F OREWORD

Many people believe that searching the Web is as easy as typing a few terms into a box and clicking the search button. Like magic, in a matter of seconds, links to precise, accurate, and current answers will appear.

Unfortunately, this is not the case.

The term "search" is very broad and means different things to different people. For some people it means using an engine like AllTheWeb or Teoma. For others it includes the use of a Web directory focused on a specific topic. For some, search means utilizing not only Web engines but also specialized databases that may contain geographic data, full-text articles, or government information.

Another major issue for the searcher is where to begin. Questions revolve around what each resource does and does not offer. Which is most likely to hold the information I need? How often is the database updated? Can I limit my search to a particular format? Can I change the number of results I see on a results page? What advanced features are available? Knowing where to find this information and then how to apply it can help the Web searcher avoid coming face-to-face with massive amounts of aggravation and wasted time.

Complicating the situation is that as already large Web engines, directories, and databases get larger, it is becoming much more challenging to find what you're looking for. While the retrieval technology is getting better, to find information effectively your search skills must not only be up-to-date, they must be constantly improving.

The good news is that with just a little education and guidance, searching, retrieving, and accessing material on the Web can become easier. Having these skills will make you a better student. Knowing how to save search time will make you a more valuable employee.

These are a few of the reasons why the knowledge, experience, and opinions of Internet search expert Ran Hock are so valuable. This latest book of

Ran's, *The Extreme Searcher's Internet Handbook,* is a resource you'll find yourself referring to on a regular basis.

These days, people tend to rely on a single search tool for all of their Internet research needs. As Ran vividly illustrates, effective searching requires that you know how to use a number of tools. He does a great job of covering the wide range of resources available to the Web searcher. From news engines to quotation databases, specialized directories to online reference works, groups and mailing lists to image and audio finding tools, comparison shopping sites, portals, and more, Ran provides not only the addresses of these sources but the reasons you might want to use them. He also addresses copyright and citation issues, among other important topics for Web searchers.

Ran Hock has done more than write a book. He's created a key resource for both those who need a bit of education in the area of Web research and for experienced searchers who need to verify what a specific search tool offers.

I don't doubt that in a very short period of time your copy will be dog-eared, full of notes, draped with Post-Its, and nothing short of worn out.

Maybe you should buy two copies …

—Gary Price
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Gary Price is a reference librarian and information consultant based in suburban Washington, DC. He is co-author of *The Invisible Web: Uncovering Information Sources Search Engines Can't See* and edits ResourceShelf (http://www.resourceshelf.com), a daily update on Web search and other online retrieval news.