Guide to Medicine”) includes a file folder that contains approximately fifty pages of frequently used clinical information that the author finds extremely valuable (p. 26).

The “Electronic Resources” chapter deciphers computers for the uninitiated. Ringel admits that although computers linked to communications systems are shrinking the world of medical information, most of the things that computers could do directly for physicians are still unavailable in most settings. The nontechnical, anecdotal writing style should surely inspire the apprehensive clinician to consider a computer for information retrieval. Half of the chapter provides a detailed description of computer hardware. The author describes and gives recommendations about a computer’s central processing unit, mass storage, monitors, mouse, printers, modems, scanners, transportable computers, and money aspects. The computer-literate health professional may scan these pages. The software portion of the chapter concentrates on access to medical information through database programs to track medical files, drug interaction databases, and general clinical programs. The author realistically looks at the advantages of database searching but cautions that novice searchers may retrieve as little as 20% of appropriate citations. He concludes that “for many situations, a small well-chosen library of books and carefully filed journal articles down the hall may be considerably more efficient than a high-tech computer based system” (p. 52).

The “People” chapter recognizes that desert-island primary-care practitioners chose the practice because of the wide array of challenging problems and independence that such practices provide but admits that professional isolation from the colleague “across the hall” often comes with the territory. Ringel says he “never hesitates to call another doctor to ask for free advice. If she balks, I will find another consultant” (p. 57). Recommendations for good consultations and referrals include pursuing a thorough communication with the consultant; obtaining feedback from referrals; using poison control centers; and an annotated file of specialists, nonphysician medical practitioners, and, wisely, health sciences librarians. Ringel suggests locating a librarian in the area, nurturing the relationship, and helping the librarian lobby for what the library and the clinician need. He emphasizes that the clinician’s use of good communication skills is the cornerstone for successfully conveying information needs to the librarian. If health sciences librarians don’t send him flowers, we at least need to consider buying his book and leaving it on display with pages 61–63 highlighted in fluorescent yellow.

Complementing the primary chapters, the appendix lists addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers of cited resources. The detailed index locates specific electronic databases, book titles, and CD-ROM products.

It is a particular pleasure to review a book when the reviewer’s opinions and research results concur with those of the author [1]. This book will be valuable not only to the health professional traveling to the rural community to practice medicine but to anyone needing a guide to help access medical information.

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Reference
retrieved through the use of electronic technology, and made available as individual products. Examples of the range of items discussed are full-text files, numeric data files (e.g., census files), indexes to journals, software, videotapes and videodiscs, and CD-ROMs (not music). The formats are treated in adequate detail to aid the reader in understanding what the formats are and include definitions of the formats, descriptions of their basic creation, the machinery and software necessary to employ them, purchase options, recommendations for cost savings, and a snapshot of the “it’s the software—no, it’s the hardware” battle. Copyright, licensing, standards, and pricing are also examined.

The authors provide many helpful financial hints to bear in mind when purchasing databases. “Costs should include the increased system capacity required to store, process, and retrieve the data. The costs could include actual sale price of the data from the publisher, and the costs of the retrieval software, processing this data to conform to local system requirements, storage in the local system, maintenance and future updates” (p. 6). There are some pronouncements with which some might take issue. For example, “Generally speaking, it is rarely cheaper to mount a major bibliographic database in a local system, unless the information had been purchased in multiple copies and formats before switching...”; the authors go on to say, “Despite the possibility of increased costs for locally mounted databases, the improved access and patron service may well be worth it” (p. 6).

The supportive selection criteria is a combination of the common-sense and the remarkable. “It is very important to have written procedures for selecting electronic resources” (p. 9) is one of the gold standards of collecting. Among the valuable topics that should be included in a section of a library’s collection development plan and may be missed by the manual writer are timeliness of updates or cumulations, compliance with national standards, and the need for follow-up releases due to bugs and glitches.

The process of obtaining electronic resources lacks the familiar simplicity of book and journal acquisitions. The Guide directs the reader in dealing with leasing, quality of documentation, warranties, licensing, copyright, and order forms that call for essential information we are unaccustomed to providing (e.g., RAM capacity!).

The Dickinson book provides very basic definitions of databases and electronic resources. There are descriptions of everything from slots or a bird’s-eye view of a mother board to types of databases. One nice feature is little gray boxes that offer some bullets and checklists. What separates this book from the Bosch book is the level of detail that Dickinson provides. Amidst instructions on how to search various electronic databases are instructions on how to lease or purchase software. Perhaps what can be said is that this book is more than its title implies. It can also serve as a primer for the uninitiated on such issues as the fundamentals of displaying and printing, a wee introduction to the Internet, and instruction on how to speak to vendors at conferences. The selection and evaluation information is here but harder to find.

This review should serve as a hearty recommendation for the American Library Association’s Acquisition Guidelines No. 9 for those who are writing (or rewriting) their collection development manuals to include electronic formats.

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Managed care—a rose by any other name... Today, most articles about health care reform or delivery use this phrase or related lexicon. Almost all health care today is managed, and the devil is in the details of that management. Thus, an updated guide to the devil—I mean, the language of managed care—is essential for any health sciences library. A comprehensive book for the reference desk and the collection itself is an essential purchase for a health sciences library and other libraries serving patrons with requests in this subject field.

This is such a book, one that is both timely and comprehensive at a reasonable price and, therefore, highly recommended. At $65.00 for 1,200 terms, it comes to $.054 per term. However, because this title purports to be more than a mere glossary and is publicized as a desk reference, what else does it include? The book has ten pages of acronyms and abbreviations, which proved very helpful. Additionally, it lists fifty-nine organizations, with abstract, name, address, and telephone and fax numbers in four separate sections for trade associations, policy and research organizations, accrediting bodies, and federal government agencies. Are these sections useful? Redundant? Easy to use? Yes, but read on.

If you are like me, you can never remember what “HEDIS” stands for. Sure enough, it was not alphabetically listed in the defined terms. However, a quick check in the acronyms section found the term health plan employer data and information set. In the terminology section, the full term appeared with a superb definition, the acronym