
“Travel Resources: an annotated guide” is a critical bibliography of selected books, serials and websites on various aspects of modern travel. It is aimed at members of the general public wishing to find sources of information for preparing and designing a trip, rather than for researchers or travel industry professionals. This very thorough guide has been well-researched and written by first-time author Stephen Walker, Associate Professor of Library Services at the University of Central Missouri.

The clear strength of “Travel Resources: an annotated guide” is its depth, attention to detail and meticulous subject coverage. Walker has directly perused almost all of the resources covered himself in order to write reviews on each. Included titles have been especially selected for their in-depth subject coverage, unique approach to the subject matter, or scarcity of other material on the topic. Each section commences with a paragraph or two listing non-specific resource types to try, and detailing why specific information on the resource is important. Walker’s professional background as a librarian clearly fortifies his work. Themes within the book are arranged simply alphabetically, but all entries are sufficiently indexed with Library of Congress Subject Headings and “see also” references to assist the user. This book could serve a public library quite well as a collection development tool, as the reviews and comparisons are well-written and the subjects are well-arranged.

However, despite the depth and diligence of this guide, it is unlikely to stand out as immediately useful to the modern traveller. Firstly, the book has possibly too much in the way of discussion on information literacy, source evaluation and subject analysis in each section. Most of this is likely to go over the heads of most of the casual readers the book is aimed at.

Secondly, the book has been written with American travellers in mind. Most of the subjects within the book feature American publications, and focus on facilities and destinations within Canada and the United States. Some resources on Europe are featured in certain sections, and other areas are occasionally featured under entries where they are obvious contributors to the topic at hand (for example, the section “Parks, Safaris and the Outdoors” features two books on African safaris). Thus this book is probably not particularly useful for those outside the continental United States.

Third and most importantly, with its focus on print materials, “Travel Resources: an annotated guide” is likely to date very quickly. Many of the titles it features have publication dates as far back as the 1980’s, and few titles are newer than 2006. Such outdated information is more likely to harm than help in such a dynamic and constantly-changing field as travel. The focus on print also means that users who identify a good resource are then required either to purchase items themselves or make use of their library’s interlibrary loans service, as most local public libraries, even in the United States, would be unlikely to stock all titles of interest on any given theme.

In summary, this is a thorough and well written annotated bibliography and analysis of the themes and aspects of practical travel. As a review of travel literature and information sources, it is an excellent resource. But due to its wordiness, and lack of immediacy and currency of its sources, it would not be particularly appealing to the average user. From a traveller’s point of view, single guidebooks or, increasingly, online travel forums and review sites, are more likely to be considered useful for planning and arranging travel than a resource like “Travel Resources: an annotated guide”.