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The Internet Passport: NorthWestNet's Guide to Our World Online (4th ed.) **FREE**

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Comput. Phys. 7, 543–544 (1993)

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The Whole Internet User's Guide & Catalog

Ed Krol

O'Reilly & Associates, Sebastopol, CA, 1992;
ISBN 1-56592-025-2, 376 pp., soft-cover, \$24.95.

The Internet Passport: NorthWestNet's Guide to Our World Online (4th ed.)

Jonathan Kochmer and NorthWestNet

NorthWestNet, Bellevue, WA, 1993;
ISBN 0-9635281-0-6, 515 pp., soft-cover, \$39.95 (\$19.95 for educational and nonprofit organizations, \$16.95 for NorthWestNet member institutions).

Internet: Getting Started

April Marine, Susan Kirkpatrick, Vivian Neou, and Carol Ward

Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1993;
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Zen and the Art of the Internet: A Beginner's Guide (2nd ed.)

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The Internet Companion: A Beginner's Guide to Global Networking

Tracy LaQuey with Jeanne C. Ryer

Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA, 1992;
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Crossing the Internet Threshold: An Instructional Handbook

Roy Tennant, John Ober, and Anne G. Lipow

Library Solutions Press, Berkeley, CA, 1993;
ISBN 1-882208-01-3, 134 pp., soft-cover, \$45.00 (20% class discount).

Reviewed by A. John Mallinckrodt

Few readers of this journal are likely to be unfamiliar with the Internet—the global network of networks. The Internet plays a key role in our professional lives, enabling us to communicate, to access information, to transfer programs, data, and other files, and to work on remote computers. Nevertheless, unless you start each day with several cups of coffee and the Usenet news, there are probably at least a few Internet goodies that you do not know about. Use of the Internet is exploding, driven in part by the emergence of powerful new information-retrieval applications such as gopher, WAIS, and the World Wide Web. Such applications, and the information sources they can access, are documented in a number of recently published guides, seven of which will be reviewed briefly here.

Some of these books began their lives as online resources written by

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and for Internet pioneers. Several include technical sections on the TCP/IP protocols, the Domain Name System, routers and gateways, etc.; a little understanding of these items allows one to use Internet applications more intelligently. Many of the books discuss how to gain access to the Internet, and include lists of service providers. They cover the important basic applications of the Internet in communication, remote login, and file transfer. Perhaps most importantly, they explain how to use the new information-management tools, and provide valuable startup lists of Internet resources. The table that accompanies this review constitutes my assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the books under scrutiny. Its entries may help to summarize the recommendations that I will make.

Ed Krol's *The Whole Internet User's Guide & Catalog* (WIG) is probably the best known of these books, and deservedly so. With roots in Krol's classic online guide, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Internet*, WIG provides extensive coverage of current and evolving Internet applications. The book is well-written, and organized for ready access to information. It sports a layout that is pleasing to the eye and serves to remind us why we sometimes prefer a "real" book to online information. Krol gives detailed instructions for the effective use of information-locating applications such asarchie, the various white-page servers, gopher, WAIS, and World Wide Web; sample sessions illustrate the methods. Although written from a Unix/X Windows-oriented view of the world, Krol's text loses very little in the translation to other systems.

Somewhat more of a find was *The Internet Passport* (TIP) by Jonathan Kochmer and NorthWestNet. Like WIG, TIP provides detailed and up-to-date coverage of Internet applications, is well-written and organized, gives sample online sessions, has a pleasingly spacious layout, and is somewhat Unix-oriented. TIP is big—indeed, it is the most massive of the books being reviewed—but it makes good use of