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Internet Censorship: A Reference Handbook

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Internet Censorship: A Reference Handbook

Santa Barbara, Calif., ABC-CLIO, 2014. 333p. index. (Contemporary World Issues). \$58.00. ISBN 13: 978-1-61069-481-0; 978-1-61069-482-7 (e-book).

Submitted Review:

Internet Censorship is part of ABC-Clio's Contemporary World Issues series, which serve as an overview for selected topics. Appearing as the thirteenth book in the series, Internet Censorship was written by Bernadette H. Schell, author of several hacking and IT books. For someone unfamiliar with this topic the table-of-contents and overall organization of the book isn't very helpful. The first three chapters are labeled Background and History; Problems, Controversies, and Solutions; and Perspectives. Within these chapters are subtopics, many of which are long in title and difficult to understand how they are connected to each other. Chapter three, Perspectives, includes named essays by experts in the field of Internet freedom and censorship. Chapter four profiles particular organizations, individuals, initiatives, etc. that played important roles in the online censorship controversy. Profiles are fairly short, running only 1-2 pages. Chapter five addresses relevant laws and legislation, and includes brief statistics on Internet usage, Internet penetration (percentage of total population that uses the Internet), and countries with the freest and most restrictive online access. The final two chapters include an annotated bibliography of resources and a chronology of key events. A ten page glossary is provided prior to the index. Overall, this book is hard to recommend. Students new to a topic need information that is clearly organized and flows with a logical progression. Each chapter needs to be distinct and delineated from others. Unfortunately this book doesn't do that. Internet Censorship simply lacks coherence, and will likely frustrate rather than help students looking for an overview of the topic.