

2013

Bell, S. S. (2009). *Librarian's guide to online searching (2nd ed.)*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited

Kevin McDonough

Northern Michigan University, [kmcdonou@nmu.edu](mailto:kmcdonou@nmu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://commons.nmu.edu/library\\_publication](http://commons.nmu.edu/library_publication)



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

McDonough, K. (2010). [Review of the book *Librarian's guide to online searching (2nd ed.)*, by S. S. Bell]. *American Reference Books Annual*, 586.

This Publication is brought to you for free and open access by The Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publication by an authorized administrator of The Commons. For more information, please contact [kclumpne@nmu.edu](mailto:kclumpne@nmu.edu), [kmcdonou@nmu.edu](mailto:kmcdonou@nmu.edu), [mburgmei@nmu.edu](mailto:mburgmei@nmu.edu), [bsarjean@nmu.edu](mailto:bsarjean@nmu.edu).

586. Bell, Suzanne S. **Librarian's Guide to Online Searching**. 2d ed. Santa Barbara, Calif., Libraries Unlimited/ABC-CLIO, 2009. 287p. index. \$45.00pa. ISBN 1-59158-763-8. ISBN 13: 978-1-59158-763-7.

In the *Librarian's Guide to Online Searching*, Suzanne Bell addresses techniques for searching online databases. Most of the databases covered are commercial offerings, although a few are freely accessible government databases. Compared to the 2006 edition, the 2d edition updates screen shots and discussion sections relating to particular database interfaces. The first quarter of the book explains the underlying structure of databases and key searching techniques (e.g. Boolean logic, controlled vocabulary, field searching, proximity searching, truncation). The next half of the guide focuses on searching key databases in the social sciences, science and medicine, and humanities, along with bibliographic (WorldCat) and statistical databases (LexisNexis Statistical, American Factfinder, and Bureau of Labor Statistics). Each subject grouping of databases has its own chapter with practice exercises at the end. The remaining quarter of the book provides direction for interacting with patrons to ensure the correct database is selected, techniques for teaching patrons about databases, and the criteria for evaluating databases.

Overall, this book is well written, but has limited use. It will be most helpful for library science students who have minimal or no experience with online databases. There is too much discussion of features unique to a particular interface. For example, searching PsycInfo is done within the Ovid interface. What happens if you only have PsycInfo through CSA or FirstSearch? Some of the principles will still apply, but specific features will not. This can be frustrating to the reader. Also, as vendors change interfaces frequently, the book will become outdated quickly. Finally, as search technology continues to improve, the need for advanced searching skills is becoming less relevant.—**Kevin McDonough**