


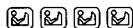
	EXCELLENT
	WELL DONE
	MOSTLY GOOD
	ADEQUATE UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES
No Logo	POOR

This column takes a critical view of publications of interest to ONLINE readers. ONLINE and its sister publications, DATABASE and CD-ROM Professional, are the only magazines in the industry that formally assign ratings to books that are reviewed. A FOUR-LOGO rating is considered outstanding, and is given only to books that are superior in every way. All publications are reviewed from the perspective of working online information professionals, which may cause higher or lower ratings than might be perceived as appropriate in the general press. In these times of tight budgets, the need for critical reviews is essential to good purchasing decisions—it is our hope that ONLINE readers will profit from the forthright, evaluative reviews published in this column.

Please note that reviewers are identified after each review and may be contacted c/o HARDCOPY, Online Inc., 462 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT 06897-2126.

Reviews Of Recent Writings



Berger, Pam and Susan Kinnell.
***CD-ROM for Schools: A Directory
and Practical Handbook for
Media Specialists.* Wilton, CT:
EIGHT BIT BOOKS, 1994. 272pp.**

There are about 200 books in print about CD-ROM technology and applications, but only five or six of them are targeted to K-12 educators and students. This is ironic because

schools now represent one of the largest CD-ROM customer groups. Students are significant indirect buyers (nagging their parents to buy one of the fancy CD-ROMs) and direct buyers when they spend their pocket money on such steals as the entertaining Medio magazine on CD-ROM for \$2.99 at Software, Etc., or the CD-ROM version of Video Movie Guide with reviews of 13,000 movies for \$14.99, or the multimedia

CD-ROM album of Peter Gabriel for a tad more.

True, there was a book published recently that mentioned CD-ROM and school media in the title, but it was the poorest piece I have read in a while. It consisted of little more than publicity blurbs pasted together from flyers from mail order companies and publishers. I have had several hundred school librarians as students in my graduate courses and

workshops through the past few years, and I have been looking for a book that I can recommend to them. I am not looking anymore. I can whole-heartedly recommend *CD-ROM for Schools* to every elementary, secondary, and high school librarian.

This book is a gold mine of information about educational CD-ROMs for the newcomer as well as the experienced user. It provides a comprehensive, knowledgeable, critiqued and annotated directory of CD-ROM titles. I could not agree more with the authors' choice of the top 100 titles and with most of the additional 200 titles on their B-list. Beyond that judgment it is the consistent high quality and uniformity of details (system requirements, publisher information, technical support number, curriculum match and grade level) for all the entries, and the substantial reviews of the top 100 titles that impresses me the most.

The reviews clearly show the authors' immense hands-on experience with CD-ROMs, mixing a healthy dose of objective description and subjective opinion. I was particularly pleased to see titles from small publishers who normally do not get the publicity they deserve. I would have liked to have seen the author's bottom ten list, too!

An exceptionally useful chapter provides a classified list by curriculum (art and music, social studies, etc.) broken down by grade categories (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12). The directory part is rounded out by a chapter listing the contact information for producers. I can only wish for another list that would break down the titles by platform so those who already have an IBM or a Macintosh could quickly scan what is available.

The book more than lives up to its subtitle as well. It is an utterly practical guide for the education specialist, offering superbly written chapters about the often overlooked issues of justifying, planning and managing CD-ROMs in schools, and integrating them with curriculum requirements.

The chapter about evaluation and selection is not merely another list of criteria, but reflects well the

specifics of the school environment. The chapter about hardware, software and networking is precise, relevant and up-to-date, and so is the glossary. The book is very current with many references from 1994.

Layout and typography also deserve praise. The screen shots are functional and good quality. The inserts that are not referenced from the texts are nicely set out, offering a pause at the right time.

This book deserves an A+ grade. I would like to see only three other things in the next edition. One would be an indication of the average mail-order price (where applicable) instead of the relatively high "list price," which might keep some readers from becoming discouraged. Large discounts are readily available. I recently saw the most current edition of an encyclopedia available for \$40 instead of the list price of \$395. Another addition I would recommend would be side-by-side, case study-length comparisons of competing products. Finally, a CD-ROM "sampler" with color pictures of the products and some screen shots would add some nice, yet valuable and informative glitz.

—Péter Jacsó

University of Hawaii at Manoa

To order contact EIGHT BIT BOOKS, 462 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT 06897-2126; 800/248-8466. ISBN 0-910965-13-7. Softcover. \$29.95.

(To avoid any hint of impropriety, readers should be aware that EIGHT BIT BOOKS is an imprint of Online Inc./Pemberton Press, publishers of this magazine. All reviews are written by independent reviewers, working with the HARDCOPY editor. —NG)



Haynes, Colin. *Paperless Publishing*. New York: Windcrest/McGraw-Hill, 1994. 370pp.

"Now virtually anyone with a computer has the power to publish...Publish straight from your computer!" promises the wording on the back cover of this book. In just a few hundred pages, Haynes covers the world of electronic publishing. Organized in 17 chapters and

further divided into short subsections, this book discusses topics ranging from multimedia and hypertext to using Journalist software and CompuServe to publish a newsletter, to duplicating, packaging and distributing your electronic words of wisdom.

While the title *Paperless Publishing* indicates a focus on publishing on electronic media, a secondary theme of the book is the virtue and ease of self-publishing. Somewhat at odds with this alternative theme are references to such complex topics as including sound and graphics on a multimedia disc and using virtual reality as a publishing medium. Sections about IBM's high-end BookManager software, Folio VIEWS and Lotus Notes, plus some parts geared toward corporate publishing environments, also contribute to the book's split personality.

A box on the back cover indicates a "special section for librarians," but the sections about librarians portray them as timid and unwilling to embrace new information technologies, in a looking-down-the-nose manner of speaking. While acknowledging that many librarians are online on the Internet, Haynes chastises others for being "locked into the mindset that their prime role is as the custodians of books, rather than as the disseminators of information." Sentences such as, "Librarians are far more at risk of becoming victims of their too-often self-imposed isolation from the important cultural developments associated with electronic publishing," are not to my mind "librarian-friendly"—begging the question of the dedication which reads, "To librarians everywhere as they face the challenges and opportunities of a new age of publishing." Colin Haynes, meet Charles Bailey!

Haynes mentions copyright, but from the perspective of the author and the need to protect his rights. Use of sound and audio clips, or electronic information retrieved from online databases for self-publishing projects is not discussed in terms of possible copyright issues—a serious omission.

Sadly missing also is any perspective on the value of the commercial

