in Canada (p. 49) and provides that author’s recommendations for minimizing legal liability for librarians. She fails to mention either John A. Gray or W. Z. Nasri, who have both written for U.S. journals on the subject of malpractice liability for information professionals. Gray, in fact, has been a recent lecturer on this subject at various library conferences.

Other suggestions for future editions would include more clarification when monetary figures are quoted (i.e., whether the figure is U.S. or Canadian funds), more detail on Internet resources, and tabs for the appendices, which would allow easier access to this very useful information. I was also disappointed to find that, even though reference was made to professional continuing education courses provided by the Canadian Health Libraries Association and the Medical Library Association (MLA), no addresses for these associations were included in the indicated appendix. Since this manual will conceivably be used by medical, special, and public librarians, these addresses would be helpful. It is also surprising that the list of MLA courses “of interest to CHI staff” (p. 63) does not include CE 308, “Consumer Health Information Services.”

Susan Murray has achieved her goal of creating a “how-to” manual that shares the practical experience of the CHIS with others involved in developing or expanding their CHI services. The manual is exceptionally valuable for Canadian information professionals, but also contains enough practical suggestions to make it a necessary purchase for anyone involved in the provision of medical and health information to consumers.

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3. Ibid, 5.


The health care system in the 1990s introduced many new terms, such as “managed health care,” “point-of-service” (POS) plan, and “preferred provider organizations” (PPOs), with which many health information professionals are still grappling. Locating current information on the new health care environment has also become increasingly difficult. Not only is the system changing rapidly, but it affects all facets of the health care industry. Now more than ever, librarians need a comprehensive resource on the health care industry. This work claims to be “the first guide to the health care field designed to be used as a comprehensive, one-stop source for researchers of all types” (p.1). Unfortunately, this almanac fails to live up to its claim.

At first glance, the book appears to be well organized, easy to use, and accurate. Organized in two sections, “The Health Care Industry” and “The Health Care 500,” the book also includes a short health care glossary, instructions on how to use the book, several indexes, and an appendix of graphs and charts on the growth and utilization of Medicaid/Medicare. The “Health Care Industry” section is the most useful and comprehensive part of this book. Broken down into chapters, this section is well organized, complete, and fairly up to date. Chapter 1 covers the major trends affecting the health care industry and provides a nice history and overview of the changes that have taken place in recent years and why they came about. Chapter 2 is an overview of the nation’s health care. Most of the data in this chapter is in the form of charts and is noted as being derived primarily from the Government Printing Office’s (GPO) publications, Health United States, 1993 [1] and the 1994 Data Compendium [2]. A common problem when presenting any kind of statistical information is currency. Almost all of the charts only go up to 1991, with only some reaching 1993. More effort should have been made to update all of the charts to 1993 and some to 1994. While much of the information is dated, this chapter does pull together useful charts and descriptions about the state of our national health care into one place.

Chapter 3 gives an industry-by-industry outlook for the 1990s for all the health care fields and was based on the U.S. Industrial Outlook 1994 [3]. Chapter 4 covers the outlook for technology and is based largely on the Bureau of Labor Statistics report entitled Outlook for Technology and Labor in Hospitals [4]. A table depicting the major technological changes in hospitals includes a description of the technology, its labor implications, and how well it has diffused.

Chapter 5 deals with careers in health care and is based on the Occupational Outlook Handbook [5]. This chapter provides quite extensive and comprehensive coverage of health care careers. It includes a brief description, employment types, training and qualifications required, job outlook, potential
earning, and sources for additional information for each career. An excellent chart on total employment and job openings from 1992 to 2005 starts off the chapter.

Chapter 6, the "Health Care 500" section, comprises the bulk of the work. The 500 is Plunkett's "unique grouping of the biggest, most successful corporations in all segments of the American health care industry" (p. 1). The firms were chosen for their dominance in the health care industry and needed to meet three criteria: (1) U.S. based, non-government; (2) ten-million-dollar minimum annual sales; and (3) publicly held. This section is arranged alphabetically by company, with indicators by industry that illustrate the diversity of the industry segments represented. Included are drug manufacturers and distributors, equipment and supplies manufacturers and distributors, nursing home and home health care companies, hospitals and clinics, insurance and HMOs, and testing and diagnostic services.

On the one hand, including so many different kinds of companies could be helpful to a librarian looking for a little-known insurance company or distributor, but if sales must exceed ten million dollars, it is unlikely that the little-known company would be listed. On the other hand, when looking for information on a company, there is little consistency. Some very well-known pharmaceutical companies are not listed, and none of the insurance carriers or HMO's used in my region or state are listed either.

A geographic index lists company headquarters by state, and the section is followed by several indexes that rank the 500 companies in relation to each other by annual sales growth, annual research budgets, and annual sales. An index of firms noted as hot spots for advancement for women and minorities and an index of subsidiaries, brand names, and affiliations are also available, but seem of little use.

I dove right into the "Health Care 500" company profiles and started reviewing the entry for Bristol-Myers Squibb, where I had worked for the previous eight years. A lot of information is provided on one page, and I was unable to interpret what all of the data meant without going back and reading the information on how to use the book. Each entry is one page and includes the organization's rank against the other 500 in sales, profits, sales growth, and dollars spent on research. This kind of information would usually be very useful when comparing "like" companies, but Plunkett's 500 covers so many different industries in the health care field that a good comparison is almost impossible. A chart classing the companies by the types of goods and services they offer provides some general information. The specialty listing that follows also helps pinpoint the focus of the company.

The company's corporate headquarters' address, and telephone, fax, and toll-free numbers are provided, as well as the names of the senior officers. Brief financial information on sales, profits, growth, budget, and number of employees follows. Locations of the company are indicated by geographic area (southwest, west, northeast, international, etc.). This information seems to be of little value without specific cities or states.

The entry includes a category entitled "Brands/Divisions." The inconsistency in this category is astounding. For many companies, only brands are listed and for many others only divisions. A person not familiar with the area, in most cases, would have no way of knowing what is a brand and what is a division. How the editors decided what was listed and what was not, is also unclear. The introduction states that this category includes "up to eight major brand names, operating divisions or subsidiaries owned by the firm" (p. 4). The list is by no means comprehensive, let alone representative. One way to make this source better would be to separate the brands and divisions and to include representative entries from each. In the case of Bristol-Myers Squibb, the book only lists brands and omits all of the company's divisions and subsidiaries. The brands listed were also a surprise. With the exception of Taxol, all products mentioned were consumer and over-the-counter products, which is not the main focus of the company.

The entry also attempts to provide data on the company's corporate culture by indicators such as pension plan, savings plan, stock plan, on-site child care, and hot spot for advancement for women and minorities (determined by providing numbers for apparent women officers and directors and apparent minority officers and directors), highest executive salaries, and bonuses. (All numbers are from 1993). This kind of information may be useful for someone considering a job at one of these firms, but I am not sure how else it could be used. The book also includes a one-line statement of what gives this particular company a competitive advantage and a larger statement of growth plans and special features. Both of these provide useful information, but I question their accuracy. The Bristol-Myers Squibb president's name was spelled differently the two times it was mentioned. If I needed this information, I would not know which one was correct. A glance at Eastman Kodak's entry also exposed an error. The company was listed as acquiring another company in 1991. What the entry did not mention was that the same company was then sold in 1993. Nowhere in the introduction are we told how the company information was compiled or what sources were used.

Overall, I was very disappointed.
with the information presented in the company profiles. This section may be useful for a quick phone number or specialty look-up, but it offers very little other information of real value, aside from the figures for research budgets, which are usually hard to find. If you need information on a health care company, it may be here and it may not. If you are considering purchasing this source as a company directory, far better resources already exist, in print and online, for both health care and business fields.

Most of the information presented in this book can be found in other, more reliable sources. I would not recommend this book be purchased by larger libraries that already receive many GPO and American Medical Association titles or who already own the standard medical directories. A small library may want to consider purchasing this source, if it cannot afford to purchase the other sources mentioned or any of the more expensive directories. Because this book is not very expensive, it may warrant purchase if a library has the need for a single source that can provide a general overview of the health care industry, its trends, and potential careers. That is the definite strength of this work, and it brings information from disparate sources together nicely. If you do decide to purchase the book, be wary about the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the company information and the currency of the charts.

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2. HEALTH CARE FINANCING ADMINISTRATION. BUREAU OF DATA MANA-


In the past few months, announcements about new journals published on the World Wide Web have appeared with increasing frequency. "Early adopters" in our health care organizations are experimenting with this new publishing medium. While the technology may speed up publication, other concerns, such as cost, are as yet unresolved. The technology will also raise issues we have yet to consider. Thus, a book on networked approaches to scholarly publishing is very timely.

The editor, F.W. Lancaster, introduces the topic in the first chapter through a discussion and definition of electronic publishing and a brief historical review of the past thirty years. He notes several obstacles to electronic publications, for example "the desires of readers and authors may not fully coincide" (p. 524). The chapter also discusses the value added by electronic publications. He closes with a theme that appears throughout the volume: the call for the academic community to take back and publish the research it generates.

Thomas Hickey offers an excellent discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of electronic journals, contrasting them to the paper version. Several of the critical issues are fairly presented with references to current projects, such as TULIP, Red Sage, and CORE. A few minor errors point to the rapid advancement of technology in the past two years. For example, Netscape far surpasses Mosaic as the most commonly used client in 1995. For Hickey, cost is the major impediment in moving toward electronic journals; he reasons that the required technology has existed for some time. He presents a very optimistic view that we will move swiftly, most likely in the next decade, to electronic access as the primary mode. Whether this will be valid across all disciplines is uncertain.

Several authors consider electronic journals from both readers' and authors' viewpoints. Ann Bishop analyzes seven online journals from a reader's perspective, evaluating their ease-of-use and how they accommodate the needs and traditional expectations of readers. Bishop concludes that features recently added to electronic journals offer advantages over paper. She finds that for librarians and readers access to electronic sources is not one of the standard library bibliographic tools. This chapter was written when Gopher was the common access mode for journals, so the discussion of searching and access is somewhat dated, although some of the issues are also relevant to the Web. The result of focus group interviews on the desires of readers is particularly valuable. Advantages, such as alerting readers through e-mail messages that new content is available and reduction in the delay between submission and publication, are features valued by readers of online journals. Carol Tenopir examines the assumption of a common set of goals between authors.