

SOURCES

libraries.—Annette M. Healy, Librarian, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

Encyclopedia of Science and Technology Communication. Ed. by Susanna Hornig Priest. Los Angeles, Calif.: Sage Reference, 2010. 2 vols. acid free \$350 (ISBN 9781-4129-5920-9). E-book available (978-1-4129-5921-6), \$440.

According to the introduction, this work is aimed at the emerging field of science communication. The research in this field is focused on understanding the best ways to communicate complex science concepts to a general population. It relies on an interdisciplinary approach to identify diverse aspects of a scientific question or issue. Science communication scholars are usually social scientists who rely on media theory to understand the influence of messages and content based on science. The focus of this work is to provide information on the “entire range of interrelated issues in one place,” while acknowledging that much of the information can be found in elsewhere (xxvii).

The two volume set is organized with a list of entries and a reader's guide at the beginning of volume 1. The reader's guide section nests the entries into subject categories like “Associations and Organizations” or “Challenges, Issues and Controversies.” The contributors are listed with their affiliation. The introduction by the editor puts the work in context, gives an overview of the concept of science communication, and identifies the goals the editor hopes to achieve with the work. Appendixes include an annotated list of science communication programs and an annotated bibliography of resources associated with each entry. The index to the work is extensive, granular, and thorough.

The entries vary from biographies of people, explanation of concepts, overviews of organizations, and descriptions of information resources. They vary in length and depth in the treatment of the subjects. Most have “see also” referrals to other entries in the volumes as well as suggesting further readings, which can be journal articles, books, reports, or websites. Each entry is signed.

I found the introduction to this work to be very interesting and most helpful in understanding the concept of science communication, the types of people who are engaged in this discipline, and the kinds of research they do. However, the expressed goal of attempting to “provide as much information as possible on this entire range of interrelated issues in one place” for this discipline is questionable and probably not very realistic (xxvii). The content in the volumes is uneven. While some of the entries are well known subjects and are lengthy, such as the one on abortion, which gives a great deal information on legal cases and concepts, one wonders about the need to include overviews of journals, such as “Issues in Science and Technology” and others. Another issue is the reality that all the entries dealing with current issues, such as abortion or climate change, will be dated even as the volume is published. The list of science communication programs in the appendixes includes personnel contacts that surely change relatively often.

The editor suggest that the volumes would be useful to undergraduate students and graduate students in journalism and related fields as well as working journalists and public information specialists. This information can be found elsewhere in more authoritative sources. One would hope that our journalists and students studying to be journalists are being trained to seek out primary research.

Perhaps this work would be better conceived in a different, more focused format, such as a textbook in science communication. It seems that this format would be more valuable as a starting point for those engaged in the discipline than a reference work. An important part of any scholar's work is to know how to find the up-to-date information they need in primary literature and not rely on a compilation of past research.

I would not recommend this work. At \$350 for the two volume set it is relatively moderately priced for a reference work but most of the content is duplicated elsewhere.—Suzanne T. Larsen, Interim Associate Director for Public Services, University of Colorado Libraries, Boulder

Environmental Issues, Global Perspectives. By James Fargo Balliett. Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe Reference, 2010. 5 vols. alkaline \$249 (ISBN 978-0-7656-8097-6).

James Fargo Balliett's *Environmental Issues, Global Perspectives* is a five-volume series focusing on environmental impacts in several different ecosystems and biomes: forests, freshwater, mountains, oceans, and wetlands. These volumes range from 152 to 155 pages and each contain an introduction to the biome, seven global case studies, maps of the case studies, and a conclusion. Each volume also includes a glossary, selected websites, further reading, and an index. Black-and-white photographs, charts, and graphs enhance the text throughout.

The case studies are one of the major strengths of this series because they provide readers with an in-depth look at some specific examples of environmental change occurring within these ecosystems. For example, in the Mountains volume, some selected locations chosen as case studies include the Himalayan Range, Southeast Asia; Presidential Range, New Hampshire; Southern Alps, New Zealand; and Ural Mountains, Russia. Each case study contains a brief description of the site, information about the human uses and impact upon the region, examples of pollution and damage to the area, and attempts made to manage and conserve the location.

Environmental Issues, Global Perspectives is especially useful for its currency. Balliett provides up-to-date information on how these biomes have been drastically altered during the past few decades along with some helpful statistics and figures on population, pollution levels, deforestation, water shortages, and oil spills. One possible weakness is the seemingly anonymous author. Balliett writes very well and appears to be an expert on these subject matters. However, no author credentials or institutional affiliations are stated, which typically are standard practices for most scholarly reference sources.