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REVIEW OF: Roy Tennant, John Ober, Anne G. Lipow. *Crossing The Internet Threshold: An Instructional Handbook* (1st ed.). Berkeley, CA: Library Solutions Press, 1993.

by Nancy Nuckles

"Crossing The Internet Threshold" is an updated version of the workbook they used at a 1992 workshop by the same name, which the reviewer attended. A foreword by Clifford A. Lynch, Director of Library Automation for the University of California, lends his excellent reputation to the publication.

Although somewhat out of date in mid-1994, it remains an excellent, clear introduction to many of the basics of the Internet. It covers networking, including names and addresses; connection to the internet; electronic mail; Telnet; and FTP. Some of the most useful information is contained in the Fact Sheets on Archie, Gopher, HYTELNET, Usenet, WAIS, and the World-Wide Web.

This publication concentrates on resources of use to libraries, which is evident from neither the title nor the table of contents. The library focus is probably intentional, as librarians and information professionals are likely to be some of the more prevalent Internet trainers. As a librarian, the reviewer appreciates this bias, but if provision of information were not my business, a text with more general coverage would be preferable. There are a number of more general publications, but none so well- designed for training as these.

One limitation of the book is that the content is Unix-based. While the authors admit this bias, the book is of limited value to users of other platforms. The "Internetworking Overview" includes an introduction to networking, using now familiar metaphors and examples to explain what the Internet is. There are brief discussions of the technological perspective, the social/political perspective, the functional perspective, and the perspective of size of networks, all of interest to the novice Internet user.

The section on names and addresses explains the anatomy of addresses, including IP addresses and domain name addresses. The evolution of networks and network services is given a brief, but sufficient, explanation for the beginner.

"Important Information for Beginners" includes a glossary, information on getting connected, Internet service providers, how to keep current, and a bibliography. Each are brief but complete enough for a training session to whet the appetites of new users. This chapter, although out-of-date, lists enough online sources of information which are still extant to remain useful. The bibliography does list several of the standard sources, such as Ed Krol's "The Whole Internet: User's Guide and Catalog," [1] and online sources including Art St. George's "Internet-Accessible Library Catalogs and Databases." [2]

"Electronic Mail" covers dos and don'ts, tips and tricks, for using e-mail and finding addresses. It lists electronic discussions for librarians and how to use listservs, electronic discussions, and journals. The authors phrase these hints in a humorous but effective fashion--think before you send, think twice before you reply, think thrice before you forward, think overnight before you flame. This is the first of the chapters which include hands-on exercises. It is helpful for trainers to have exercises designed, as these are, for several levels of expertise, so more difficult ones can be used as appropriate.

"Internet Remote Login (Telnet)," the next chapter, contains an introduction and definition, a command summary, tips and tricks, and exercises. Each command summary, or tips and tricks section, includes the command to find help and to exit. This is a small service but one often omitted in how-to publications and training materials. The exercises are divided not only into levels of expertise, but also into types of services, such as accessing online catalogs or other special databases.

"Internet File Transfer (FTP)" is structured in a similar fashion, and includes instructions for downloading and translating files and a list of common FTP file extensions. This list is one of several pages which will be used frequently for a quick reminder or to answer users' questions.

The next section is one used frequently in the reviewer's office-- the fact sheets. Each is only one or two pages, but provides a sufficient quick description and reference on some of the most popular services on the Internet. They are: Archie, BITNET, Freenets, Gopher, HYTELNET, Internet, LIBS, Project Gutenberg, RFCs, SLIP, Usenet News, WAIS, World-Wide Web, and Z39.50.

Trainers will find the chapter with Trainer's Aids the most beneficial reason for purchasing this publication. It contains small group discussion questions, an evaluation form, and a checklist for trainers. Most trainers find a checklist useful in preparing every detail of a session. In addition, there are pages which can be used for overheads on several topics covered in the previous chapters. These are "Introduction to Networking," "What Are Networks," "Networks You May Have Heard About," and "Names and Addresses." An appendix contains diagrams which may be useful for showing maps of backbones and networks in the US. An index completes the publication.

Notes:

1. Krol, Ed. *The Whole Internet: User's Guide & Catalog* (1st ed.). Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly & Associates, 1992.
2. St. George, Art & Larsen, Ron. *Internet-Accessible Library Catalogs and Databases* [Online]. Available FTP: ftp.unm.edu Directory: library File: internet.library Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico, 1992.

[Editor's note: The 2nd edition of this publication was reviewed in TER volume 2, issue 2 (/lita/publications/archive/ter/2/2-2#tenant).]

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REVIEW OF: Lee David Jaffe. *Introducing the Internet: A Trainer's Workshop* (1st ed.). Berkeley, CA: Library Solutions Press, 1994.

by Nancy Nuckles

"Introducing the Internet: A Trainer's Workshop" is the first supplement to "Crossing the Internet Threshold." [1] Although it covers many of the same topics, this supplement is designed to be delivered in a shorter training session than the original. Both books may be used by trainers or by individuals who learn best with explanations and hands-on activities. The book is divided into four substantive parts: "Lecture," "Slides," "Handouts," and "Instruction for Trainers." Also included are a preface, appendix, and index.

The Lecture chapter is the informative portion of the book. Like "Crossing the Internet Threshold," it discusses what the Internet is, how to get connected, and network addresses. There is a review of e-mail, Telnet, FTP, and extended services, such as Gopher and Archie. Each of these topics can include a hands-

on demonstration at the time of discussion, or can be shown en masse after presentation. The trainer should also cover getting a network account, learning the systems, varieties of hardware, and how to learn more.

This publication is not designed for comprehensive coverage of any of these topics. There are many publications about the Internet, and each has its own merits and can expand the user's knowledge. The benefits of these supplemental publications are the chapters of ready-made slides, handouts, glossaries, and bibliographic citations. There are two-page brief guides to e-mail, Telnet, and FTP which students of the topic will find especially helpful.

As this publication is designed for trainers, there is a chapter devoted to suggestions on organizing and conducting a variety of training sessions on the topic. Even experienced trainers will benefit from the lists and ideas presented. An Appendix gives one example of a modified version of the information and slides.

Notes:

1. Tennant, Roy, Ober, John, & Lipow, Anne G. *Crossing The Internet Threshold: An Instructional Handbook* (1st ed.). Berkeley, CA: Library Solutions Press, 1993.

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REVIEW OF: David F. W. Robinson. All about Internet FTP: Learning and Teaching to Transfer Files on the Internet (1st ed.). Berkeley, CA: Library Solutions Press, 1994.

by Nancy Nuckles

"All About Internet FTP: Learning and Teaching to Transfer Files on the Internet" is the second supplement to "Crossing the Internet Threshold." [1] Both supplements are fairly up to date as they were published in February 1994. As the title suggests, this book concentrates on FTP. The format remains as in "Introducing the Internet." [2] There are substantive sections for the lecture; the slides; the glossary, exercises, and handouts as supporting materials; and trainer's aids; plus a preface and index.

The lecture is clearly organized into sections which can be expanded or shortened as the situation and experience of the students require. There are clear explanations of what FTP can do and how it works, what anonymous FTP is, the simple FTP interface, the FTP session itself, downloading, FTP client software, locating files, and keeping current. Included are an example of a session, a list of common file extensions, and a description of some popular sites. A clearer explanation than is usually found of a variety of Archie searches and results adds value to this publication.

Exercises include getting a simple text file, reading a text file without transferring it, changing local names and directories, getting a DOS file, getting a Mac font, and locating and getting graphics files. There are hints and explanations of common mistakes with each exercise.

Pages which may be removed and used as overhead slides constitute a major portion of these supplemental publications. The lecture sections of the manuals designate the number of the slide which should be presented at each step of the lecture. The "Plus" version of these two titles includes diskettes with PowerPoint presentation slides, Mac and Windows Viewer files, and specific instructions for displaying them. The price for the titles is \$30.00 each--or \$45.00 each for the Plus version. Considering the value of the time for a trainer to obtain the same information and design slides, the purchase is well worth the price.

Notes:

1. Tennant, Roy, Ober, John, & Lipow, Anne G. Crossing The Internet Threshold: An Instructional Handbook (1st ed.). Berkeley, CA: Library Solutions Press, 1993.
2. Jaffe, Lee David. Introducing the Internet: A Trainer's Workshop (1st ed.). Berkeley, CA: Library Solutions Press, 1994.

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Networking As Smoke And Mirrors

by Thomas C. Wilson

Recently, after a week of 12-hour days, I was reminded that sometimes we get caught up in the high-level protocols of life and the complexities of what we attempt to accomplish--high percentage uptime, increasingly intelligent applications, global connectivity, etc. In the race--or chase, if you prefer--to get there first, stay there the longest, and garner the highest visibility, we can easily forget how tenuous, and yet amazing, it is that we are able to connect so many things.

In the midst of attempting to figure out why some piece of hardware refuses to communicate, I often lose track of what we have done and are planning to do. And I suspect many of us suffer the same distraction. On one level, networking really is some sort of magic show. It matters only in as much as the user perceives a seamless intertwining of resources available to him or her--not unlike the concept of multi-tasking. Our systems, and at times those of us who support them, participate in a fantastic cover-up. Not that any of us really chooses to deceive others, but to the degree that we actually accomplish this integration, we judge our success on the basis of how well we fool the users. The very point of much of our work is that the users don't "see" it. Now, I am not suggesting that we are all charlatans or that we should stop providing the services that we do. I am chewing on the idea that we perhaps do ourselves a disservice when we focus solely on the lowest layers of the stack.

Yes, networking--and life in general--is made up of multiple layers of minutia. And we must pour over these details in order to create, maintain, and enhance the services and resources we offer. I am, however, struck by the need to pause from time to time and muse that it actually works. As a parent of a youngster, I have a built-in reminder of what it's like to allow oneself to be amazed and perhaps a bit starry-eyed. With all due respect to the seemingly endless hours of support work we invest, I do think it does us good once in awhile to sit back in wonderment.

Here's to all of us who support this stuff we call networking: May our packets be happy and our switching smooth!

Tom Wilson, Editor-in-Chief TER, TWilson@uh.edu (<mailto:TWilson@uh.edu>)

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