

Many years ago, when I started out on a library career, I was introduced to *Walford's Guide* and used it often to answer most of the questions posed by my teacher when I did my library assistant's course. It was called a 'single-book library' by library users in those days, but then I am going back to the days before Google, Windows or even computers in libraries.

Now that I am a fully qualified chartered librarian I wonder at the value of such a printed tome in this digital age of instant information at your fingertips. The World Wide Web revolutionized the way we search for information, and perhaps few people take the trouble to critically appraise the sites they visit and reference.

However, the beauty of this book is the simplicity of design and layout which can be accessed far more quickly than opening a search engine and typing in a nebulous term.

The contents page is a clear and concise listing of the subject groupings under which the contents are organized. There is a useful quick-start guide with a comprehensive description of an example entry. There is also a list of contributors in case you feel the need to complain of omissions, and there are some notable omissions amongst the 8000+ resources. However, many of the best resources (including Google) are referenced in this guide.

The introduction gives a neat diagram of the 'Information Universe' and there are two indexes, a topic-based index with more than 1000 entries and a title/author index, making searching the contents very straightforward.

Using the same subject groupings as the contents page there are 'SO good websites to try first', but it does mention in the Introduction that websites are sometimes restricted or denied to some users. The preface tells us that all the URLs were checked in April 2005, which, because of the evanescent nature of some websites, is extremely useful.

The content under the websites' *Medicine* section includes some American sites but totally ignores the National Library for Health in the UK and the equivalent in the USA. It does mention Bandolier and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.

Despite the shortcomings of trying to list all the resources available in one volume, *The new Walford* is very much a book for all libraries and a must for general research.

It is a fine display of the knowledge and expertise with which librarians can search for, identify and retrieve specialist information, and a needed starting point for novice researchers.

The entries are cross indexed with references and commonly used abbreviations and acronyms, and this encourages readers to turn the pages, allowing serendipity to show interesting and often unknown resources.

Google may be an excellent search engine but there is no way it could produce such a listing of appraised quality resources, in a concise format, in

one session of searching from the keyboard.
This book has tried to use resources from everywhere but the bulk of entries come from the UK and the USA, with a scattering of international organizations such as the World Health Organization and UNESCO.

Most publishers mentioned are multi-national, but again the content is chiefly from the UK or USA. I did find a mention of a textbook, translated from the Greek, on railway infrastructure which describes European railway practices which are not usually mentioned in British texts! Fascinating thing-serendi pi ty.