

## Description

We investigated the Ballard branch of the Seattle Public Library. Located in a growing and changing neighborhood, it is “one of the busiest branches in the city” according to the SPL website (<http://www.spl.org/Neighborhoodlibs/ballard/index.html>). This assertion is borne out by our experience; when we visited on a Sunday afternoon, the library was teeming with people moving through the stacks or sitting at computer terminals and reading tables. Because of the intense use this branch receives, the city is building a new facility to replace the current one. According to the status report on the website, the new building will contain a neighborhood service center as well as the library facility, which will include “an updated collection of 66,700 books and materials, more seats, expanded reference areas, larger areas for children and young adults, more computer space, a meeting room and more parking” (<http://www.spl.org/Neighborhoodlibs/ballard/ballardstatus.html>).

As a branch of the public library, the Ballard branch, of course, serves the general public. In the Ballard neighborhood, the general public is a mixture of its historical populace (industrial and maritime workers, families, and senior citizens) and newer residents (artists and younger people). The people, prominent displays, and book categorizations that we saw in the library confirmed that the patrons are an eclectic and diverse group. Flyers in the library were written in English, Polish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Russian. One area contained newspapers in Spanish, German, and Russian. The children’s area includes a large number of materials as well an area for children to sit. The library hosts storytelling for families as well as book clubs for any interested people. Arranged according to the Dewey decimal system, the branch also includes some bookstore-like organization, breaking up the fiction into general fiction as well as “Mystery” (the largest of the separate categories), “Sci-Fi,” and “Western.” The 600 section is the largest non-fiction section, housing how-to books, manuals, and practical books on activities such as gardening, auto repair, and management. In addition to the standard non-fiction, the library includes a collection it calls “Marine” as well as a collection about local history. The oversize book section appears to contain mostly art books.

The reference books include an entire wall (six tall columns of shelving) labeled “Reference,” two columns labeled “Job & Education Center,” and many areas labeled “Consumer Information.” Included in the labeling is the note that some of these items may be checked out. Near the children’s and young adult sections is an area labeled “Newspapers, College Catalogs, and Handouts.” More flyers hang on the board near the check out desk under the categories “Ballard Events,” “Misc. Events,” “Parents & Children,” “City and Government Agencies,” “Volunteer Opportunities,” “ESL,” “Health Issues,” “Business & Job,” “Classes & Schools,” “Newsletters,” and “Entertainment.” The periodicals have a small reading area nearby.

As evidenced by the number of flyers as well as other services, beyond being a library, this branch functions as a community center. Bus and ferry schedules are near the door for convenient pick-up. People may use computers for word processing and Internet access, with printing available for a small per sheet fee. Currently, the library offers tax forms and even tax help, including flyers, hosting workshops and offering e-filing services. Due to the location of some tall bookshelves, a person at the checkout desk cannot see the entire library; so, a mirror sits on top of some shelves in order to monitor the children’s area.

## **Characterization**

We interviewed three Ballard librarians who told us that Ballard has sixteen staff members, including four librarians (two full-time and two part-time), and these librarians answer reference questions by phone and at a reference desk. (The non-librarian staff primarily handle administrative tasks, circulation and shelving books.) They also told us that Ballard is the busiest Seattle Public branch in terms of reference questions and the second busiest in terms of circulation. Their door counter records 600-1000 people coming through the doors each day, and the numbers increased by more than 7000 total last year.

The librarians at Ballard reported that their growing community is diverse. Ballard doesn’t have as many people of Scandinavian descent as it used to. The community currently includes seniors, homeless, a fishing community, small business

owners, artists, artisans, day care providers and visitors (the fishing terminal brings in people from out of town). Many families with children come to the library. (800 kids enrolled in the summer reading program last year, including 119 teens.)

When asked about underserved populations in their community, the librarians mentioned that more women than men seem to use the library. Also, self-employed people, of which there are many in Ballard, don't come in often (except at tax time) and don't seem to realize how many resources the library has to offer them. Furthermore, new immigrants from places like Russia, Pakistan, and Ethiopia often have a need for citizenship materials and videos in many languages, and procuring these is sometimes troublesome. The librarians also want to better serve students and especially teachers at nearby schools, including a nearby ESL school.

In terms of technological infrastructure, the Ballard library has computers with Internet connections and computers with only word-processing functionality. As in all Seattle Public branches, patrons at Ballard have access to an online catalog, an Internet browser, subscription databases, and a word processing program. Ballard patrons represent the whole spectrum of technical literacy from people who've never used a computer to experts. The librarians reported that approximately half the patrons come in to use the computers, and of those who come in for the computer, almost all come to check e-mail.

When we asked which resources were used the most, the librarians reported that periodicals and repair manuals get heavy use. Not surprisingly, they also mentioned: *World Book Encyclopedia*, almanacs, dictionaries, consumer information, the RCWs, *Physicians Desk Reference*, and *World Biography Abridged* (which they said was better than *American National Biography*). Two sources important for children are the *International Wildlife Encyclopedia*, and the biographical resources. When we asked about serial and bibliographic databases, they mentioned Gale Biography, One File, and ProQuest. As for non-subscription web resources, they mentioned: Amazon.com, Google, imdb.com, Irs.gov, the King County Law Library website, and the new UW Health Sciences live chat. They also said forms are in demand: they use various books and forms on file (online). For readers' advisory they use *The Whole Story*, *NoveList*, "If You Like . . ." lists, and Google.

When we asked what they would add to their collection, they told us that collection development at Seattle Public is centralized but that they fought hard for the *Gale Directory of Publications*. They would add more poetry indexes and probably remove *Lands and Peoples* in print because they now have better information online.

## Resources

We chose to take a closer look at consumer information resources at Ballard. (Many of these resources are in the 600s of the Dewey run.)

### Subscription Databases<sup>1</sup> (The prorated total is: \$1682.69)

This section includes online resources available at all Seattle Public Library (SPL) branches and at home from the SPL website. SPL pays an annual subscription fee for these resources. The total annual fee estimated for the following databases for all of Seattle Public Library (SPL) is \$43,750 per year. And since all SPL branches have access to these databases this number is further divided by the 26 existing SPL branches.

#### Health & Wellness Resource Center

Gale Group. Farmington Hills, MI. Copyright © 2003. (Gale Group is a Thomson Corporation Company.)

**Price:** Part of a bundle of Gale databases covering topics including literature, biography, history and business. The price of the total bundle is \$58,798 per year. Very roughly speaking the health databases could be estimated at \$12,000 per year assuming they make up roughly one fifth of the bundle. Further divided by branch this total is: \$461.54

“Health and medical journals, the Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, and the Medical & Health Information Directory.” The Health & Wellness Resource Center includes reference sources, pamphlets, articles, newsletters and more. This database’s resources include: *Body by Design: From the Digestive System to the Skeleton*, *Harvard Special Health Reports*, *Consumer Health Information Source Book*, *PDR Family Guide to Nutrition and Health*, *The PDR Family Guide to Over-the-Counter Drugs*, *Complementary and Alternative Medicine Information Source Book*, *Herbal Medicine: Expanded Commission E Monographs*, *PDR Family Guide to Natural Medicines and Healing Therapies*, and *USPDI: Volume 2, Advice for the Patient*. These resources and others include material for different reading levels and audiences. This database is searchable, the user may employ Boolean operators, proximity operators, and the user may browse the *Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine*. The interface also allows the user to link to MEDLINE and other resources such as Cancerfacts.com. In short, this database is expensive, but contains a great deal of quality information.

<sup>1</sup> Annotations for subscription databases begin with material quoted from Seattle Public Library’s website. <http://www.spl.org> (Accessed 5/19/03).

### **Health Reference Center**

**Price:** Part of a (second) bundle of Gale databases. The price of the total bundle is \$71,864 per year. Very roughly speaking the health database could be estimated at \$14,000 per year assuming it, with OneFile, makes up roughly one fifth of the bundle. Further divided by branch this total is: \$538.46

“Articles on pregnancy, medicine, nutrition, diseases, HMOs, prescription drugs, etc.” Some of the journals, or other materials, available through this resource are: *AIDS Weekly*, *American Baby*, *Biotech Week*, *Consumer Reports on Health*, *Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine*, *Harvard Health Letter*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, *Lancet*, *Psychology Today*, and *Vegetarian Journal*. So, both the average consumer and health professionals can find information of interest. Most of the resources on the list make sense, but it is unclear why journals such as *Library Journal* are also included. This resource uses the InfoTrac interface, is searchable, and includes either citations or full-text articles depending on the article. This resource offers a different interface, and draws on some different resources, but it overlaps with the Health & Wellness Resource Center.

### **OneFile**

**Price:** Part of one of the Gale bundles, and the estimated price is included in the estimate given for Health Reference Center.

“A one-stop source for magazine articles on a wide range of topics.” This uses the InfoTrac interface and includes periodicals not covered in other resources such as *401K Advisor* that may be of interest to consumers.

### **ProQuest Direct**

**Price:** Bundled with Computer Database and InfoTrac for a total price of \$17,750 per year. (This price is lower than some of the others because Seattle Public Library gets a discount on these databases by being part of the Washington Library Consortium. Divided by branch this total is: \$682.69

“Magazine and newspaper databases in all subject areas. Includes full-text coverage of the Seattle Times (1984-current) and the Post-Intelligencer (1990-current), and full-text coverage of the New York Times for the past three years. Provided jointly by the Washington State Library and the Seattle Public Library, and is funded in part with federal LSTA funds.” Proquest is an important source for consumers because it includes full text articles from *Consumer Reports* magazine, local newspapers, and other periodicals useful for making consumer choices. Coverage of *Consumer Reports*: Citation, abstract, full-text, graphics and page image: May 2002 (Volume 67, Issue 5) – current. The coverage of local papers may also be helpful for consumers wanting local product and service information.

### **General Reference Center from InfoTrac**

**Price:** Bundled with Computer Database and ProQuest.

“General interest database of full-text articles from magazines, reference books, and newspapers.” General Reference Center from InfoTrac is of use to consumers in part because it has citations and abstracts for *Consumer Reports* articles. There is

overlap with ProQuest Direct and Computer Database, but also some resources that are unique to InfoTrac—everything from *AB Europe* to *ZIP-Target Marketing*.

### **Computer Database**

**Price:** Bundled with ProQuest and InfoTrac.

“Articles about computers and technology.” This database, with the Infotrac interface includes access to articles from periodicals such as *Business Software*, *Computer Gaming World*, *Computer User*, *Computerworld*, *FamilyPC*, *LAN Product News*, *Macworld*, *PC Magazine*, *Wired* and *Yahoo! Internet Life*. So, consumers with both general and more specialized needs would be able to find articles and citations of interest.

### **Web Resources (Total cost: \$0)**

In this section of the list are free web resources. The SPL does not license or subscribe to them; it merely links to them from its website. Therefore, these resources incur no costs to the library system other than those of hosting its website and providing Internet access in the libraries. These resources are linked from the SPL’s website (<http://www.spl.org/selectedsites/consumer.html>) but hosted elsewhere.

**Seattle Citizen’s Service Bureau:** <http://www.cityofseattle.net/CitizenService/>

“The Citizens Service Bureau exists to help you get information, solve problems, or resolve complaints regarding any City of Seattle department.” The website hosts a web form for filing compliments/comments/requests/complaints as well as a Frequently Asked Questions document which answers common questions such as “What’s the schedule for garbage and recycling pickup?” Although this site does not itself host very much information, its FAQ links to other city department sites. A Seattle resident who doesn’t know what city department to ask can pose his question here and find out where to go next.

**Unclaimed Property Database (WA):** <http://ucp.dor.wa.gov/>

Unclaimed property is “any intangible amount owed or held by an organization that remains unpaid or has no evidence of positive owner activity for an extended period of time.” Abandoned property is turned over to the Washington State Department of Revenue, which publishes its database on the Web. People can search the database for a person’s name and, if they recognize the name and address, file a claim for the abandoned property attached to that name.

**Frequently Requested County Records:**

<http://www.metrokc.gov/recelec/archives/frequent/>

This site is a guide to finding frequently requested county records. The site does not host records itself, but it tells you whom to ask for historical records such as birth certificates or election records. It is a crucial resource for genealogists and other nuts.

**Washington State Office of the Attorney General: Consumer Protection Division:**

<http://www.wa.gov/ago/consumer/>

The Consumer Protection Division “enforces consumer protection statutes by investigating and bringing legal actions to stop fraudulent and deceptive practices, and to

recover refunds, costs and penalties. ... The division also provides information to the public on consumer rights, fraudulent or predatory business activities, and issues alerts when consumers are targeted for fraudulent or illegal practices.” Consistent with this mission, the CPD’s website offers tips about avoiding scams and other shady business practices. For example, one page about choosing a phone carrier alerts consumers to the practice of “slamming” and advises them to get everything in writing. Top consumer problem areas covered on the site include communications, credit/mortgages, retail business, travel tours, motor vehicle repair, motor vehicle sales, contractors, direct mail advertising, books and magazines, and appliances. The site also hosts consumer complaint forms; the forms as well as some articles are also available in Spanish.

**Better Business Bureau:** <http://www.bbb.org/>

This site is put out by the Council of Better Business Bureaus, whose mission is “to promote and foster the highest ethical relationship between business and the public through voluntary self-regulation, consumer and business education, and service excellence.” To that end, it provides services such as business reliability reports, dispute resolution, truth-in-advertising, consumer and business education, and charity review. Current “special features” include sections about business ethics (for businesses) and identity theft (for consumers).

**Safeshopping.org:** <http://www.safeshopping.org/>

Safeshopping.org is a site created by the American Bar Association, about how to buy online safely. It has concise, authoritative information about issues of online transactions such as security and privacy. The focus is on legal issues and the precautions that buyers should take to safeguard their rights.

**Federal Citizen Information Center:** <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/>

The Federal Citizen Information Center provides answers to questions about the federal government and every-day consumer issues. The FCIC can be contacted by mail, by phone, or of course on the Web, where the FCIC is one of a family of websites: [firstgov.gov](http://firstgov.gov), [pueblo.gsa.gov](http://pueblo.gsa.gov), [kids.gov](http://kids.gov), and [consumeraction.gov](http://consumeraction.gov). The FCIC’s site covers not only popular topics such as cars and computers, but ones which may not be addressed by other sites, such as federal programs, housing, and education. The site also has a fairly comprehensive section about scams and frauds.

**Consumer Price Index from the US Department of Labor:** <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/>

“The Consumer Price Indexes program produces monthly data on changes in the prices paid by urban consumers for a representative basket of goods and services.” The CPI is used to track inflation; consumers can compare what they pay to the official CPI and find out how much less a dollar is worth today than last month.

**Product Reviews and Reports by Consumer Search:**

<http://www.consumersearch.com/>

Consumer Search is a source for product reviews on a wide range of product categories. The site hosts three basic services for each type of product (for example, MP3 players). “Fast Answers” summarizes the research results for each model (for example, Apple’s

iPod), “Full Story” is a longer article written by Consumer Search’s own experts, and “All Reviews” links to reviews on other sites such as CNet, ranked by credibility rating. Product reviews not only consider products on their own merits, but compare them to similar items. This site is perhaps most useful for reviews of product reviews from other sources; in fact, the site’s tagline is “Reviewing the reviewers.”

**Find-it-consumer:** <http://finditconsumer.wa.gov/>

Find-it! Consumer is a specialized web search engine that allows consumers to search consumer information created by governmental and non-profit organizations, either national or local to Washington state. Consumers can search by keyword, browse by topic, or see a list of this week’s most popular questions. The focus is on the most recent information and consumer need; the sidebar features “What’s New,” a short list of new topics covered on the site. Find-It! Consumer is sponsored by the Washington State Attorney General, Consumer Jungle, and other departments and organizations.

**Kelley Blue Book:** <http://www.kbb.com/>

This site is the free web version of the Kelley Blue Book, a reputable print resource for pricing used cars. The website features an interactive used-car pricing feature which calculates an average price according to make, model, condition, and features, in detail which would be impossible with a print edition. The site also features information about new-car pricing, insurance, warranties, and other related topics. The site pays for itself through advertising.

**NADA:** <http://www.nada.com/>

Strictly speaking, Nada.com offers no information and only links to three separate sites for consumers and businesses. Nadaguides.com is the site for consumers, providing the same sort of information as Kbb.com, such as prices for cars, motorcycles, boats, and other vehicles. The site offers the same information as in the print guides, for free; naturally it plugs the print guides, and it pays for itself through advertising.

**Edmunds.com:** <http://www.edmunds.com/>

Edmunds.com provides all sorts of information and services for people who are shopping for cars, whether new or used. There are “prices, review, and info” on both new and used cars, but the specific information is slightly different; for example, “incentives & rebates” for new cars but “cars for sale near you” for used cars. Edmunds.com also provides links to financing and insurance, all sorts of car advice, and car-related message boards.

**Product Safety:** <http://www.consumer.gov/productsafety.htm>

This is a site produced by the federal government about product safety information and alerts, divided into categories such as “automobiles,” “children,” “poison,” and “product recalls.” Every link (such as “Poison Prevention”) is associated with a body such as the FDA or CPSC. This is the authoritative source for product safety information.

**Center for Health Statistics: Vital Records Certificate Ordering (WA State Dept. of Health):** <http://www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/chs/cert.htm>

This site is another all-important genealogical resource. The “vital records” in question

are birth, death, marriage, and divorce certificates; the CHS holds birth and death records since 1907 and marriage and divorce records since 1968. Certificate ordering is now via a company called VitalChek Network, which has a website and accepts online ordering for some states.

**HealthFinder.gov:** <http://www.healthfinder.gov/>

HealthFinder is “your guide to reliable health information,” published by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. HealthFinder is a “key resource for finding the best government and nonprofit health and human services information on the Internet;” rather than an informational site, it is a directory of Web health resources.

**MEDLINEplus Health Information from the National Library of Medicine:**

<http://medlineplus.gov/>

MEDLINEplus is published by the National Library of Medicine. According to the site, it “has extensive information from the National Institutes of Health and other trusted sources on over 600 diseases and conditions. There are also lists of hospitals and physicians, a medical encyclopedia and a medical dictionary, health information in Spanish, extensive information on prescription and nonprescription drugs, health information from the media, and links to thousands of clinical trials. MEDLINEplus is updated daily... There is no advertising on this site, nor does MEDLINEplus endorse any company or product.” This is a very authoritative site for almost all consumer health information.

**Live Help:** <http://www.spl.org>

The Ballard Library is one of three Seattle Public Library branches that began offering access to general, medical, and legal information through the new “Live Help” online service in January 2003. This service is a cooperative service provided by The Seattle Public Library, University of Washington Health Sciences Libraries and King County Law Library. This service provides answers to reference questions and also serves as a guide to Seattle Public’s electronic resources. Seattle Public’s web site states: “To connect to Live Help, visit [www.spl.org](http://www.spl.org) and click on Ask A Question. From there, choose Live Help and then link directly to any one of the three participating libraries for service after downloading a small plug-in.” The website further adds: “Live Help is currently available from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Access to Live Help from all computers in The Seattle Public Library will be available by April 1.”

### **Print Resources (Total Cost: \$453.31)**

This section includes print resources available at the Ballard branch of Seattle Public Library. We chose to look at the fairly standard resources, but it is worth noting that Ballard also provides local resources. For example, the Ballard branch has pamphlets and information like newsletters in binders to enhance the service that staff provides to patrons looking for consumer information. The binders are local creations and often deal with local issues. We divided the print resources into two sections. The first section is

print resources that must be bought on an annual basis, and the second section is print resources that don't need to be undated every year.

**Subscription/Yearly Purchase (\$294.49):**

*Consumer Guide: Best Buys and Discount Prices*

ISBN 0-671-78587-7 (ISSN 0882-729X)

Book: 21 cm

Publisher: Publications International

Price: \$13 retail

Library also holds the 2002 and 2001 editions.

<http://www.consumerguide.com>

Divided into sections by types of products, this guide includes summaries of the type, strategies for shopping, names of stores, and features & terminology. After the summary, it describes particular models, including specifications, ratings, warranty, manufacturer's suggested retail price, and an approximate low price. This guide also includes a table of contents but no index.

*Consumer Guide: Computer Buying Guide*

2002 edition, ISBN 0-45119-908-1

Paperback: 28 cm

Publisher: Publications International

Price: \$9.99 retail

Available annually, this guide contains summaries with ratings, specifics, and company contact information for computers, PDAs, peripherals, software, online services, and Internet resources. The guide contains information on individual products, grouped by type, such as monitors, video cards, or software suites. Each main section (computers, PDAs, peripherals, software, etc.) also includes a general summary of current trends in that type of product. Admittedly, the guide does not cover all products available, but it tries to give a good sampling of interest to the average buyer, in a wide price range. This guide includes a table of contents; however, the lack of an index may be annoying. The ratings don't have an obvious key available, but the summaries (in terms of options and what is available) may often be of use.

*Consumer Reports* magazine

Magazine: 18-28 cm

Author/Publisher: Consumers Union of United States

(\$53.40 cover price)

Price: \$26 SPL price

This monthly magazine also publishes several types of special issues and contains articles and product reviews on technology, medicine, food, and many other products. The issues also include articles on consumer topics such as investing or certain types of home repair. Special issues are devoted to certain types of products (such as electronics) or particular products (such as cars). Because each issue is diverse in its coverage and new products continuously arrive on the market, a continuous record of this resource will be of most help to patrons.

*Consumer Reports Buying Guide*

2003 edition, ISBN 0-89043-970-2

Paperback: 360 pages; 0.63 x 7.22 x 5.06 inches

Publisher: Consumer Reports Books (November 2002)

Price: \$9.99 retail

Library also holds the 2001 and 2002 editions.

Available annually, this guide includes general tips and shopping strategies for buying in a store, through a catalog, or online as well as summaries that include "What's Available," "Key Features," and "How to Choose" for products new on the market. The summaries also list related reports in the main Consumer Reports magazine. This guide also includes product recalls, manufacturer contact information, an 8-year guide to the magazine, and an index to the buying guide.

*Consumer Reports Digital Buying Guide*

2003 edition, ISBN 0-89043-969-9 (ISSN 1530-3713)

Paperback: 256 pages; 0.43 x 10.8 x 8.36

Publisher: Consumer Reports Books (October 2002)

Price: \$9.99 retail

Designed to give buying advice for hardware (digital cameras, PDAs, MP3 players, computers, peripherals, etc.) and software as well as advice on Internet resources, this guide gives an introduction to the type of item followed by "What's available," "Key features," and "How to choose." The information contained overlaps with the *Consumer Reports Home Computer Buying Guide*. The chapters are Plugged in & Turned on, Fitting Images: Photos and Video, All in the Game, Rock on: Digital Music, Good Work: Research Tools, Online Shopping: the Virtual Mall, Computing, Picture These, Sound Investments, Ink to Paper, Telephones, Working in Comfort, and a Reference Section which includes ratings, brand guide, glossary, and index to the guide. Within the chapters, the guide includes tips broken out from the main text into boxes. These tips are sporadic, but include things to consider such as batteries, memory, and cost of use over the long term.

*Consumer Reports Home Computer Buying Guide 2002*

2002 edition, ISBN 0-89043-959-1 (ISSN 1087-3368)

Paperback: 256 pages; 0.5 x 11 x 8 inches

Publisher: Consumer Reports Books (October 2001)

Price: \$9.99 retail

Though similar in content, this guide has a very different layout from the *Consumer Guide: Computer Buying Guide*. It is divided into Navigating the Web, Life Online, Sights & Sounds, Software for Fun and Profit, The Virtual Mall, Personal Computing, Cool Tools, Ink to Paper, Telephones, Working in Comfort, and a Reference Section which includes ratings, brand guide, glossary, and index to the guide. The guide follows a format similar to other *Consumer Report* buying guides, including "What's available," "Key features," and "How to choose." Someone consulting the guide will need to jump to several pages to find all he or she may need to make a decision. The main advantage to this guide is the summary of features generally available for certain types of products.

*Consumer Reports Used Car Buying Guide 2002*

ISBN 0-89043-963-X

Paperback: 256 pages; 0.5 x 11 x 8.5 inches

Publisher: Consumer Reports Books (March 2002)

Price: \$9.99 retail

This guide includes ratings on reliability, safety, car care & tires, insurance, buying or selling, profiles of selected models, and reference (ratings of car-related products, recalls, index to models profiled, and a sample bill of sale). The profiles are major models from between 1994 to 2001 and include information on reliability, safety equipment, drive wheels, reliability history for certain parts, and prices by year. This guide will give a reader information on what to look for, but it not the best source for information on specific models. It contains a table of contents, but no index.

*ACEEE's Green Book: The Environmental Guide to Cars* by John DeCicco

2003 edition, ISBN 0-918249-51-1

Book: 163 pages; 23 cm

Publisher: American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy

Price: \$8.95 retail

Library also holds the 2002 edition, ISBN 0-918249-48-1 and the 2001 edition, ISBN 0-918249-39-2.

<http://www.GreenerCars.com>

This specialty book is for buyers interested in cars and trucks that are considered friendlier for the environment. The guide includes information on emissions testing, fuels, car design, tips on "driving green" (in addition to "buying green"), and a section on "Automobiles and the Environment." In addition to ratings for the vehicles, the guide also lists "highlights of the model year" such as top scorers, electric vehicles, meanest vehicles for the environment, and crossover vehicles. The ratings are given in tables with many acronyms and symbols explained in a key. Using the guide may require a straightedge to isolate certain categories to compare across brands. This guide is unique in its "green" outlook.

Edmunds

*2003 Annual New Cars and Trucks Buyer's Guide*

ISBN 0-87759-681-6

Paperback: 400 pages; 0.75 x 9 x 7 inches

Publisher: Edmund Publications (January 2003)

Price: \$9.99 retail

*2003 Annual Used Cars and Trucks Buyer's Guide*

ISBN 0-87759-683-2

Price: \$9.99

*2002 Used Cars and Trucks Prices*

ISBN 0-87759-680-8

Price: \$9.99

<http://www.edmunds.com>

The many special varieties of this classic guide contain in-depth vehicle descriptions. The books for new vehicles contain the largest amount of description and include the description, price range, consumer ratings, editors' ratings, specifications, body styles, pros/cons, and what's new for the model. The books for used vehicles have a smaller amount of description, but pack in tables of information concerning pricing by body styles and options.

NADA guides

*Official Older Used Car Guide (National Edition): Domestic Cars--Import Cars—Light-Duty Trucks (Jan-April 2003)*

*Official Older Used Car Guide (National Edition): Passenger Cars—Light-Duty Trucks (May-Aug 2003)*

*Official Used Car Guide (Pacific Northwest Edition): Passenger Cars—Light-Duty Trucks*

Paperback: 0.5 x 5 x 3.5

Publisher: Automotive Publications (May 2003)

Price: \$9.95 each (3 listed) = \$29.85

This traditional guide for pricing a used car includes information on some (but no all) of the originally available options. Pocket size is good and bad. It is transportable, but the font is small. NADA makes its guides in many special varieties. In addition to the national edition, regional versions are available. Other varieties include classic/collectible/special interest car, recreation vehicle, marine appraisal, motorcycle/snowmobile/ATV/personal watercraft, van/truck conversion & limousines, and commercial trucks.

*Road & Track Buyer's Guide 2002*

Annual ISSN 1060-8656

Part of Road & Track magazine \$48.39 cover (\$5.95 issue price)

Price: \$11.97 subscription

This special issue of *Road & Track* magazine includes prices, specifications, warranties, and summaries for new model cars. Each model is pictured and described on one page, with a few smaller "specialty files" for high-end cars. It includes minimal advertising from manufacturers. With no rating system, this issue may be best for people interested in general information about new models of cars, and it would need to be paired with another source for most buyers to determine if a car is correct for them.

*2003 Standard Guide to Cars and Prices* Edited by Kowalke & Buttolph

ISBN 0-87349-487-3 (ISSN 1048-1001)

Paperback: 744 pages; 1.5 x 9.04 x 6 inches

Publisher: Krause Publications (September 2002)

Price: \$17.95 retail

From the same publisher as *Standard Catalog of American Cars 1946-1975*, whose editor is a co-editor on this book, this book is one long table of car models and prices, subdivided by a condition code. The codes are described in the front of the book, complete with rough diagrams. The book does not include how options add to the value, but it covers models from 1901 to 1995. The models are subdivided by engine and body

style. The information in this guide comes from the same data used by *Old Cars Price Guide*, a specialty magazine for people in many types of the used car businesses. The guide also includes a look into the crystal ball for collector-car trends.

*The Used Car Book 2002-2003* by Jack Gillis  
15th edition, ISBN 0-06-273715-5 (ISSN 0895-3899)  
Paperback: 336 pages; 0.85 x 7.96 x 5.3  
Publisher: Harper Resource (July 30, 2002)  
Price: \$11.95 retail

Library also holds the 2000-2001 edition, ISBN 0-06-273713-9.  
Available annually, this book includes “Finding them and checking them out,” “Getting the best price and selling your car,” “Keeping them going,” and “How they rate.” The many checklists and helpful hints may be the most helpful part of this book for the buyer. The very small index does not include the cars. The guide to cars is for model years 1993-2002, listed alphabetically. Each model includes a picture, a very brief summary, and a table of specifics, complaints, and price for the years the model was produced. It also includes an overall rating.

*Consumer Reports: Complete Drug Reference 2003* by Consumer Reports Books and United States Pharmacopeial Convention  
ISBN 0-89043-971-0  
Book: 28 cm  
Publisher: Consumer Reports Books (2001)  
Price: \$44.95

This very large book contains a color medicine guide and extensive index. Medicine listings include name, classification of use (such as dental, systemic, or ophthalmic), common brand names, description, before using this medicine, proper use of this medicine, precautions, and side effects. The font is large, but the layout makes finding information harder.

*The PDR Family Guide to Prescription Drugs*  
9<sup>th</sup> edition, ISBN 0-609-80950-4  
Book: 935 pages; 24 cm  
Publisher: Three Rivers Press (2002)  
Price: \$23 retail

This guide is based on the authoritative *Physicians' Desk Reference* and includes supplements from other sources deemed of good quality by the makers of the *PDR*. It includes a table of contents, index, drug profiles, disease overviews, and a new drugs (to this edition) section. Like the *PDR*, it has a color product guide. For each drug, the guide lists brand & generic name (with pronunciation), why prescribed, most important fact, how to take, side effects, why drug should not be prescribed, special warnings, possible food & drug interactions, special information, recommended dosage, and over dosage.

*The Pill Book*  
10<sup>th</sup> edition, ISBN 0-553-38160-1

Book: 1216 pages; 21 cm  
Publisher: Bantam Books (2002)  
Price: \$26.95

Similar to the other medicine guides, this guide includes color pictures for identification. It also includes an index, questions to ask your doctor/pharmacist, and the information on the medications. In addition to specific drugs, it describes general classes of medicines. For each drug, they give generic & brand name (with pronunciation guide), type of drug, what it is prescribed for, general information, cautions & warnings, possible side effects, drug interactions, food interactions, usual dose, overdose information, special information, and special populations (such as pregnant/nursing).

**Non-Subscription (\$158.82):**

*Anatomy, Descriptive and Surgical (Gray's Anatomy)* by Henry Gray  
ISBN 0-89471-135-0

Book: 1257 pages; 22 cm  
Publisher: Running Press (1974)  
Price: \$15.98 retail

The traditional anatomical textbook's phrasing is not for general public. Line drawings labeled with specific names supplement the text. The book contains information on all the parts of the body and includes index, chapters on body systems, and information on embryos. The font is small and packed.

*The PDR Family Guide to Natural Medicine and Healing Therapies*  
ISBN 0-609-80071-X

Book: 752 pages  
Publisher: Three Rivers Press (1999)  
Price: \$23 retail

From the makers of the classic *Physician's Desk Reference*, this guide includes color pictures of the herbs in their plant/seed form. The guide also includes a table of Contents and several indexes and is divided into Alternate routes to better health, Guide to alternative and complementary therapies, Guide to natural medicines, Guide to nutritional therapy, and Treatment finder. For the alternative therapies, it covers what to consider this therapy for, how the treatments are done, what treatment hopes to accomplish, who should avoid treatment, side effects, choosing a therapist, when to stop treatment, when to see a conventional doctor, and resources. For the natural medicines, it covers the common name, Latin name, other names, remedy for, what it is, why it works, avoid if, special cautions, possible drug interactions, special information, how to prepare, typical dosage, and overdose. For vitamins, it covers what it is, what it does, why you need it, ability to take too much, recommended daily allowances, and the best dietary sources.

*DSM-IV-TR (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)*  
ISBN 0-89042-025-4

Book: 943 pages; 26 cm.  
Publisher: American Psychiatric Association (2000)  
Price: \$49.95 retail

This standard text for work in the psychiatric field gives descriptions of disorders along with diagnostic features, subtypes and/or specifiers, recording procedures, associated features & disorders, specific culture/age/gender features, prevalence, course, familial pattern, and differential diagnosis. The book also includes several appendices to aid in diagnosis. Like *Gray's Anatomy*, this book is a very specialized text and is not be appropriate for all levels of readers. Furthermore, although it may be helpful for understanding a diagnosis from a doctor, it should not be used for self-diagnosis.

*Gomez Best of the Web Guide 2001*

ISBN 0-7615-2834-2 (out of stock indefinitely)

Book: 410 pages; 24 cm

Publisher: Prima Publishing (2000)

Price: \$19.95 retail

This guide includes a Table of Contents and index as well as a final list of web addresses, divided by topic. It also contains two Appendices: "What Makes a Good Web Site?" and "The Anatomy of E-Commerce." Short of the parent company going out of business, most of the websites listed will continue to be available because they are the sites to well-known businesses. The sites are grouped by type of service/product such as "Airlines and Online Travel Agents," "Toys," "Apparel," and "Prescriptions and Health & Wellness." For each site, this guide gives a general summary, including information on the parent company, and also scores the site in the categories of overall, ease of use, customer confidence, on-site resources, relationship service, overall cost, and customer profile. The lists and descriptions of the websites may quickly go out of date, but other information in the book may continue to be helpful, such as the introduction sections to each type, which includes considerations, benefits, and drawbacks to using these types of websites. For people wanting to evaluate a site they find themselves, the "What Makes a Good Web Site?" Appendix will be helpful. Overall, the book may actually be best in a more dynamic form, such as a website. The scorecards for the book are on the web at [www.gomez.com](http://www.gomez.com).

*Standard Catalog of American Cars 1946-1975* Edited by Ron Kowalke

4<sup>th</sup> edition, ISBN 0-87341-521-3

Book: 976 pages; 28 cm.

Publisher: Krause Publications (1997)

Price: \$34.95 retail

The product of many experts, hobbyists, and historians, this book includes much information in a relatively small space. Each chapter is a summary of a car brand. The chapter also lists all models of car with black & white photos, production history, standard features, and options. Also included is information on how models changed from year to year. Models are grouped by manufacturer and are listed in chronological order. The introduction includes diagrams for reference to parts of the cars. In addition to the standard cars, this book includes chapters on alternative cars, dream cars, Indy pace cars, Indy 500 winners, factory lightweights, and a price guide. Overall, this "catalog" is a great book for a car collector. A restorer will need to access other material to learn greater details about a specific vehicle.

*The Insider's Guide to Buying a New or Used Car* by Burke Leon and Stephanie Leon  
3<sup>rd</sup> edition, ISBN 1-55870-566-X

Book: 278 pages; 23 cm.

Publisher: Betterway Books (2000)

Price: \$14.99 retail

Written by owners of a car lot, this guide intends to give a buyer the inside scoop. It includes checklists for buyers to consult as well as strategies for evaluating, researching, and approaching buying or selling a car. It also discusses some of the legal matters involved and includes references to other, more detailed sources. The authors also give their contact information for people wishing to contact them directly for advice. The guide includes a Table of Contents and Index. Information is arranged by sections, which are then broken into chapters. The sections are Setting the Stage for the Car-Buying Process, Your Visit to the Dealership, Special Tips for Buying a Used Car, and Additional Buying Tips. As a tool, this guide is not a one-stop source. Buyers will need to do additional research, but this guide will lead them through what to consider, how to evaluate, and what to expect while pointing to other sources for additional information.

**Total Cost of All Resources: \$2136.00**

**MEMO**

To: The Boss  
 Date: June 11, 2003  
 Re: Budget

As requested, we have assembled our recommendations regarding the proposed 8% cut in the materials budget.

The total annual materials budget is \$2136. 8% of that is \$170.88. Our cuts add up to \$171.66.

▪ <i>Consumer Reports Digital Buying Guide</i>	\$9.99
▪ <i>Consumer Reports Home Computer Buying Guide 2003</i>	\$9.99
▪ <i>Consumer Guide: Computer Buying Guide</i>	\$9.99
▪ <i>Best of the Web Guide 2003</i>	\$19.95
▪ <i>The Used Car Book</i>	\$11.95
▪ <i>One NADA Guide (Pacific Northwest Edition)</i>	\$9.95
▪ <i>2004 Standard Guide to Cars and Prices</i>	\$17.95
▪ <i>Consumer Reports Used Car Buying Guide 2003</i>	\$9.99
▪ <i>Consumer Reports: Complete Drug Reference 2003</i>	\$44.95
▪ <i>The Pill Book</i>	\$26.95

We decided to cut *Consumer Reports Digital Buying Guide*, *Consumer Reports Home Computer Buying Guide*, and *Consumer Guide: Computer Buying Guide* because consumer information about computers goes out of date before or just after a print guide can be published. Furthermore, the same information is available online and is almost certainly more current in that medium.

Similarly, consumer information about new and used cars, contained in *The Used Car Book*, *Standard Guide to Cars and Prices*, *Consumer Reports Used Car Buying Guide*, and one NADA guide, is also available free online from several different sources, including from the publisher of the NADA guides.

Finally, we recommend cutting *Consumer Reports: Complete Drug Reference* and *The Pill Book* because the information in these books is duplicated in another print resource and online.

The major reason for cutting all of these resources is duplication, in print or through digital means; much of the same information is available online. Unfortunately, such cuts raise some issues of access. People looking for this consumer information may need to compete more heavily for computer access in the library. Furthermore, they may be accustomed to print resources and not find links that are "hidden" on the library website. We suggest that a partial remedy for this second problem may be to post a sign in the consumer information area to alert patrons to the wealth of information available online.

This sign should also encourage patrons to ask a staff member about these resources in order to make sure patrons continue to get the information they need even if it is in a format new to them.

Heavier reliance on online resources raises other issues such as archiving and cost. The archival issue comes up because with online resources we do not have the same assurances that come with ownership of print resources. If we choose to change our subscription, or our subscription is changed by something beyond our control like a merger or bankruptcy, will we have access to the current and back issues of the periodicals we need? Price is also an issue because online resources are expensive, and prices can fluctuate.

We made no cuts in Web resources because these resources have no cost beyond infrastructure and maintenance. We made no cuts in electronic subscriptions because these resources are bundled in such a way that targeted cuts are not possible. The only area left to cut was the print resources. These cuts were difficult to make because we want to continue to provide our patrons with the best reference service possible. And, the best service means having up-to-date and accessible information available in a variety of formats. Our service population encompasses so many different kinds of people with different needs that some overlap in resources is desirable. It appears that we can only afford the online subscriptions by cutting print resources in the current budget situation, but further cuts in print resources would be difficult if not impossible; so, if more cuts come, we must begin to look at other areas to cut.

Ballard Branch Consumer Resources Evaluation Team

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