

PROFESSIONAL MEDIA

Green, Ravonne A. & Vera Blair.

Keep It Simple: A Guide to Assistive Technologies. Libraries Unlimited:

ABC-CLIO. 2011. 144p. index. ISBN

9781591588665. pap. \$50. PRO MEDIA

Green (library & information studies, Valdosta State Univ.; *Library Management: A Case Study Approach*) and Blair, who has an MLIS and has conducted assistive technology workshops for public libraries, have tried to provide here a basic tutorial on the currently available assistive computer applications, hardware, and software available for library use. The meat of the book is organized by disability rather than type of assistive technology and includes click-by-click instructions for specific software applications. Librarians will find value in the copious resources, including websites and periodical references, collected in the book. **VERDICT** Despite its title, this is not the simple guide one would expect. It would best serve academic libraries able to provide access to

an exhaustive array of assistive technologies.

For most public and

smaller-sized academic libraries, Barbara T. Mates and William R. Reed IV's *Assistive Technologies in the Library*, reviewed below, is the guide to turn to for simple and engaging information when selecting, funding, and marketing assistive technologies that will enable libraries to provide equal access to library services to all patrons.—Catherine McMullen, Canby P.L., OR

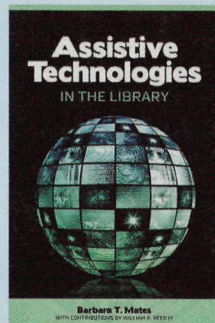
Mates, Barbara T. with William R. Reed IV. **Assistive Technologies in the Library.** ALA. 2011. 176p. illus. index. ISBN 9780838910702. pap. \$55. PRO MEDIA

Mates and Reed (former head and regional librarian, respectively, Ohio Lib. for the Blind & Physically Disabled, Cleveland P.L.) together have more than 35 years of experience providing library services to patrons with disabilities. Their passion and

expertise on the subject come through on every page in this well-organized book, which facilitates choosing the assistive technologies that are most appropriate and economical for your particular library and service population. The authors begin with the charge to serve all patrons, and the bulk of their text covers the wide range of

assistive technologies available, including solutions for every library budget. They finish with chapters on staff training and support, finding funding, and marketing. Mates points out that the number of persons with disabilities is growing as baby boomers age, thus it is "best to be prepared." Additional resources listed include vendors, organizations, websites,

and grant opportunities. **VERDICT** In a time of tight budgets, just reading this engaging book makes one want to devote the needed resources to assistive technologies. Recommended for all libraries.—Catherine McMullen, Canby P.L., OR



ism; *A Beautiful Mind*) posits that economics theorists have over the last two centuries shown people how they might take charge of their destinies rather than trusting their material progress to fate. It's an ambitious project, and Nasar offers chapters that mix history and biography while explaining the greatest hits of economic thought. She links theorists with their settings, including Marx and Engels in Paris and England, Beatrice and Sidney Webb in London, Joseph Schumpeter in Vienna, and John Maynard Keynes seemingly everywhere. Nasar's biographical sketches are lively, but the history sometimes bogs down in the (still simplified) economic details. Although the book proceeds chronologically in three sections (pre-World War I, during World War I and the lead-up to World War II, and the post-war period), it never quite seems to gel as either narrative history or biography. **VERDICT** Libraries and readers have waited 13 years for Nasar's second book, and there will be demand. But the story may be too dry for fans of biography and not rigorous enough for hard-core economics wonks. [See Prepub Alert, 2/28/11.]—Sarah Statz Cords, The Reader's Advisor Online

Rumelt, Richard. **Good Strategy, Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why It Matters.** Crown Business. Jul. 2011. c.320p. index. ISBN 9780307886231. \$28. BUS Award-winning author and sought-after

consultant Rumelt (Harry and Elsa Kunin Chair in Business and Society, UCLA Anderson Sch. of Management) provides keen insights on how to recognize effective approaches to promoting economic performance. Drawing from his rich experience, he offers numerous examples to help business leaders craft effective strategies. The book contains three essential components. First, it covers how to diagnose a challenge and formulate policy and action plans to address it. Then, it shows how good strategies can build upon the strengths, weaknesses, and sources of power unique to an organization. Finally, it shows the importance of business leaders sharpening their sensitivity to the challenges of an organization by viewing them from the customers' perspective. **VERDICT** Readers accustomed to managerial terminology should be able to cut through Rumelt's thin shroud of consultant hype to get to his practical insights. Although his candid comments and colorful examples convey his passion for counseling readers interested in strategy, the effective application of these concepts requires considerable experience and stamina.—Jerry P. Miller, Cambridge, MA

EDUCATION

Be Honest: And Other Advice from Students Across the Country. New Pr., dist. by Perseus. Aug. 2011. c.272p. ed. by Nínive Calegari. ISBN 9781595586094. \$25.95. ED

826 National is a nonprofit organization that partners writers and educators with classroom teachers and students to develop writing as a means of expression. There are nine 826 locations across the country—Calegari cofounded, with Dave Eggers, the first, in San Francisco. In this collection, students express their thoughts about what works and what doesn't in American education today. While not scholarly or particularly authoritative, the volume has power beyond research and statistics via the voices of students within the educational system. Readers get to see how current policies as they are implemented impact those they are meant to help. **VERDICT** This is an outstanding book. Not only is it eye-opening to see how students feel about schools and education, it is encouraging to read teens express themselves so capably. It also displays the influence of 826, one of the more innovative school/community partnerships out there. A valuable look at education from students' perspectives.—Mark Bay, Univ. of the Cumberland Lib., Williamsburg, KY

Hauser, Brooke. **The New Kids: Big Dreams, Brave Journeys—Immigrant Teens Coming of Age in the U.S.A.** Free Pr. S. & S. Sept. 2011. c.304p. bibliog. ISBN 9781439163283. \$26. ED

After writing "This Strange Thing Called Prom" for the *New York Times* in 2008, Hauser spent an entire school year at the

International School in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, and here gives readers a sense of how students from varied cultures deal with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. There's Ngawang, who escaped Tibet in a suitcase; Jessica Tan, abandoned by her step-family after arriving in America; Chit-Su, the only student at International who speaks Burmese; and Mohamed Bah, plucked from near poverty in Sierra Leone and determined to become an American citizen. Hauser's writing resonates with the message she forwards, which is epitomized by International and its cohorts: "Keep hope breathing." **VERDICT** Though the narrative can get bogged down in detail, Hauser provides a clear view into the mindset of immigrant teenagers. In doing so, she succeeds in telling a story about people rather than a school. Highly recommended. [See Prepub Alert, 3/28/11, as *New American High*.]—Karen McCoy, Fort Lewis Coll. Lib., Durango, CO

HISTORY

Booth, Robert. *Death of an Empire: The Rise and Murderous Fall of Salem, America's Richest City*. Thomas Dunne: St. Martin's. Aug. 2011. c.352p. illus. index. ISBN 9780312540388. \$25.99. HIST

Booth (curator, emeritus, Pickering House, Salem; *Boston's Freedom Trail*) weaves together the 19th-century decline of the once vital port of Salem, MA, with a murder story. Following the American Revolution, Salem's maritime activities made it the wealthiest city in the new nation, with its ships sailing the globe and opening Asian markets to trade. However, economic changes over the late 18th and early 19th centuries, especially implementation of tariffs on imported finished goods to encourage American industrialization, rather soon eroded Salem's standing. In response, Stephen White, a member of a wealthy Salem shipping family, led an unsuccessful attempt to establish manufacturing in the city. The loss of jobs had brought on a rise in local violent crime. On April 6, 1830, Joseph White, Stephen's father, was murdered in his home. Stephen himself initially fell under suspicion, but Frank Knapp, a member of another prominent Salem family, confessed to the crime. The entire incident further tarnished Salem's declining reputation. Booth bases his narrative history on diaries, letters, ship logs, period newspapers, and secondary sources. **VERDICT** This is a readable, even gripping account of the consequences of the economic decline on a once proud city. Recommended for fans of accessible history and historical true crime. [See Prepub Alert, 12/20/11.]—Stephen L. Hupp, West Virginia Univ., Parkersburg

A Companion to Franklin D. Roosevelt. Wiley-Blackwell. (Blackwell Companions to American History). 2011. c.784p. ed. by William D. Pederson. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781444330168. \$199.95. HIST

Pederson (American Studies Endowed Chair & Director of the International Lincoln Center for American Studies, Louisiana State Univ., Shreveport; *The FDR Years*) presents a comprehensive collection of new essays on all aspects of FDR's presidency. Each writer expertly guides the reader through important themes and areas that have heretofore been in need of further research. The range of essays, each with endnotes and further readings, is impressive; the book covers not only the usual subjects such as the New Deal, foreign relations, and the presidential elections, but other less discussed issues such as conditions and treatment of minorities and land conservation. Some more recent sources for further reading are not here, e.g., Kirstin Downey's *The Woman Behind the New Deal*. **VERDICT** As historiographical essays, they are not intended for the lay reader. For serious students of FDR's presidency, from undergraduates to faculty and scholars, this is an indispensable foundational source. [Pederson has been a longtime *LJ* book reviewer in American history and biography.—Ed.]—Bryan Craig, Univ. of Virginia, Charlottesville

Devine, T.M. *To the Ends of the Earth: Scotland's Global Diaspora, 1750–2010*. Smithsonian Bks., dist. by Random. Oct. 2011. c.416p. illus. maps. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781588343178. \$32.95. HIST

Devine (Sir William Fraser Professor of Scottish History & Palaeography, Univ. of Edinburgh; *The Scottish Nation, 1700–2007*) rounds out his trilogy of authoritative works on Scottish history with this seminal volume on the dispersion of the Scots to other lands throughout history. Devine insightfully addresses the impetus behind the large-scale Scottish emigration as well as the experiences of émigrés in their new lands over the past 250 years. Covering Scottish engagement in the colonial slave and tobacco trades; the movement of impoverished Highland Scots during famine in the 1850s; fortune-seeking Scots in the British Empire and the American colonies; and Scottish missionary efforts in India and Africa, Devine offers a sweeping critical examination of this topic, which he admits is in its infancy as an area of academic study. He succeeds in addressing a broad span of time and geography while avoiding both triumphalism and exceptionalism on behalf of the Scots. **VERDICT** A meticulously researched and thoroughly documented academic volume that will be welcomed by scholars and others with a keen interest in

Scottish history.—Elizabeth L. Winter, Georgia Inst. of Technology Lib., Atlanta

French, Patrick. *India: A Portrait*. Knopf. 2011. c.320p. illus. index. ISBN 9780307272430. \$30. HIST

National Book Critics Circle Award winner French (*The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V.S. Naipaul*) provides a thematic history of India, primarily from its independence in 1947 to the present. Rather than aiming for comprehensive coverage, he outlines Indian history in three major subject areas: nation (politics), wealth, and society. French provides detailed yet compact introductions to many major historical figures such as B.R. Ambedkar and various members of the Nehru/Gandhi dynasty, as well as figures from India's pop culture and street life. Most of these he has interviewed in person to produce engaging narratives that enlarge on his main themes and illuminate India's multiple cultures and the complexities that stem from its many systems of language and behavior. **VERDICT** While the book would have benefited from a bit more establishment of background and definitions, serious readers, including undergraduate and graduate students, will come away with a nuanced understanding of today's India. French's tales may also remind readers, paradoxically, that many of the reasons they love India cannot easily be put into words. [See Prepub Alert, 11/29/10.]—Karen Sobel, Univ. of Colorado Lib., Denver

Glain, Stephen. *State vs. Defense: The Battle To Define America's Empire*. Crown. Aug. 2011. c.496p. photogs. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780307408419. \$26. HIST

Since the early years of the Cold War, the U.S. State and Defense Departments have been locked in a bitter fight over making foreign policy—a battle in which Defense has dominated to the extent that the national security budget is now 20 percent of the total federal budget (i.e., rather than there being a greater percentage for diplomacy or foreign aid). So writes journalist Glain (*Wall Street Journal*; *Mullahs, Merchants, and Militants: The Economic Collapse of the Arab World*) in his fascinating account of the making of modern foreign policy. This is not a comprehensive Cold War history, but it skillfully investigates each presidential administration since Truman's to show how militarists—often wealthy corporation heads and elected officials—have created the military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned against. Readers will be familiar with many of the militarists and diplomatists who fill these pages but will likely be angered about the extent to which the former went to distort the truth about the

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