

proaching the subject matter that, librarian-like, helps organize the information for future use. It seems clear that RA is most effective as a group effort and that the service becomes more valuable as it is adapted to local needs.

Saricks admits that training in RA is difficult; the subject matter can be overwhelming. Saricks's book helps to mitigate that effect and offers a practical method for bringing together patron and product, something we should all take advantage of in this era of questioning the relevance of libraries.—James McShane, Director, Kent Memorial Library, Suffield, Connecticut

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***The Real Story: A Guide to Nonfiction Reading Interests.*** By Sarah Statz Cords. Edited by Robert Burgin. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 464p. \$55 (ISBN 1-59158-283-0).

*The Real Story* is a unique handbook that helps readers' advisors recommend nonfiction titles to library patrons based on their preferred genre, subject, or writing style. Sarah Statz Cords states, "Librarians must recognize that there will always be books within subjects that most patrons, happy to browse in their habitual subject areas, would never see but might enjoy nonetheless" (xix).

While nonfiction's increased popularity is part of a larger media trend toward films based on true stories, documentaries, and reality shows, Cords encourages mixing fiction and nonfiction advisory because readers may enjoy both nonfiction and fiction on the same topic. Titles cover 1990 to 2005 and include starred reviews from review sources, award winners, a few titles from her library's sorting truck, and a few classics.

Within each chapter, Cords explains the development and appeal of the genre, subject, or style. The bulk of each chapter lists some of the best titles in that genre or subject area, along with a short list of titles to start with, fiction read-alikes, further reading, and references. Four appendixes provide lists of political pundits, spiritual writers, awards, and resources for nonfiction books. Bold index tabs help the reader flip to the next chapter.

In the "Biography" chapter, Cords points out that sports biographies may appeal to readers of true adventure because both contain "elements of the most exciting competitions or hardest-fought battles" (215). She spends a lot of time on "Relationships" and "Making Sense . . ." (of ourselves, of our culture) titles because they are well liked by readers, there are no corresponding subject headings, and they are not shelved near each other in libraries. Some truly fun sections cover celebrities and superstars, humorous memoirs, and "gentle family reads."

*The Real Story* distinguishes itself by being the only nonfiction readers' advisory (RA) book that includes annotated recommended titles, explains each genre's development and appeal, and suggests related fiction titles. Librarians who want to know more about the basics of nonfiction RA should consult Robert Burgin's *Nonfiction Readers Advisory* (Libraries Unlimited, 2004).

Reading *The Real Story* is an enjoyable learning experience. Knowing the appeal of nonfiction genres, subjects, and styles will help reference librarians immensely and will help their readers discover how exciting well-written nonfiction can be.—Margie Ruppel, Reference and Interlibrary Loan Librarian, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville

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***Student Guide to Research in the Digital Age: How to Locate and Evaluate Information Sources.*** By Leslie F. Stebbins. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 202p. \$45 (ISBN 1-59158-099-4).

Each year one encounters new research guides. However, the *Student Guide* by Stebbins is worth serious attention. Living up to its intention of being "essential reading" (xi), it does a masterful job of integrating critical thinking skills, information sources, and database searching techniques, all in one concise paperback.

Following a chapter outlining the basic steps of research (identifying a topic, choosing research strategies), the *Student Guide* leads users to sources for books (including e-books), magazine and journal articles, primary sources, biography, laws and court cases, and government documents. In addition to the usual subscription databases, the *Student Guide* judiciously mentions reference books, microfilm series, and freely accessible Web sites, thus enabling students to find helpful information, regardless of how digitized their own libraries have become.

Critical thinking and evaluation are important parts of each chapter, and Stebbins tailors her suggestions to the types of sources at hand. For instance, she encourages users of primary sources to look for internal and external consistency in the creator's story and suggests that readers of autobiographies find out whether a ghost writer was used. Whenever the *Student Guide* encourages readers to use a database, it uses partial screenshots to illustrate how to adjust search fields appropriately and compose a valid search with Boolean operators and truncation. These outstanding features should be emulated in all research guides.

There are only a few improvements one could suggest. Knowing the popularity of business as an undergraduate major, any subsequent edition should add a chapter on finding unbiased information about companies, nonprofits, and other corporate entities. Also, given that many students have to develop presentations along with (or instead of) written papers, a section on finding and using images and videos would be helpful. The final chapter, which addresses citation and plagiarism, could include more information on APA style.

Some guides, such as Jeff Lenburg's *Guide to Research* (Facts On File, 2005), excel at listing pertinent reference titles and subscription databases for an array of disciplines. Others, such as those by Pycszak Publishing, explain surveys, statistical software, and other concerns of graduate-level students and empirical researchers. However, the *Student Guide* by Stebbins is the best literature guide for undergraduates that has crossed this reviewer's desk. Highly recommended