

Review: The Environmental Guidebook Companion CD-ROM

By Jeff Staudinger

Reviewed by Dale Stirling
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Jeff Staudinger. *The Environmental Guidebook: A Selective Reference Guide to Environmental Organizations and Related Entities with Companion CD-ROM*. Menlo Park, CA: Environmental Frontlines. 294 p. ISBN 0-9720685-1-1. US\$59.95

The movement to provide comprehensive document collections on CD-ROM is gathering speed. Publishers find that encyclopedias, manuals, guidebooks, and compendiums of all sorts lend themselves to this format. The CD-ROM is tailor-made for lengthy reference works that would otherwise take up valuable shelf space. However, this creates a new dual responsibility for the reviewer who must not only speak to the quality of the content, but the quality of the medium as well. In this case, the CD-ROM version stacks up well to its hardcopy version.

The CD-ROM is designed as a companion piece to the print version of the guidebook. As such it contains a PDF version of the guidebook imbedded with 3,800 Internet hotlinks. That the CD-ROM includes a PDF version of the guidebook makes for a versatile CD-ROM product. It is particularly valuable due to more than 300 documents (all in PDF) from state, federal, and international environmental agencies and special interest groups. These include annual reports, planning documents, "state of the state" reports, strategic plans, and other similar documents.

Does this work have competitors? Yes. Popular web-based directories include the *Environmental Yellow Pages* at <http://www.enviroyellowpages.com/Resources/Organizations> ; the *GAIN directories* at <http://eelink.net/gaindirectories.html>; and the *National Environmental Directory* at <http://www.environmentaldirectory.net/default.htm>. Popular print directories include the California Institute of Public Affairs' *World Directory of Environmental Organizations: A Handbook of National and International Organizations and Programs*; the National Wildlife Federation's *Conservation Directory: The Guide to Worldwide Environmental Organizations*; and Blue Planet's *The Green Book Directory: A Citizen's Guide to Environmental Organizations*. However, there is no single environmental directory that fulfills every research need. Based on the fact that this CD-ROM includes a PDF version of the *Environmental Guidebook*, that it contains hundreds of environmental reports of interest, and includes thousands of Internet links,

makes it a very desirable reference work. Its value will increase if updated editions are released in the future.

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