadly, the copyright date is 2005. For what it is, I can highly recommend the book to every researcher, for its bargain price. But it is a shame to see a forward dated copyright notice; there is no valid reason for this. Indeed, it borders on unethical.

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From the
EDITORS' ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

A Misbegotten Myth

By Dyanne Rivers

Some years ago, while editing a college-level grammar textbook for ESL students, I found myself in hand-to-hand combat with the author over the use of *gotten*. British-born and -educated, she had flagged this past participle of *get* as substandard usage. In her view, *got* was the only acceptable past form.

I disagreed, though I wasn't surprised by her stand. This wasn't the first time I had encountered this attitude toward *gotten*. Like split infinitives and dangling prepositions, *gotten* is unfairly — and unnecessarily — condemned by some English speakers. Its use is particularly frowned on in the United Kingdom, where, like the author I was dealing with, some people mistakenly believe that it is incorrect.

This is odd, because at one time, *gotten* and *got* were equally common in British English. Indeed, the *-en* past-participle ending is a time-honoured Old English form that continues to exist in words such as *proven*, *broken*, *bitten*, *stolen* and *known*.

Nevertheless, by the seventeenth century, *got* was starting to prevail in Britain. By then, however, British colonists had begun to arrive in North America — and had brought *gotten* with them. Though the word was gradually falling out of favour in Britain, its use in North America remained vibrant, and both Canadian and American usage commentators maintain that it's perfectly acceptable, especially in informal contexts.

But why did *gotten* fall from grace in Britain? The reasons are obscure. The 1965 edition of *Fowler's Modern English Usage*, for example, labelled the word "archaic and affected." Is it possible that this comment morphed into the popular myth that *gotten* is substandard, even vulgar?

No matter. This attitude is changing, and nothing indicates this more vividly than the latest version of the venerable *Fowler*, which has pulled in its horns on

the use of *gotten*. It says, "Nothing points more clearly to the North Americanness of a person than the ability to use the [past participle] forms *got* and *gotten* in a natural manner." It goes on to acknowledge that the British aversion to *gotten* is curious, especially when *begotten*, *forgotten* and *ill-gotten* — words derived from the same root — remain firmly rooted in the everyday vocabulary of British people.

But what is this North American ability to use *got* and *gotten* in a "natural manner"? Here, Fowler is referring to the distinction in meaning between the two words, for they are not synonyms in North America. If I say, "I've got a computer," I mean that I have a computer in my possession. But if I say, "I've gotten a computer," I mean that I have obtained or acquired a computer. For North Americans, making this distinction in meaning is instinctive.

North Americans also tend to use *gotten* when they want to indicate a progression. In these cases, it is often used as synonym for *become*. I might say, for example, "I've gotten used to doing exercises every morning," whereas someone raised in the U.K. is more likely to say, "I've got used to doing exercises every morning."

My defence of "gotten" doesn't mean that I endorse this word wholeheartedly. In fact, I have the same reservations about it as I do about *get*. These

reservations have nothing to do with the correctness of *get*; it is perfectly good English. Rather, they have to do with the overuse of this word, which has become ubiquitous. Listen to any news broadcast and you'll hear *get* used over and over in situations where smoother and more serviceable word choices would convey the meaning far more energetically and precisely. In these situations, using *get* amounts to a kind of linguistic sloth, a reluctance to stretch the imagination and reach for a more polished word.

But I digress. The fact remains that *gotten* has definitely gotten a bad rap and should never be unthinkingly eliminated in favour of *got*.

And for those who are wondering about the upshot of my debate with the British-born author, not only did she agree to drop the note about *gotten*, but also our time in opposing trenches forged a bond that remains strong to this day.

Dyanne Rivers is a freelance editor and a member of the Toronto branch of the Editors' Association of Canada. This article was adapted from a usage column she writes for the association's national newsletter. For more information about the Editors' Association of Canada, please see their listing in this issue of Sources.



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From the
CANADIAN SCIENCE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

Communicating Health Information

By Guenther Krueger

There is a fine line between irrational panic and justified fear. This is certainly something that was evident during the SARS crisis. Communicating health information remains a sensitive and complicated task. How the facts are presented and which aspects are highlighted can become important determinants of how things become interpreted or misinterpreted.

While the fears may have been irrational, so were some of the comparisons. Attempting to calm people's frayed nerves about SARS by explaining that more people die of influenza or positioning the numbers in the context of deaths worldwide probably did little good. When people read they relate it to themselves, not what is happening globally, or even nationally.

Actual clarity was often missing from the stories. When writing about health issues it's important to explain terminology along with charts, diagrams and sidebars that give factual information. Knowledge of the truth is reassuring, not mumbo jumbo about how SARS is "sweeping Asia".

So how to get the facts? When asking about research or epidemiological patterns, ask the questions of the researcher who conducted or is responsible for the study, or who presented the findings. Frequently these days PR people handle the media giving the story an instant spin, or worse, false reassurance. The best person to synthesize the results of whatever you're interested in is the person who carried out the work. Go to the source.

If you are unclear of what to ask, then say so. Asking what the take-home message is, what the implications are for other health professionals, and what individual members of the public need to understand are straightforward but legitimate questions. If you don't understand it, neither will your reader.

If the logic is unclear, others won't follow your arguments. The key is to be clear without being patronizing and knowledgeable without being pedantic.

Fitting research findings into a context or timeline is also useful. How will this play out or where things are moving can help gain perspective. However, projections, even when made by experts, are often fuzzy because health



and disease are complex, elusive, and relative constructs. How people become ill is not nearly as well understood as is generally believed. No one knew for sure how SARS would play out, but many predictions were accurate.

In fact, disease is related to many factors, including genetic predisposition or heredity, socioeconomic factors, the strength of the immune system, diet, lifestyle factors such as drinking, smoking, rest, and exercise, exposure to viruses, bacteria, and parasites, along with age, sex and psychological variables. Simple, single factors such as exposure to an organism may not cause anything all by itself. It might, but we don't really understand the process.

As a knowledgeable journalist covering health issues you should be familiar with some key concepts. You should understand the scientific approach by which a problem is defined, a hypothesis or question is raised, deductive reasoning is applied, the hypothesis is test-

ed through collection and analysis of data, and finally, the hypothesis is confirmed or rejected.

If you are writing about pharmaceuticals, you should understand the clinical trial process, the scientific way in which agents or procedures are tested to ensure safety and effectiveness. Methods are compared, often using a placebo or sham treatment that makes objective measurements possible. There is also a phase process where, for example, pharmaceuticals move from the laboratory, into animals, then into selected individuals, and finally into widespread use.

The more you understand about research design, the more comfortable you will be in looking at scientific studies and analyzing where potential problems might arise. Of course, few of us have the background and expertise to determine whether appropriate statistical inferences were made and whether the general study design is robust and wellconstructed. Even professionals hire statisticians to do the number crunching. But asking the right questions is the journalist's prerogative and skillfully done can get the right information.

There are many ways to improve your understanding of reporting on health matters. These include reference texts, internet search skills, and the use of solid journalistic techniques to get the story right. And getting it right can make a big impact, especially when people are anxious for proper facts.

Guenther Krueger is a freelance writer living in Burnaby BC, and member of the CSWA. He is currently pursuing doctoral studies.

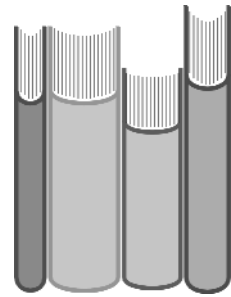
For more information about the Canadian Science Writers' Association, please see their listing in this issue of Sources.

B O O K R E V I E W S

BOOKS OF INTEREST

Reviewed by Dean Tudor

Reference Books

**New Words**

Orin Hargraves, Editor

Oxford University Press
2004, 320 pages, \$29.95,
ISBN 0-19-517282-5

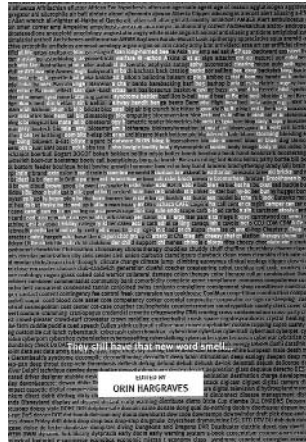
The dust jacket proudly proclaims, "They still have that new word smell...". Maybe so, but you would have to go to the new food words to really find the smells. These new food words are simply foreign words entering the English language (and not made up, brand "new" words): adobo, broccoli rabe, capellini, enoki, huevos rancheros, and puttanesca. They are all listed in this book, as examples of the globalization of food leading from our consumption of "fusion" (this word is found in the book) food.

Hargraves has been a lexicographer for the past 15 years, working for all of the major dictionary publishers at one time or another. He is the author of *Mighty Fine Words and Smashing Expressions* (Oxford UP), a guide to the differences between US and UK words.

The format in this present book is largely the same as in dictionaries. For each of 2500 words, there is entry, syllabification, pronunciation, examples, derivatives, etymology, grammar, phrases, cross-references, citation to a printed source. Phrases are also included.

In fact, some phrases here are not really new. "Bridge mix" has been around forever it seems (a candy treat was named after the phrase), as has "Dixie Cup" and "barf bag" and "guest book". His rationale for inclusion is that these phrases had fallen through the cracks at the major dictionary publishers' offices, and thus they are actually missing from standard reference works.

Some words need further explanation, such as the definition for "acid reflux" (a condition that also happens when one is sleeping, not just after a meal) and "access charge" or "access fee" (also employed by ATMs and their



bank networks but not noted as such by Hargraves since he just mentions telephone networks).

As you can see, I just looked at the beginnings of "A", so there may be other deficiencies in explanations. I checked out a few food entries as well. The book has a topical index, with broad subject headings such as "Arts and Music", "Computing", "Law and Politics", lifestyle, medicine, society, religion, science, sports, and, of course "Food and Clothing" (a strange combination, unless you consider the fact that we are always spilling food on our clothes).

The trick here is where to draw the line, since food is still full of regionalisms. The cuisine of the day seems to be Mexican and Italian, with a foray into Asian. Even so, a local (Cajun) dish such as "dirty rice" is supposed to contain giblets. Hargraves only notes chicken livers; this is another example of incompleteness.

"Internet" has made it into the big books, but "Intranet" has apparently not.

Some words are dubious choices, such as "office park dad" and its abbreviation "OPD". I asked around, and nobody I know in Toronto has ever heard the phrase. However, they have now, so the book is effective in promulgating change.

Audience or interest level: libraries, word hounds, journalists looking for story ideas.

Some interesting facts: "We have included in this dictionary only the new senses of a word, but in the cases where the new sense makes little sense without reference to an older one, both the original and the newer sense are defined here".

What I don't like about this resource: the topical index has no running heads, so you don't know what subject you are in as you turn the pages. There are also no cross-references, such as "Music see Arts and Music". In addition, the short bibliography only refers to Oxford UP books!

What I do like about this resource: there is a short essay on the coining of new words.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 90**

**The Red Pages: Toronto
Website Directory
2004/2005 West**

www.redto.com

2004, 541 pages plus, \$9.95,
ISBN 0-9735655-0-0 paper covers

This is a nice idea, being an A – Z subject listing like the yellow pages (with advertising) classified sections. However, it is mostly the yellow pages with an URL, i.e., it has the name, address, and phone number of a company plus its URL and (very rarely) an E-mail address. The book could have been a lot thinner, and perhaps more useful, if it just had the URLs. We all know where the addresses and phone numbers are: just give us the URLs. For URLs, we already have Google in the form of Froogle. Therefore, like the yellow pages, you can let your mouse do the walking for browsing at Froogle. To plump up the *Red Pages*, there are separate sections at the front: an events calendar, maps and bike trails, an Internet guide (omigod, another one!), reference Web sites, kids and family materials,

B O O K R E V I E W S



and a green living guide. At the rear, there are government listings. But only the reference section has a list of direct URLs. For all of the other listings in the front and back sections, you'll be redirected to the www.redto.com site. This helps to generate some traffic for RedTO.

Audience or interest level: Internet consumers

Some interesting facts: Increasingly, Canadians research online before making purchases.

What I don't like about this resource: there is no real indication of how data was gathered. Also, I don't like the excessive use of redirections.

What I do like about this resource: my free, personal copy was dropped on my doorstep in my "exclusive" neighbourhood.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio:**
useful if free, an 88.
Paid-for copies: 72.

The Oxford Companion to Canadian History

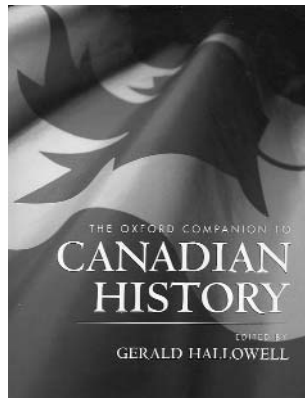
Gerald Hallowell, editor

Oxford University Press
2004, 748 pages, \$79.95,
ISBN 0-19-541559-0

Norah Story created the *Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature*, published by OUP in 1967 as a "Centennial Project". It had been updated and supplemented over the years, until the *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* appeared as a separate entity. The *OCCL* was last updated in 1997. This current book, the *OCCH*, is the first edition for a free-standing guide to Canadian history. The editor is Gerald Hallowell, former senior editor of Canadian history at University of Toronto Press, and now retired from a full-time job. He is the

excellent points man with all the contacts to produce this fine, first job.

Here are the basic details of the main events, institutions, places, and people in Canada's past. The topics appear to be politics, economy, education, religion, law, medicine, science, transportation, social and cultural events (minus the literary: see the *OCCL* for that). It has been alphabetically arranged by headword, and the scope is Aboriginal Canada, French Canada, and the English. Obvious Canadian entries here include "residential schools". There are 527 contributors, and 1654 entries, all signed, but with very few cross-references in the headwords (e.g., "marriage see courtship and marriage"). Internal cross-references are indicated by an asterisk. No entries under "X", but "Z" has two: "zombies" (Canadians conscripted for domestic service) and



"zouaves" (Canadian volunteers who defended the papacy 1865-1870).

To keep the size of the book manageable, the editor decided to have no listing of sources, not even a general bibliography.

There are several sections of lists in the end material: national anthems are listed (although you must go to the headword "national anthem" to read a history of all the changes), Prime Ministers and Premiers, Governor-Generals (mysteriously closing off Adrienne Clarkson at 2004), monarchs, plus 10 sketch maps. The book is invaluable for people outside of Canada and non-Canadians, but otherwise Internet access will get you to its main competitor *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com) or you can even use the older CD-ROM, still important for quick data. Or, you can check the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* at www.biographi.ca.

Audience or interest level: schools,

libraries, the Internet-deprived.

Some interesting facts: There are only two paragraphs on Canadian jazz, by Mark Miller, with no asterisks or other cross-references within the entry.

What I don't like about this resource: there is nothing under "snow", which could be a place for an interesting discussion (there is a John Snow and snowmobile in the index).

What I do like about this resource: a first-rate book for tracking origins, in print form, with an extensive index.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 88.**

The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature

Eva-Marie Kroller, editor.

Cambridge University Press
2004, 291 pages, \$30 ?,

ISBN 0-521-89131-0 paper covers

This is one of a huge, long series in the Cambridge Companion to Literature sets. All of the books specialize in thematic essays with indexes rather than in the handbook style used by the companions produced at the "other" British academic publisher. This book — a first edition — becomes a readable introduction to the major writers, genres, and topics in CanLit.

Here are broad surveys of fiction, drama, and poetry, Aboriginal writings, Francophone writings, autobiography, literary criticism, writing by women, urban writing, nature writing, travel writing, and short fiction. There are 12 named contributors, including the editor (she's at UBC); most of them are academics teaching in Canada, while others teach in the UK, Australia, and USA. There are copious endnotes and a concluding bibliography. The index is mostly to personal names.

Audience or interest level: libraries, scholars, students, writers.

Some interesting facts: "A long-time British observer of the Booker Prize concluded that the Canadians' success was not so much a national achievement as it was part and parcel of the Commonwealth's triumph over British metropolitan culture".

What I don't like about this resource: as with most of the series, it is only a brief overview.

What I do like about this resource: there is a chronology and a timeline.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 92.**

B O O K R E V I E W S

Computer Books

Net Crimes & Misdemeanors: outmaneuvering the spammers, swindlers, and stalkers who are targeting you online

J.A. Hitchcock

Information Today, Inc.
2002, 359 pages, \$24.95US,
ISBN 0-910965-57-9 paper covers

J.A. Hitchcock is not related to Alfred. Rather, she is an Internet crime and security expert, specializing in online harassment. She provides sound bites on cyberstalking to all the major US media outlets. You can check her out at www.jahitchcock.com.

As first published in 2002 (with older material in the manuscript), the book was dated; it has gotten worse now (no more CompuServe, no more free ZoneAlarm, higher version numbers for all the major software). Nevertheless, it serves as a useful recap, in an historical context. There are 20 chapters, which deal with themes such as: protecting one's privacy and personal security in the Internet age, stalking, harassment, identity theft, spam, online fraud, trolls, encryption, online shopping and banking, children, viruses and firewalls. Basically, it is a jungle out there. We all know that, this book confirms it for the unwary.

There are plenty of screen shots to illustrate what she lists and says. The book concludes with a glossary, a Web site list, and a directory of all the URLs mentioned (arranged by chapter).

Audience or interest level: unsuspecting Internet virgins, students, the paranoid seeking confirmation.

Some interesting facts: "People are inherently trusting, and for some reason it seems this is even more true online. A person one would never trust to do business with offline is often assumed to be honest and competent simply because he or she is online".

What I don't like about this resource: too many events have moved on in the 4 - 5 years since the book began its manuscript life.

What I do like about this resource: Chapter 20 has a collection of dos and

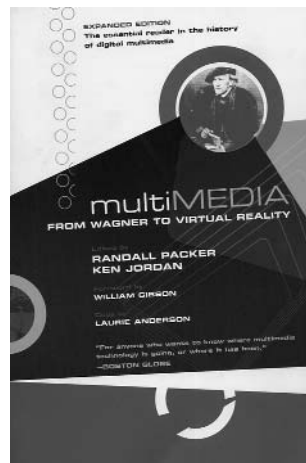
don'ts for "the basics of staying safe online". There is also an extensive index with plenty of cross-references.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio:**
given its age, about 78.

Multimedia: from Wagner to virtual reality

Randall Packer and
Ken Jordan, editors

W.W.Norton & Co.
2001, expanded in 2002. 458 pages,
\$28.99, ISBN 0-393-32375-7
paper covers



Packer is a media critic and academic. Jordan has worked in new media as an editor and administrator. This book was originally published in 2001, with a slight expansion in 2002 as a more affordable paperback, geared to the student market. It is a collection of articles, ranging from the vision of Vannevar Bush (the seminal "As We May Think"), to William Burroughs ("The Future of the Novel"), Norbert Wiener (cybernetics), Tim Berners-Lee ("Information Management"), to the performance techniques of John Cage, to Alan Kay's notebook-sized computer, to Allan Karpov's 1966 "Untitled Guidelines for Happenings" (he coined the term), William Gibson, J.C.R. Licklider's man-computer symbiosis. These major writings of the pioneers of multimedia give it all a sense of history and of context, of being a prime document.

Thirty-seven articles (more than the hardback edition) are organized on themes of multimedia integration, interactivity, hypermedia, immersion, and narrativity. Each essay is introduced by the editors and put into context. The 25-page overall introduction (plus the contextual intros before the essays) provide a really good summary of the whole field. Endnotes comprise references. There is a Web site at www.artmuseum.net/w2vr with links to texts, photos, videos, timelines, profiles on people mentioned in the book, and visual artworks.

Audience or interest level: students, artists, critics and teachers.

Some interesting facts: given the eclectic nature of this book, we're indeed lucky it was published with consecutive pagination.

What I don't like about this resource: the importance of Wagner needed more punching up, but that's just a minor quibble.

What I do like about this resource: there is actually an index, rarely seen in anthologies. This one is almost 30 pages long.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio:** 95.

User Error: Resisting Computer Culture

Ellen Rose

Between the Lines
2003, 204 pages, \$24.95,
ISBN 1-896357-79-2 paper covers

Ellen Rose holds the McCain/Aliant-Telecom Chair in Education and Multimedia at the University of New Brunswick. Her premise is that as users, we willingly grant authority to the creators of software, support materials, and the infrastructure. Her examples are as up to date as the beginning of 2003, and now this review itself will be two years later. In addition, by the time you, the reader, buy or rent the book, it may be as much as three years. Books will always be late, and out of date. That goes with the territory.

To use Rose's words, we willingly grant authority to the book publishers to create out of date information. Her topics include computer anxiety, artificial intelligence (but no mention of Eliza or

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Julia programs), intelligent agents, hackers, computer knowledge, user documentation (always good for a joke), obsolescence, software development, upgrades, and user interfaces. I'm not really sure what her point is, since users in other areas don't need to know what goes on under the hood. We don't know about internal combustion engines or VCRs either. Have you ever tried to read a car manual? Her material makes for a couple of good magazine articles, which can also be updated more frequently, too.

Audience or interest level: the curious, Luddites, technophobes seeking validation.

Some interesting facts: "As users we tend to be dismissed by software producers as error-prone and mindless, but as consumers of high-technology we seem to be highly sought after and cherished."

What I don't like about this resource: her "conclusion" chapter is all about the future: pure speculation, and inconclusive at best.

What I do like about this resource: there is a large bibliography with endnotes, although the index is mainly to personal names.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 85.**

Web Journalism: practice and promise of a new medium

James Glen Stovall

Pearson Allyn and Bacon
2004, 239 pages, \$59.95,

ISBN 0-205-35398-3 paper covers

Stovall is the faculty advisor for Dateline Alabama, the news Web site at the journalism school of the University of Alabama's College of Communi-

cation and Information Sciences (is this another merger of j-schools with library schools?). It is a journalism textbook, with "discussion and activities" at the end of each chapter. Each chapter also has chapter summaries at the top and bibliographies and notable Web sites at the end.

Stovall takes great pains to show that Web news is not just a newspaper on a screen. He concentrates on what sets the Web apart from other journalism activities, such as its capacity (virtually unlimited), immediacy, flexibility, permanency, and interactivity. And all of these using basic journalistic principles of seeking the news and presenting it in a balanced and fair manner. His good examples include visits inside MSNBC, a 24-hour web news organization. Convergence is still an issue, such as in Tampa Bay, and it is working fine if it is applied right.

But Stovall has little on archiving (there is nothing on doing it, nor on indexing, etc.), a bit on fees or subscription, little on freelancer pay rates and ownership, and absolutely nothing on RSS or XML, the "next big thing" or "killer app". It makes wonder if the copyright notice here is one of those "advanced dating" dates, and the book was physically published in early 2003.

On the positive side, Stovall has sidebars for tips and advice, generally quite good, and plenty of screen shots. Copious bibliographies and Web site listings enhance the book, as does the index. But in the end, this is an American book with American examples and themes, and no Canadian relevance, beyond the global mechanics of Web site construction and usage.

Audience or interest level: students, refresher courses, journalism schools.

Some interesting facts: "The world wide web is a news medium in the sense that all web sites need to post new information to keep visitors coming back?"

What I don't like about this resource: he calls the World Wide Web "a browser"...isn't that what IE or Netscape is?

What I do like about this resource: good examples given of how news media sites try to involve their readers.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: as a college level text, it is a pricey book in Canada, give it an 82.

Choosing and Using a News Alert Service

Robert Berkman

Information Today and Find/SVP
2004, 117 pages, \$—,
ISBN 1-57387-224-5 paper covers

Berkman is not identified in this book, but he appears to be the same Robert Berkman who has written information retrieval and reference books for the past twenty-five years or so. The date of publication here is actually August 2004, so it is really current. Overall, there are 81 pages of text; the balance is comparative tables. News alerts are E-mail messages that keep you current on any themes you tell such a service to do for you. You'll want to keep ahead of the competition, so time is of the essence. His definition: news alerts services scan and index text for subscriber's keywords, and automatically alert subscribers to those news items. The idea is not new: twenty years ago there used to be FAX alert services (in fact, *Sources* was poised to get involved at one point).

Now, text comes from all over the Web: trade journals, online news, blogs, audio-visual clips, Usenet, Web forums, Listservs, both domestic and international, and in different languages – sometimes with machine-generated translations. Usually, several thousand different news sites and sources are scanned.

For businesses, you can track news on specific companies, products, and general industry news.

The news alerts filter the vast amount of news on the web today, producing "niche news". The next step is wireless alerts for all phones: Yahoo! Mobile, AP, ABC News are already there...

The best news alerts are obviously the ones that charge a fee, or are part of a fee-based online subscription service. They can afford the resources for powerful keyword search options. So you get what you pay for. In general, RSS readers, Web page monitors, E-mail newsletters, and TOC (tables of contents) alert services are free. To get prime value, in terms of quantity, quality or depth, you must pay. It costs the news alert service money to implement its product, such as using proximity searching, and to provide customer support. Free services, which use advertis-

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ing, can only pay a few bills. Berkman reviews and compares the feature/price quality ratios of twenty news alert services, commenting on how well they performed. There are many tables and plenty of screen shots, mostly dated from 2003. There is no index, but there are lists of key business news sources.

Audience or interest level: news junkies, business people who require up to the minute ticker data.

Some interesting facts: Most of us will only want to know his findings: his top picks are Google News Alerts

(free), NetContent/Intellisearch (cheap), Dialog NewsEdge (premium) and Lexis/Nexis (also premium).

What I don't like about this resource: no ID for Berkman. Also, the Web is in a state of flux. A few news alerts had closed shop since the book began to be written.

What I do like about this resource: he notes that my old research buddies Dialog and Nexis are still around and have moved into the news alert business, still charging fees. Nothing has been able to beat them since they began

operating over a quarter of a century ago. Berkman notes some material on "specialized" news alert services that scan items such as new patent filings, recent mergers, and company filings. Most can be free, especially for sending you the announcement. If you want details, you'll need to pay a modest price.

Quality-to-Price Ratio:
if this is the usual corporate report,
as a tax-deductible expense,
give it an 85.

Media Books

Journalism: Truth or Dare

Ian Hargreaves

Oxford University Press
2003, 294 pages, \$19.95US,
ISBN 0-19-280274-7



Hargreaves is a serious-looking (from his jacket photo) journalism professor at Cardiff UK; he has held senior spots in newspapers, magazines, television and radio. This book is all about gatekeeping in journalism, yet he doesn't even mention the word (nor "Mr. Gates"). How strange...

His material covers accountability, ethics, regulation, trust, commercialization, advertising, corporate ownerships, branding, PR, dumbing down, celebrities, readership and audience, conscience, free expression and censorship, electronic publishing, and cultural identity. He believes that journalism has now moved from being the "first draft of history" to "cultural dumbing down". A good example of this (not used in the book) is Paris Hilton, who the media

was all over: she is famous for just being famous.

Although he uses examples from everywhere, the book is British-based. The first forty pages are devoted to history, there are eclectic illustrations, which seem to have no real purpose, and while there are endnotes, there is no bibliography. The section on films about journalism ignores "Absence of Malice" (1981) and "The Paper" (1994). Convergence is not discussed; maybe it didn't hit the UK?

Audience or interest level: communication students.

Some interesting facts: Star journalists earn as much as celebrities.

What I don't like about this resource: this is a short book with tons of leading. There are only 250 words on a page, much like a manuscript.

What I do like about this resource: touches all the bases, much to think about without the answers being given, a swift account.

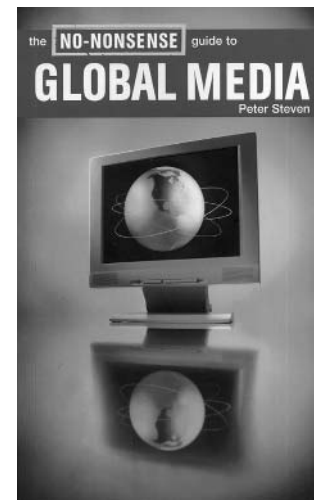
★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 74.**

The No-Nonsense Guide to Global Media

Peter Steven

New Internationalist
Publications/Between the Lines
2004, 144 pages, \$14.95,
ISBN 1-896357-81-4 paper covers

Steven is the well-known author of "Brink of Reality" and "Jump Cut". This current book is one of a series on issues, such as Fair Trade, the Arms Trade, HIV/AIDS, which have come out the *New Internationalist* magazine topical issues. The media here is, of



course, more than just news: there's film, TV, radio, recording, publishing, and the Internet. There has been more globalization lately because of multinational ownership, satellite TV and the Internet. Steven sits firmly in the camp that says the media shape the way we lead our lives. Thus, the book becomes a polemic, with lots of examples and anecdotes from the Toronto area (Steven is based here). He has quotes, sidebars (in smaller typeface), tables and charts. Much of our media in the First and Second World impacts on the Third World, and that is a continuing concern. He cites media criticism found in magazines (*Adbusters*, *Jump Cut*), BBC radio shows, and papers such as *The Guardian* and *Le Monde*, as well as Web operations. His footnoted sources show plenty of online sources where everyone is a media critic. But his bibliography shows only four books.

Audience or interest level: the con-

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verted, giving them ammunition for talking to others.

Some interesting facts: “We cannot underestimate the power and brute force behind the barons of global media, the Rupert Murdochs and Silvio Berlusconi of the world who wield political and economic power as well as the ability to shape dreams through our entertainment”.

What I don’t like about this resource: a footnote reads “Michael Moore, if you are out there send us your email address”. Huh? Is he that hard to find, with his own Web site at www.michaelmoore.com???

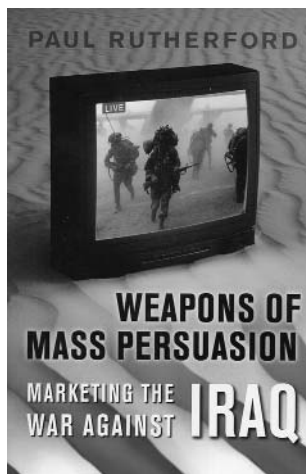
What I do like about this resource: cogent and concise, even scary.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 97.**

Weapons of Mass Persuasion: Marketing the War against Iraq

Paul Rutherford

University of Toronto Press
2004, 226 pages, \$45,
ISBN 0-8020-8995-X; \$19.95,
ISBN 0-8020-8651-9 paper covers



This is a tougher book to review, since I could barely bring myself to read it. We all know by now, the WMD did not exist, that Saddam Hussein even turned down bin Laden (how bad do you have to be in order to be turned down by Saddam??). There are no links to bin Laden, no WMDs. Yet Iran had those links and WMDs. The US invaded the wrong country: they were off by only one letter!!

Seriously, there was much wrong with the war with Iraq even before the obvious truth came out and was acknowledged by the American govern-

ment. Rutherford, an academic and media critic at the University of Toronto, tries to show how the marketing campaign for the war against Iraq was constructed and carried out with the aid of a compliant media.

Real time, such as “embedding” was treated as pop culture. Advertising propaganda made war become a branded conflict. It soon became the war of good versus evil. Selling the war as a good thing in the USA was hard to do, since the Iraqi resistance had created a quicksand swamp as in Vietnam. *The New York Times* said that Americans may have been “watching Iraq” on TV but they were “seeing Vietnam”. The major problem was actually one of sensory overload: the overwhelmed viewer caught in a real-time war with multiple sources of data. It was hard to figure out what was going on since everything was happening so fast. Print – papers and magazines – were left behind, in the dust so to speak. Rutherford is a terrific writer, never pedantic and always engaging. He cites first-rate sources such as interviews, books, articles and Web sites, as well as analyses of speeches, editorial cartoons, media commentaries, sound bites, polling data.

Audience or interest level: academics, students, George W. Bush.

Some interesting facts: “The American news media were particularly event-driven, focusing much more on concrete actions than on ideas”.

What I don’t like about this resource: depressing but unavoidable.

What I do like about this resource: richly illustrated with 25 editorial cartoons, all properly sourced.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 93.**

Continentalizing Canadian Telecommunications: The Politics of Regulatory Reform

Vanda Rideout

McGill-Queen’s University Press
2003, 256 pages, \$75,
ISBN 0-7735-2425-8
(\$27.95 paper covers, different ISBN,
review copy was hardback)

Rideout is an associate professor of sociology at the University of New Brunswick. Her book is based on her doctoral dissertation for the School of Journalism and Communication at



Carleton University in Ottawa, plus some government contract research. Papers based on portions of this material have been presented at meetings of various learned societies. The time slice is 1985-1996, so by now it is mostly all history.

She examines the political resistance to liberal transformation of Canadian telecommunications policy, involving the players of the feds vs. big business. She argues that the public interest has not been well served, despite cohesion with labour, consumers and public-interest groups. She looks at Free Trade, long-distance and local competition, and a subsidy program for low-income earners. Overall, she concludes, we appear to be moving more towards the US (=continentalism) with a North American reach. Both the issues behind privatization policies and telecommunications policies are looked at through a glass of drifting continentalism... There are endnotes, and extensive bibliography, and an index.

Audience or interest level: academics, historians, communications policy analysts.

Some interesting facts: “The development of a neo-liberal, continental telecommunications model has benefited large corporate users, the new competitors, and the established dominant providers”.

What I don’t like about this resource: all the sources come from the slice, without any updating: there are appendices detailing names and dates.

What I do like about this resource: illustrates the strong role that the government had been playing.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 83.**

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Framing the West: Race, Gender, and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest.

Carol J. Williams

Oxford University Press
2003, 216 pages, \$29.95,
ISBN 0-19-514652-2 paper covers

Williams is a professor of women's studies and American history at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta. In this book (a great title, riffing off *Farming the West*), she examines a wide range of photographic forms (landscapes, portraits, action shots), and concludes that surveyors made images for the British government to map and claim ownership of the regions.

The photos also depicted Native peoples as non-threatening, and thus they (the photos) could be used in posters to encourage emigration from the UK, promoting the Canadian west as a safe haven. These are the images of the good, compliant Indian in western garb. Williams goes on to identify the camera as the influential source of imperialist ideology, the Fox News Network of the day (of course, imperialism continued with news film and documentaries. There are about 50 photos from various western archives, from just around the turn of the 19th century. Williams also gives us about 23 pages of extensive endnotes.

Audience or interest level: academics, historians, photographers (especially journalism photographers), libraries.

Some interesting facts: "The book moves beyond the conventional biographical approaches to photographers' work and the usual assumptions about the objectivity of historical photographs to develop an argument about how photographs can function as ideological documents"

What I don't like about this resource: a great commentary, but I feel it needs more photographs as examples.

What I do like about this resource: a great slice of history, makes you think.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 92.**

Dialogues on Cultural Studies: Interviews with Contemporary Critics

Shaobo Xie and
Fengzhen Wang, editors

University of Calgary Press
2003, 280 pages, \$34.95,
ISBN 1-55238-074-2 paper covers

Xie is a professor of English at the University of Calgary, while Wang is a research fellow in Beijing (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences). This book is a series of interviews with twelve academics, all American or working in the US (Pamela McCallum is at the University of Calgary). Thirty-three questions were asked (but not necessarily answered) of each participant, dealing with cultural studies, modernity, postmodernism, referentiality, ideology and history, post-colonialism, neo-orientalism, revolution and tragedy, intellectuals and universities (hah!), gender, Marxism, new communications technology – do I go on? Extremely difficult to read, unless you know something about the field. There is an extensive bibliography, but it seems to list only older works. It would be interesting to run this book through any fog indexes or other readability indicators, such as Flesch reading ease or Flesch-Kincaid grade levels. All in all, it appears to be mainly a polemic. Certainly, it is not a dialogue, since there seem to be no "supplementary" questions.

Audience or interest level: academics, Marxists.

Some interesting facts: "Difference or differentiation as the spirit and mood of the postmodern age has been celebrated on a global scale for three decades, whereas at the same time globalized capitalism is globally erasing difference, imposing sameness and standardization on consciousness, feeling, imagination, motivation, desire, and taste through cultural, social, and economic means."

What I don't like about this resource: too arcane for journalists, and even journalism educators. Certainly the dialogues are not interviews that journalists would do.

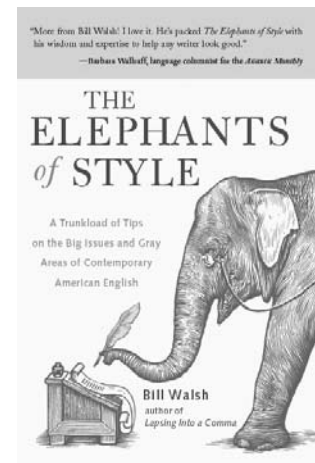
What I do like about this resource: a boldface index does manage to tie it all together. Many anthologies or collections are not indexed.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: what can I say? If you need it, read it: 85.**

The Elephants of Style: A Trunkload of Tips on the Big Issues and Gray Areas of Contemporary American English

Bill Walsh

McGraw-Hill
2004, 238 pages, \$21.95,
ISBN 0-07-142268-4 paper covers



Bill Walsh is the copy chief for national news at the *Washington Post*, and the creator of www.theslot.com, a popular Web site for copyeditors. This book, his second on this theme, is opinionated commentary on American English in the computer age. The first was *Lapsing Into a Comma*. In that earlier book, he had a chapter "Curmudgeon's Stylebook", an alphabetical guide to interesting but often obscure questions of usage and miscellaneous facts. He continues with that stylebook in his second book. Topics here include his pseudo-Luddite takes on spelling, capitalization, abbreviations, parts of speech, possessives and plurals, numbers, and punctuation. This is the real nitty-gritty stuff, not often taught in journalism schools. There are separate sections that deal with plagiarism and fabrication. He concludes with a bibliography of style and usage books, plus an index.

Audience or interest level: copy editors.

Some interesting facts: "Some habits of spoken English do not translate well to the written word. The superfluous "hand" in phrases like "upper left-hand corner" is one of them. People who need to refer to their hands to tell right from left don't tend to read much".

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What I don't like about this resource: material does tend to be scattered and a little too cutesy.

What I do like about this resource: more practical than the publisher admits. A really good read, enjoyable too.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 94.**

Tell it Slant: Writing and Shaping Creative Nonfiction

Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola

McGraw-Hill

2005, 195 pages, \$21.95,

ISBN 0-07-144494-7 paper covers

Both Miller and Paola are award-winning essay writers and book authors, teaching at Western Washington University. The book is a guide to writing memoirs and essays, and the authors encourage the reader-writer to find the hook, the theme, the "slant" mentioned in the title.

They explain the processes (writing basics, essay writing, memoirs) for creative non-fiction. Topics covered include family subjects, historical writing, lyric essay, the arts, personal essays, and spiritual autobiography. Elegance is the keyword here, but tread with caution.

The authors delve into fact vs. fiction, thrusting and clarifying: memory and imagination, emotional truth and factual truth, whole truth and partial truth. Isn't this what journalists are supposed to avoid? False memories and fabrication are anathema to the daily reporters. And it is, of course, ironic that for a book dealing with creative non-fiction, the copyright notice here is 2005, not 2004 when the book was actually published. Many textbooks are appearing now with advanced dating, in hopes of keeping the books fresher with a current date. Each chapter concludes with a series of exercises and prompts for writing on your own; these are quite good. There is a chapter on writing groups and how to form one, plenty of writing examples, and an index.

Audience or interest level: budding writers, writing groups. But not journalists (we don't want to give them any ideas)...

Some interesting facts: "We believe

that every writer must negotiate the boundary between fact and fiction for him- or herself. What constitutes fabrication for one writer will seem like natural technique to another". Really???

What I don't like about this resource: lots of stuff and advice for writers, but nothing about readers or audiences. Who actually reads the personal memoirs, the essays, the creative non-fiction? These books do not sell very well.

What I do like about this resource: a really useful, annotated bibliography.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 90.**

Imagined Nations: Reflections on Media in Canadian fiction

David Williams

McGill-Queen's University Press

2003, 278 pages, \$—,

ISBN 0-7735-2516-5

Williams is an English professor at the University of Manitoba. He presents a basic look at the effects different forms of media have had on Canadian novels and film adaptations and cyberspace, and how these affect the sense of time and space and national identities. He examines writings and film treatments of such works as *No Great Mischief*, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, *Prochain Episode*, *The Butterfly Plague*, *The Englishman's Boy*, *The English Patient*, and *Necromancer*. Some of these chapters were conference papers previously published in scholarly journals. There is an extensive bibliography and index, and overall, I can safely say that he has strong roots in Innis and McLuhan.

Audience or interest level: academics, libraries.

Some interesting facts: "During a decade marked by Canada's Free Trade Agreement with the United States, we could expect the national idea to be contested in novels as well as in the culture at large."

What I don't like about this resource: the reader really needs an interest in communications theory.

What I do like about this resource: applications to journalism communications.

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 84.**

Strategic Copy Editing

John Russial

The Guilford Press

2004, 280 pages, \$35US,

ISBN 1-57230-926-1 paper covers

Russial teaches editing at the University of Oregon's School of Journalism. He had spent twelve years at the *Philadelphia Inquirer* newspaper as Sunday copy chief. This is a basic book on how to edit for grammar and punctuation, usage and style, fairness and focus, and headlines. He also has sections on how to negotiate with reporters, other editors, and layout designers. Editors are intermediaries. Strewn throughout the book are editing strategies, practical tips, examples. There is a chapter on accuracy (fact checking) and inaccuracy, with consequences explained. As I always said, "Look it up – you'll remember it longer. But screw it up – you'll remember it forever." I know that many journalism students are turned off by the detailed work demanded of copyediting. I taught courses in fact checking, and it was no breeze. Most students gave me the excuse that they were going into broadcasting, or sports writing, or advertising or PR. Hmmmm...Russial also ahs material on the use of computers and software, with a good section on spellcheckers. This book can be a bit overwhelming to read, so it would be safer to just chunk it. There are endnotes but no bibliography.

Audience or interest level: journalism schools, self-learners, people who need some brushing up.

Some interesting facts: "Reviewing the mistakes I missed in proofreading [this book] confirmed my suspicion that everyone needs a copy editor, especially a copy editor".

What I don't like about this resource: too US based for me, with US examples.

What I do like about this resource: pragmatic

★ **Quality-to-Price Ratio: 84.**