

2010-2-17 Notes

LIS 620: Information Sources and Services

Fact Books

- Read Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics
- Try to see if [Statistical Abstract of the United States](#) can be obtained for free.
- Fact Books
 - Handbooks
 - Almanacs
 - Directories
 - Manuals
 - Annuals & Yearbooks
- What is a fact? (from lowest to highest order)
 - Data
 - Fact
 - Information
 - Knowledge
 - Wisdom
 - Once you get enough of a _____ you can get the next level.
- Cautionary Notes:
 - Sources of information
 - Information should have a source to cite from.
 - Problem of nomenclature
 - Fact books are outdated quickly, but have historical value.
 - Exist for every conceivable subject (almost)
 - Online or web alternatives—do they really save time?
- Handbooks
 - German: handbuch
 - Miscellany—small
 - Utility rather than depth of coverage.
- Almanacs
 - General vs. subject
 - *Women's Almanac. Etc*
 - *Whitaker's—UK*
 - You never plant until after Easter!!!
 - **Only sponges will pick up cat hair.**
 - Often leads to source documents.
 - Useful chronologies, lists.
 - Encyclopedias supplements and yearbooks an alternative?
 - Subject terms are very bizarre.

- Measurements are different since they measure from different places.
- Directories
 - Outdated quickly
 - Geographic (phonebook) vs.
 - Professional vs.
 - Organizational (libraries, associations)
 - NB: *Directories in Print*. Reference AY2001. D57020 (2001)
- “People are so paranoid that people know that they exist. So they talk about who they had sex with across the frozen food counter.”
- Manuals
 - Limitations ex: dance
 - Replaced by video and DVD
 - Good for car repair
- Annuals and Yearbooks
 - Usually professional
 - Trace current trends in topic-alphabetic order
 - May include general information, obits, etc.
- Some particularly useful fact books (not immediately apparent)
 - *U.S. Government Manual*
 - Who’s Who in the current government
 - Minimal biographical information (available readily elsewhere, but committee assignments)
 - *Encyclopedias of Associations*
 - 3 volume in a base set
 - Also a set for international associations
 - Association in broadest sense (ex: Tom Jones fan)
 - Actually, a directory, although lots of additional organizational history and information
 - SEE ALSO: *Acronyms, Initialisms, and Abbreviations*
 - Strictly ABC order
- Indispensable Sources—1
 - *Famous First Facts*
 - America only—separate international edition (2000)
 - Geographical, Topical, and chronological arrangements
 - **The editions (1981, 1997, 2006) do not contain the same information! You may have to check more than one!**
 - Arranged in three parts:
 - Chronological order
 - Geographical arrangement
 - What happened first in Greensboro
 - Subject arrangement

- You have to figure out what they put things under
- Indispensable Sources—2
 - *Guinness World Records* (see also related titles, e.g. *Guinness Book of Records*, etc)
 - Originally started by beer guy to settle a bet
 - Biggest, smallest, longest, shortest—any superlative
 - Information not the same from issue to issue
 - Sporadic indexing, sometimes silly quests
- Indispensable Sources—3
 - *Statistical Abstracts of the U.S.*
 - Is a government document
 - Serves as a précis or index for government statistics
 - Note the source given at bottom of each table
 - Careful about units of measurement in table
- Indispensable Sources—4
 - Education
 - *College Blue Book* (see also Peterson's guides for comparison)
 - Now separate volumes for 4 year, junior college, occupational college, etc.)
 - Europa World of Learning
 - World guide, but coverage somewhat uneven for individual countries
 - Includes faculty
 - Most complete, but slightly confusing arrangement—also most expensive, but great features
 - *Political Handbook of the World*
 - *Statesman's Yearbook*
 - Will serve same purpose admirably for smaller library, and all three have great historical value
- Federal & State
 - *US Government Manual* (again)
 - Who's Who and On What Committee, etc. Index!
 - *North Carolina Manual*
 - A fluffy who's who of state government (pictures!)
 - But great introductory material (state bird, tree, rock, etc)
 - 5 years out of date
- And, for business and travel...
 - *Exporter's Encyclopedia*
 - What you can and can't take, by country
 - Customs Duties
 - Currency
 - Diplomatic liaison
 - Great supplement to information in *Europa Yearbook*, etc.