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Librarian's Guide to Online Searching : Cultivating Database Skills for Research and Instruction [book review]

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In the fifth edition of this venerable, graduate level text, longstanding author Suzanne Bell passes the mantle to Christopher Brown, a reference technology integration librarian at the University of Denver. Bell still has a role in the book, namely chapters 15 and 16 on evaluating databases and teaching other people about databases. This edition brings a number of new chapters, including ones on government information resources, controlled vocabulary, major vendors' database interfaces and common database search features, and web-scale discovery tools. As with the fourth edition, additional search tips, exercises, and tutorials are available on the publisher's website. The types of databases discussed are ones typically encountered in public or academic libraries. The first six chapters address the basics of databases, chapters 7 through 13 cover subject specific databases, chapter 14 addresses user needs when searching, and the last two chapters are ones addressed by Bell and mentioned earlier. Particularly useful were the chapters on web-scale discovery tools, which discussed their virtues and shortcomings. Also, useful was chapter 6 that addressed user interfaces, and specific search features common to various databases. As this book often serves as a textbook, each chapter concludes with a set of exercises and references to other sources. Overall, this is an indispensable book for learning about databases. Recommended for all libraries.