Expert Internet Searching by Phil Bradley (review)

Jacqueline MacDonald

Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science, Volume 38, Number 1, March/mars 2014, pp. R2-R3 (Review)

Published by University of Toronto Press

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/ils.2014.0003

For additional information about this article
https://muse.jhu.edu/article/547075

For content related to this article
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=article&id=547075
various e-mail discussion groups and social media sites. There is no Canadian-specific content referred to by the authors (although 4% of the survey respondents were Canadian), making the short appendix of resources useful only for American librarians or Canadian graduates hoping to move to the United States; however, the majority of their advice is very practical in nature and applicable to both Americans and Canadians equally. The small but functional index of key concepts supports the detailed table of contents, which makes specific sections of the book easily accessible for quick reference. This book is recommended for MLIS students looking for practical advice on preparing for the job search and tips for managing their emerging careers.

Deborah Hicks, Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta


Phil Bradley is a British librarian turned Internet consultant, trainer, and author who has authored over half a dozen books on aspects of the Internet, writes a monthly column for the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals *Update* magazine and a quarterly column on search engines for *Ariadne: Web Magazine for Information Professionals*, and also contributes articles to other books and professional magazines.

*Expert Internet Searching* is the second book on Internet searching that I have read and reviewed this year. The first was *The Extreme Internet Searcher’s Internet Handbook* by Randolph Hock, also a fourth edition. I found it difficult not to compare the two. At a glance the chapter titles and their lengths appear to be similar: Hock arranges the content in 10 chapters, and Bradley in 16 chapters. The first difference is that I found Hock’s book such an easy read that I consumed it from cover to cover quite quickly, disagreeing with nothing he said and highlighting passages to consider including in a review. Bradley’s book, though just as well written and well organized, has not been a quick read because from the beginning I have had to keep stopping to check out unfamiliar content. It is peppered with “Did you know?” Internet facts in textboxes; to each of these I have had to answer (to myself), “No, I didn’t know.”

A comparison of the content on Boolean logic illustrates the difference between the two books. In his explanation of Boolean logic within a section on search basics, Hock includes a figure with the familiar overlapping circles representing AND, OR, and NOT. The index is detailed with respect to where and why Boolean logic is discussed throughout the book (its application within eight named sites/engines, inclusion in two tables comparing search engines, a series of pages where it is included in search strategies, etc.). That Bradley is indeed writing for the expert searcher is evident, as he discusses Boolean logic without explaining or graphically illustrating it. Individual operators are indexed under
named sites, and the index entry for Boolean logic is a series of page numbers that must be checked to see what they are (and in doing this just for this review I had to force myself back to writing instead of delving into the Web). I will value both books for course preparation as there is unique content in each that will contribute, for example, to content on searching grey literature to inform health policy. However, if I could keep only one, for the quantity of new-to-me content, it would have to be *Expert Internet Searching*.

Among the content that I appreciated most for course preparation is a comparison of clustering search engines such as Carrot\textsuperscript{2} in chapter 5 and Visual Searching in chapter 8. Chapter 11, “Academic and Other Specialized Search Engines,” sets these specialized “niche market” products apart in a way that reinforces for me that information and resources must be “fit for purpose” and begs the question why we health librarians pay so much to make resources designed for academics available to health services workers without knowing for sure that these workers have enough time or capacity to search for and then synthesize multiple primary research articles to meet their day-to-day practice-based information needs.

Chapter 14, “Hints and Tips on Better Searching with Sample Search Examples,” includes pointers for testing search skills, getting the most out of browsers, and setting up personal home pages for expert searchers.

I have been digging into the evolving concept of expert searching and have yet to identify recent work that provides an explicit solid, modern foundation to support expert searchers who need both a common language and standard methods to select between and then guide different search processes. This book does not set out to meet these needs, but throughout and specifically in chapter 16, “The Future of Search,” it does expand the horizons of what constitutes expert searching beyond what was imaginable just a few years ago.

*Jacqueline MacDonald, adjunct professor, School of Information Management, Dalhousie University*


Inspirée de la campagne d’évaluation internationale TREC, c’est la seule campagne d’évaluation francophone de fouille de textes. Elle confronte les