


Subject: Library and Information Science

Production of Courseware

 -Content for Post Graduate Courses



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Module : 11 Handbooks, Yearbooks, etc: Use and Evaluation



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Module 11: Handbooks and Yearbooks: Their Use and Evaluation

I. Objectives

- To know about the definition of Handbooks and Yearbooks, discuss about their Use, and make their Evaluative Study.

II. Learning Outcome

After reading this module, you will be able to:

- Know the meaning of handbook,
- Learn about uses of handbook,
- Describes the various types of handbooks, manuals and yearbooks,
- Know the definition of manuals as well as yearbooks, and their uses, and Evaluate Handbooks and yearbooks from library's point of view.

III. Module Structure

1. Introduction

2. Handbooks: Definition

3. Uses

4. Types of Handbooks

4.1 General Handbooks

4.2 Statistical Handbooks

4.3 Historical Handbooks

4.4 Literary Handbooks

4.5 Subject Handbooks

4.6 Official Handbooks

4.7 Practical Handbooks

4.7.1 Family Health and First- Aid Handbooks

4.7.2 Home Maintenance Handbooks

4.7.3 Etiquette and Manners Handbooks

4.7.4 Cooking Recipes Handbooks

4.7.5 Recreation, Handicrafts and Hobbies Handbooks

4.7.6 Self-Taught or Learn Yourself Handbooks

4.7.7 Equipment and Home Appliances Handbooks

4.8 Tables

5. Manuals

5.1 Definition

5.2 Scope

5.3 Uses

5.4 Types of Manuals

5.4.1 Subject Manuals

5.4.2 Technical Manuals

5.4.3 Procedure Manual

5.4.4 Laboratory Manuals

6. Year Books

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Definition

6.3 Uses

6.4 Types of Yearbooks

6.4.1 General Yearbooks- International

6.4.2 General Yearbooks- Regional

6.4.3 General Yearbooks- National

6.4.4 Subject Yearbooks- International

6.4.5 Subject Yearbooks- National

6.4.6 Organizational Yearbooks

6.5 Supplements to Encyclopaedias

6.5.1 Adult General Encyclopaedia Supplements

6.5.2 Subject Encyclopaedia Supplements

7. Evaluation of Handbooks and Yearbooks

7.1 Authority

7.2 Scope

7.3 Arrangement

7.4 Current Information

7.5 Treatment

7.6 Audience

7.7 Format

7.8 Special Features

7.9 Indexes

7.10 Electronic Version

8. Summary

9. References

1. Introduction

In the present times, the news and current information have become almost an integral part of human life. In the emerging information society, newspapers and television have become a household name, and 24x7 news channels churn out news whenever the television set is switched on. The amount of information being produced in the world is enormous, and it is still growing at a fast rate. It becomes incumbent upon the library to collect and maintain a good collection of sources of current information. These include handbooks, manuals, yearbooks, almanacs, directories, guides, etc. As these are used to answer factual type queries, they are also known as ready reference sources. Yearbooks and handbooks are some such sources among a large assortment of ready reference sources which may trace the historical events, chronologies, year reviews, facts, statistics, etc. This Module discusses about Handbooks and Yearbooks as ready reference sources as these are referred by the users to obtain answers to their factual enquiries.

2. Handbooks: Definition

A handbook is a type of reference work or other collection of instructions, which is intended to provide ready reference. It is regarded as a book giving information such as facts on a particular subject or instructions for operating a machine.

The term 'Handbook' has its origin in German word "Handbuch" meaning "a small book or a treatise giving useful facts". It is usually considered a reference book which is handy to use, handy to carry, and so on.

A handbook is defined as a comprehensive and detailed work on a particular topic for practitioners, structured for quick reference. It is called as a handbook because it is usually convenient to be held in the hands of the users. It is, therefore, a ready reference book, the relevant portions of which are consulted at the time of need. It is the best 'working tool' for a technologist and usually contains factual information, data, tables, formulae, etc. It may deal with any topic, and generally is a compendium of information in a particular field or about a particular technique. Designed to be easily consulted, it provides quick answers in certain areas and is designed and developed to meet what is called "everyday approach". For example, the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers is a reference for how to cite works in MLA style, among other things.

The term handbook is commonly used interchangeably with a manual because, according to William Katz, it is difficult to distinguish between the average handbook and the average manual. A handbook, therefore, is much the same as a manual. So Katz further stated that a handbook "is a collection of a miscellaneous group of facts centred on one theme or subject area". He observed that a handbook presupposes that readers know the field well and turn to it to refresh memory.

Louis Shores defines a handbook as "A reference book of miscellaneous facts and figures on one or many subjects assembled for ready use, in response to popular interest or to a specific need for concise, handy information".

Harrod's Librarians' Glossary and Reference Book defines a handbook as "a treatise on a subject; nowadays it has often a simple but all-embracing treatment, containing concise information, and being small enough to be held in the hand; but strictly a book written primarily for practitioners and serving for constant references".

A large number of organizations, centres, and other institutions have been preparing handbooks since a long time. The term handbook is, therefore, used for documents that are produced within an organization. Professional organizations usually prepare a variety of handbooks ranging from short duplicated set of regulations to glossy multi-coloured reports. These are produced for different type of users such as technical personnel, industrial workers, office staff, and so on. On the other hand, some handbooks are prepared for general information, such as history of an organization; and there are other handbooks that are meant only for the benefit of the employees of the organization, for example, they provide a set of rules, and so on.

All the available handbooks may not be providing facts of popular interest. Many of the handbooks are limited in scope, and focus on a specific area of interest. Such subject handbooks consist of articles based on research reports in a particular field. This presupposes that the users have a basic knowledge of the subject.

3. Uses

As single-volumed ready reference sources, handbooks have the following uses:

- i. They provide facts of popular interest for public at large.
- ii. They provide depth of information in a narrow subject field.
- iii. They contain articles for subject specialists.
- iv. They also serve as 'how-to-do-it' type guides, whereby one can learn things by oneself.
- v. They also provide rules for government servants.
- vi. They are also useful for historical and literary information.

4. Types of Handbooks

Various types of handbooks can be grouped in the following types:

- i. General Handbooks
- ii. Statistical Handbooks
- iii. Historical Handbooks
- iv. Literary Handbooks
- v. Subject Handbooks
- vi. Official Handbooks
- vii. Practical Handbooks
- viii. Tables

Each of these types is described briefly with suitable examples.

4.1 General Handbooks

General handbooks provide such information as to satisfy the curiosity and inquisitiveness of the public in general. They provide information about interesting and unique facts about, say, the first, or the best of almost everything.

Examples:

- Famous First Facts, by Joseph N Kane. 6th ed. Edited by Steven Anzovin and Janet Podall. New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 2006.

It has been published since 1933, and therefore, it "has served generations of researchers". It is a record of first happenings, discoveries and inventions in American history. It is arranged chronologically in such a way that one may find a subject area and either browse or seek out the essential first fact. For example, under "Library" one finds the first library periodical (Library Journal); first library catalogue (Library of Congress); first library building (Philadelphia); and so on. The current edition has about 7,500 entries on 1,300 pages. This ready reference source also has its electronic version available at

www.hwwilson.com. The same editors have edited another related work: Famous First Facts International Edition (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 2000).

- Guinness Book of Records. New York: Sterling, 1955 to date. Annual. 2014 Edition.

This handbook needs no introduction and is well known to almost all readers. It provides information about facts and figures on records of human achievement, space, arts, science, animal and plant kingdom, sports, etc. It is, therefore, a handbook of ultimate record-breaking facts and achievements. The latest edition is new with updated records, and never-seen before photography. It also includes illustrations, some of them in colour. The Guinness is a place to find information on almost any winner, and the search is aided by an excellent index. It is updated every year, though past editions are also sometimes useful. Every edition of Guinness consists of records set by swimmers, climbers, pilots, runners, and others who intend to set a new record for adventure. It is also available in CD-ROM format adding data about 4,000 records from several Guinness works. It has approximately 600 pictures, video clips of record breakers in action, and many sounds from behind. The online version is available at www.guinnessworldrecord.com/

- Limca Book of Records. Edited by Vijay Ghose. New Delhi: Coca-Cola India. 1990 to date.

It is an Indian parallel of Guinness Book of Records. It provides the latest news, biographies, videos and wallpapers, photos of events of national and international importance. This fact book documents some of the most fascinating information available in India on India. It satisfies people's curiosity about facts and figures, people, places and things. It has also brought out special editions devoted to 100 years of Indian cinema, and the 21st edition released in 2011 is sports achievers special edition. It is published in three languages, viz. English, Hindi and Malayalam. Its electronic version is available at www.limcabookofrecords.com.

4.2 Statistical Handbooks

This type of handbook covers information regarding various aspects in numerical form. Statistical handbooks are published, among others, by governments of different countries. These are handy and regarded useful for social scientists and research scholars who are interested in data and other figures.

Examples:

- International Historical Statistics: Europe, 1750-2010. By B. R. Mitchell. 5thed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan,

It is the latest edition of the most authoritative collection of statistics available about Europe. It provides key economic and social indicators for last 250 years of European countries, from employment figures by occupation to annual output of wheat. This ready reference source provides hard-to-find historical data conveniently gathered together with latest figures.

Mitchell has authored at least two more such handbooks:

- International Historical Statistics: Africa, Asia, and Oceania, 1750-2010;
- International Historical Statistics: The Americas, 1750-2010.
- Handbook of Labour Statistics. Bombay: Employers' Federation of India, 1991.
- Pocket Book of Labour Statistics, 1999. Shimla: Ministry of Labour, Government of India, 2000.

4.3 Historical Handbooks

This group of handbooks provides information regarding historical events, discoveries, achievements in different fields of knowledge in a particular year. Historical handbooks are usually arranged in chronological or alphabetical sequence.

Examples:

- The People's chronology: A Year by Year Record of Human Events from Pre-history to the Present, by James Trager. Rev. ed. New York: Owllett, 1994.

The ever popular chronology has been updated through 1993. It presents more than 35,000 entries that chronicle the major historical events in 30 categories of human endeavour- from art to communication to music to literature to religion to science and more.

- The Time Tables of History: A Horizontal Linkage of People and Events, based on W. Stein's Kulturfahr Plan, by Bernard Grun. 4th rev. ed. New York: Touchstone, 2005.

This Time Table of History includes 30,000 events in its revised paperback edition. It presents a sweeping overview of the making of the contemporary world by mapping out at a glance what was happening simultaneously from the dawn of history to the present days.

4.4 Literary Handbooks

In order to deal with reference queries on literature, literary works, literary characters, authors, brief summary of classics and master pieces, etc. the literary handbooks come as handy ready reference sources. Some of these are mentioned below:

- The Oxford Companion to American Literature, by James D. Hart and Phillip Leininger. 6th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

It is unparalleled guide to America's literary culture providing one of the finest resources to this country's rich history of great writers. It has been completely revised and updated in the light of new developments, and added more than 180 entries.

The Oxford companions are also available for English, French, German, Spanish, and Classical literature.

- The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English. Edited by Ian Ousby. 6th Ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988 (Paperback, 2nd ed. 1995).

It has been considerably revised and its scope expanded to include English literature syllabus beyond the UK and Ireland. It also covers literature from the US, Canada, Africa, India, Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand. It has entries for writers, individual literatures, literary groups, movements, etc.’

4.5 Subject Handbooks

The subject handbooks are very useful to the academic community and experts in various fields. These handbooks are, therefore, brought out regularly including the current research and other developments in different subjects, hence these need to be soon revised and updated. These handbooks are published in almost every conceivable subject.

Examples:

- Handbook of Special Librarianship and Information Work. 7th ed. Edited by A. Scammell. London: ASLIB, 1997.
The last edition of this famous handbook re-examines many functions of traditional procedures of librarianship in the context of modern information imperatives and thus proving to be of fundamental importance to working library and information professionals.
- Third World Economic Handbook, 2nd ed. Edited by Stuart W. Sinclair. London: Euro Monitor Publications, 1989.

This handbook discusses about the prevailing economic conditions and the parameters for the economic development in the Third World countries.

4.6 Official Handbooks

Governments and other organisations are run by following some rules and regulations. To bring consistency and uniformity in carrying out various organisational activities, the official handbooks are published to be used by government officials. Some of them are mentioned below:

Examples:

- Swamy’s Handbook 2013 for Central Government Servants, by Muthuswamy and V. Brinda. Chennai: Swamy Publishers, 2012. Annual.

A popular handbook about the rules and regulations for central government employees, it includes in its current edition all the latest orders based on Sixth Pay Commission recommendations. It provides an easy access to regulations, codes and manuals, etc.

Swamy's such compilations are available in the form of handbooks and guidebooks for various aspects of service rules.

- Chaudhri's Compilations of the Civil Service Regulations: Main Rules (Corrected up to 1st April, 1986), by S. Lakhi Singh Chaudhri and SatyaChaudhri. Hoshiarpur: Chaudri Publishers, 1986. 5 Volumes.

This multi-volumed handbook includes information about the fundamental rules, supplementary rules and civil service regulations (in three volumes).

4.7 Practical Handbooks

Many handbooks have been prepared with the specific objectives of making, doing, operating, and performing some jobs. Such handbooks fall in the category of practical handbooks. These are also called as instruction manuals and are further classified in different groups as follows:

- a. Family Health and First- Aid Handbooks
- b. Home Maintenance Handbooks
- c. Etiquette and Manners Handbooks
- d. Cooking Recipes Handbooks
- e. Recreation, Handicrafts and Hobbies Handbooks
- f. Self-taught or Learn Yourself Handbooks
- g. Equipments and Home Appliances Handbooks

Every year a number of new handbooks are added in different categories for the use and benefit of the people. Some of the examples of the above mentioned categories are given below:

4.7.1 Family Health and First- Aid Handbooks

Health guides and first- aid handbooks are very useful reference sources for families. Such handbooks provide information about various diseases, their symptoms and precautions to be taken, home remedies for certain sickness, advice regarding first-aid, and so on.

Examples:

- Your Guide to Health. By C. R. Anderson. Poona: Oriental Watchman, 1976.
This handbook has been found to be very useful for health care of people. It provides useful information as to what should be done to keep the body fit.
- Listen to Your Body: A Head to Toe Guide to More than 400 Symptoms, Their Causes and Best Treatment. By Ellen Michaud, et al. Bombay: Rajendra Publishing House, 1992.
Whenever body is under attack and sending out messages of, say, pain, sneezing, swelling, aching, etc. this handbook is very helpful as to what should be done about it. It may suggest whether to call a doctor or not at this point of time.

- Where There is No Doctor: A Village Health Care Handbook. By David Werner and Jane Maxwell. California: Hesperian Foundation, 1977. Reprint 2013. (Fourth Indian revised edition, by Voluntary Health Association of India, New Delhi, 1984). This Hesperian classic handbook is arguably the most widely used health care manual in the world. In the latest reprint, it features new information on tuberculosis, HIV, etc. as well as include information about the new medicines and their uses.

4.7.2 Home Maintenance Handbooks

These handbooks provide useful information on a variety of aspects concerning people's homes. Such information concerns interior decoration, maintenance of clothes of different materials, gardening, and many more household aspects.

Examples:

- Around the House Like Magic. By Jean E. Laired. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

This handbook has been arranged by areas useful for any house. These include food, sewing, repairs, gardening, pet care, and the like. It has been found very helpful to its users.

- 101 Things for Housewife To Do: A Practical Handbook for the Home. By Lillie B. Horth and Arthur Horth. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1954. (Reissued, 2007).

This popular handbook has been reissued to inform and delight all readers about the housewife's lot as Britain emerged after the Second World War.

4.7.3 Etiquette and Manners Handbooks

In view of the all-around current crisis in morals and manners, there is always the need for such handbooks as could provide useful information about good manners and rules for decorum. They tell about the rules for formal relations in elite class, or polite social behaviour among people in a society or a profession. They also provide information about various social customs, human relations, and other manners like table manners, party manners, etc.

Examples:

- Emily Post's Etiquette. 16thed. New York: Harper Collins, 1997.

Emily Post, realizing the need to help a new, affluent group of middle-class people, in various mannerisms, published the first edition of this major work well known throughout the world for etiquettes, etc.

- The Random House Vest Pocket Handbook of Etiquette. Edited by Frances Benton. New York: Random House, 1962.

It provides useful advice on such common things as table settings, wedding, tipping, invitations, social events, gifts, forms of addresses, births, etc. For the benefit of its users, it has been fully indexed.

- A Young People's Guide to Manners. By John Barclay, Leila Hadley and Erica Marking. New York: Random House, 1967.

Focusing primarily on children and teenagers, it provides useful hints for manners as to how to say the proper and considerate things at home, at school, in public, on visits, at parties, in correspondence, and so on.

4.7.4 Cooking Recipes Handbooks

These days recipe guidebooks are quite popular among the young people as these provide information about various delicious dishes from different parts of a country as well as from other countries of the world. Such recipe handbooks also give suggestions regarding the selection and purchase of ingredients, nutritive values, tables of calories, weights and measures, setting the tables, etc.

Examples:

- Vegetable Delights: A Collection of 650 Recipes. By Malini Bisen. Bombay: Wilco Pub. House, 1969.

It has also been published by the author as Vegetable Delights: 650 Original Indian Recipes.

- The Working Woman's Cookbook. Rev. ed. By Vimla Patil. New Delhi: Rupa & Company, 2002.

It was originally published by India Book House in 1979. This cookbook includes hundreds of fast and tasty recipes, and information about many ready to eat meals, with no preservatives, etc.

- 101 Jams, Pickles, Candles and Squashes. By Barbara Lal. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1997.

This handbook includes much useful information about how to make and preserve jams, pickles, candies and squashes.

- Simply Vegetarian Recipes for the Indian Kitchen. By Sanjeev Kapoor. New Delhi: Popular Prakashan. 8 volumes.

In this multi-volume set, the author famous for his recipes, provides very useful recipes for the housewives as well as professionals from the point of view of Indian tastes.

4.7.5 Recreation, Handicrafts and Hobbies Handbooks

Many useful handbooks are published in this category of handbooks which provide recreation and leisure through practicing various hobbies, playing games, handicrafts, etc. These include such hobbies and handicrafts as needle work, stitching, knitting, embroidery, crocheting, pottery, wood work,

gardening, flower arrangement, interior decoration, sketching, drawing, painting, fabric painting, stamp collection, coins collection, indoor and outdoor games, and so on.

Examples:

- Crafts and Hobbies: Step-by-Step Guide to Creative Skills. New York: Reader's Digest, 1981.

It is an instructional book of over 40 crafts explained in detail about candle making, basketry, stained glass, wood making, leather making, and so on.

- Crafts for Your Leisure Years. By Cora Bodkin et al. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.

It provides information about 25 specially designed projects with step-by-step instructions in easy to read type for its users.

- Ikebana of Japan: Heika Style. By Houn Ohara. Tokyo: Shufunotomo, 1970.

This handbook is about vintage Ikebana of Japan, the Japanese art of flower arrangement. It contains full-colour flower arrangements and glossy photos. Also includes information about materials, containers, style and complete description to do own flower arrangements.

4.7.6 Self-Taught or Learn Yourself Handbooks

A number of practical handbooks are published which are 'how-to-do' type documents. These are also referred to as 'Learn Yourself' handbooks as they provide information about how to do, make, learn, operate, etc. without getting any formal training. Such handbooks are available for many odd works such as learning a language, learning magic, playing a musical instrument, operating a machine, and so on.

Examples:

- Learn Hindi in 30 Days. By K. Srinivasachari. Chennai: Balaji Publishers, 2003.

This handbook instructs on how to learn Hindi language through English.

- Learn Photography. Edited by J. Chakraborty and B. Sengupta. Calcutta: Photographic Association of Dum Dum, 1981.
- Learn to Play on Harmonium. By Ram Avtar. New Delhi: Pankaj Publishers, 2006.

It is a step-by-step direction guide of harmonium. It presents topics ranging from basics of understanding and handling instrument to teaching fingering, and learning the scale and octaves.

- Learn to Make Children's Clothes. By Sue Locke. London: Olympic Marketing Corporation, 1987.

It provides simple instructions for such common things as quick-sewing, mix-and-match patterns, etc. to make the children clothes. The book basically to carry out sewing by the novice. It also gives measurements of pieces of fabric, gives graph showing the patterns, and so on.

4.7.7 Equipment and Home Appliances Handbooks

Most of the electronic gadgets and home appliances have their own manuals to explain their operations. There are a number of handbooks and manuals which explain the theory and practice of modern equipment and also discuss about their problems and repairs. Such handbooks prepared in simple language help to bridge the gap between the scientists and laymen, and hence are very informative.

Examples:

- How Things Work: The Universal Encyclopaedia of Machines. By Paladin and C. van Amerongen. London: Granada, 1972. 2 volumes.

It discusses in detail about the installation, operation, functioning, maintenance, repair, etc. of the various types of machines. Also describes many more interesting aspects of machines.

- Car Repairs Properly Explained: Maintenance and Adjustments. 7thed. By B. C. Macdonald. Surrey: Elliot Right Way Books, 1970.

It is prepared for amateurs to learn how to repair, maintain and adjust a car properly, hence very useful.

4.8 Tables

In many subjects quantitative information in tabular form is required. These subjects are mathematics, physical sciences, engineering and technology as they are largely concerned with quantification of data, etc. It is convenient for the users to consult and grasp scientific and technical data in tabular form, for example, boiling and melting points, density, atomic weights, mathematical calculations for daily wages, taxes, etc. There are many handbooks available for this purpose in tabular form.

Examples:

- Tables of Physical and Chemical Constants. By G. W. C. Kaye and T. H. Laby. 16th ed. London: Longman, 1995.

It is the most up to date reference work available, providing a unique coverage of whole range of physical and chemical data available. It features improved accessibility, simplified illustrations, key references, and most importantly introductory text in each section.

- Climatological Tables of Observatories in India, 1931-1960. By Meteorological Department, Government of India, New Delhi, 1983.

This handbook has calculated tables using state level physical maps and climatic tables.

- **Logarithm and Other Tables with Useful Data: General and Chemical.** 2nd ed. Compiled by V. L. Pradhan. Poona: Dastane Brothers, 1958.

It contains major log rules, log scaling information, etc. and includes tables for other uses also. It is very useful for students, teachers, and others interested in logarithms.

5. Manuals

5.1 Definition

A manual is a concise reference book dealing with a particular process, procedure, operation, mechanism, job instruction, etc. It is essentially a how-to-do-it document prepared with meticulous care containing details of the concerned subject matter.

The word 'manual' is derived from the Latin word 'Manualis'. It means a guidebook, a compendious book, an abridged handbook, or a concise treatise.

However, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish it from an average handbook. William Katz believes that a handbook is "much the same as a manual", and both are used without much distinction. But another definition of a manual that it is "a book that gives instructions about how to use a machine" treats it separately from a handbook. However, this definition is narrow in as much as manuals give instructions not only for the use of a machine but many other things also. For example, *Manual of Online Search Strategies* (1988) gives useful instructions about the searching of databases. In common practice, a manual is an instruction book which explains how a certain thing happens, or how a particular job should be done by means of specific instructions.

5.2 Scope

A manual, like a handbook, has a limited scope, and it usually focuses on a specific area of interest. According to Katz, its particular value is its depth of information in a narrow field of knowledge. These days, numerous manuals are available on as many subjects. Also, new manuals appear every year, while some old ones disappear or undergo a name change.

5.3 Uses

A manual is a handy, single volume ready reference source useful for individual users as well as for libraries. Some of the uses of a typical manual are as follows:

- i. Being self-instructional, it provides instructions to users on the uses of equipment/appliances/software, etc.
- ii. It provides instructions to users' representatives on how to instruct their employees about the use of various machines and other equipment.

- iii. It provides instructions to management, supporting staff or helping staff on the use of equipment and/ or procedures, etc.
- iv. It provides instructions to departments or organizations on how to liaise their operations with others.

5.4 Types of Manuals

In the present day professional world, different types of manuals dealing with the description of various jobs, functions, instructions, procedures, software, etc. are available for use. Accordingly, they can be grouped in the following major categories:

5.4.1 Subject Manuals

There are numerous subject manuals which do not necessarily give instructions for setting, operating, or repairing a machine.

Examples:

- Manual of Online Search Strategies. Edited by Christopher J. Armstrong and J.A. Large. Boston:1988.

A comprehensively updated, this 3-volume edition covers the whole range of Internet, CD-ROM and dial-up online services. It is written by international experts on each subject area. It also gives useful instructions about the searching of databases.

- Manual of Map Reading and Land Navigation. 2nded.By Ministry of Defence, Great Britain. London: HMSO, 1989.

It provides guidance as to how a map should be read and information used during land navigation, particularly by the defence forces. It is a useful ready reference source for armed forces.

5.4.2 Technical Manuals

A technical manual describes an equipment, or a process, or a software, or a mechanical device. It is a publication containing detailed information on technical procedures including instructions on the operation, maintenance, and repair of equipment.

Examples:

- Technical Manual. 16thed. By John Roback and Martha Rae Combs. American Association of Blood Banks, 2008.

This manual deals with such technical subjects as medicine, internal medicine, medical professionals and technical aspects of medicine relating to blood banks.

5.4.3 Procedure Manual

A procedure manual deals with established procedures and working practices in an organization. This type of manuals is helpful for the managers in carrying out their work in methodical manner; therefore, mostly they are non-technical in nature. A procedure manual is therefore, a “how-to” guide providing uniformity and consistency in dealing with the daily tasks of any operation, say a business. They are also called as Standards Manuals or Policies Manuals.

Examples:

- Biogas Technology. A Manual for extension workers. Bombay, Tata Energy Research Institute and UNESCO, 1983.

5.4.4 Laboratory Manuals

The category of laboratory manuals describe how the users can perform experiments and give information about the concerned equipment, procedure, installing software, testing techniques, etc. These manuals are prepared for specific purpose and usually accompany some equipment, process, or software.

Examples:

- Haynes Owner’s Workshop Manuals. England: Haynes Publishing Group, 1960 to date.

Haynes manuals are named after their founder John Haynes, who began with a manual for car owners, garage mechanics, etc. to fix up their vehicles. Later, a series of practical manuals have been prepared by him and his publishing group, for domestic appliances, personal computer, digital photography, and the like.

6. Year Books

6.1 Introduction

A Yearbook, as the name suggests, is an annual publication, and updates information every year. It is an annual compendium of data and statistics recording the year’s activities by country, subject, or specialized area. However, the term ‘Yearbook’ is used by publishers for a variety of reference sources published annually. Yearbook is used to include at least two types of annual publications:

- Digests of current information, which are called as ‘Almanacs’; and
- Annual reviews of world history, which are called ‘Yearbooks’.

Although these two terms are distinctive forms of reference sources, yet they are closely related so far as their use and scope are concerned. In libraries also for reference purpose, these two are used for almost the same purpose.

6.2 Definition

The ALA Glossary of Library Terms defines a yearbook as “an annual volume of current information in descriptive and/or statistical form, sometimes limited to a special field”.

William Katz, however, defines a yearbook as “an annual compendium of data a statistics of a given year”.

Yearbooks, therefore, are regarded as excellent and convenient sources of general background information on countries of the world. In this context, Christine Reid stated that yearbooks “can also quickly provide facts on history, geography, population, politics and trade”. Hence, it is a ready reference source for a multitude of topics and provides a record of human progress in various fields.

Therefore, yearbook aims to cover activities which have taken place during a period of one year. Sometimes, it is limited to a particular subject, country, or region and records mostly current developments in various fields of human activity.

6.3 Uses

Yearbooks are handy ready reference resources in a library as well as some households. These are regarded as very useful to the users. Some of the uses of yearbooks could be as follows:

- i. Most of the queries of users in a library can be easily answered with the help of yearbooks.
- ii. They provide information about the current developments and recent trends in a subject.
- iii. They are a convenient source of all kinds of statistical information.
- iv. Sometimes yearbooks also cite the sources of information which provide additional keys to further information.
- v. Some of the yearbooks also provide biographical information.

6.4 Types of Yearbooks

Yearbooks are of various types, but they can broadly be categorized, according to their scope, as follows:

- a. General Yearbooks
- b. Subject Yearbooks
- c. Organizational Yearbooks

They are further available at different levels, according to various geographical areas of coverage:

- i. National,
- ii. Regional, and

iii. International

Besides the above stated yearbooks, there is yet another category of yearbooks which are issued by publishers of encyclopaedias to update the main set of their encyclopaedia.

Each of these types at different geographical levels are discussed below with suitable examples:

6.4.1 General Yearbooks- International

Most of the general yearbooks are found to be handy, authentic and include reliable information. Generally, such yearbooks cover descriptive and statistical information about each country of the world. Besides, information about international and regional organizations, such as United Nations, SAARC, Commonwealth, etc. is also included in these yearbooks. Some of them may also include biographical accounts of personalities who have made their mark at international level.

Examples:

- The Statesman's Yearbook 2014: The Politics, Culture and Economics of the World. Edited by Barry Turner. London: Macmillan, 1864 to date. Annual.

This 150 years old world-famous Yearbook is regarded as the most authoritative and reliable ready reference source. Despite being international in scope and coverage of about 166 countries, it is kept up-to-date, hence helpful for all types of users. The current edition is revised and updated to include profiles of all current leaders of the world. It is divided in two parts. Part I deal with international organizations giving information about the United Nations and its agencies, European Union, and so on. Part II deals with the countries of the world arranged in alphabetical order. The information provided about each country includes its history, territory and population, social statistics, climate, constitution and government, administration, defence, international relations, economy, energy and natural resources, industry, international trade, communication, social institutions, culture, and diplomatic representations. Katz declares it as "a corner stone for reference work in any type of library". It is also available online: www.statesmansyearbook.com

- The Europa World Yearbook 2014. London: Europa Publications,2013. 1926 to date. 2 volumes. Annual.

This yearbook is about eight decades old now. In its present two volume form published since 1959, it provides wealth of information about all countries of the world. It is globally renowned for its accuracy, consistency and reliability. Katz believes that Europa has several advantages, like (1) "...it is almost as timely as the Statesman's Yearbook, (2) It leads in the number of words and amount of information, (3) The first volume covers the United Nations and over 1,650 special agencies and international organizations by subject and European countries, and (4) The second volume covers non-European countries, a total of 250 nations and territories". In the present edition, a new chapter on South Sudan, and updated information on the uprising against Syria, among others, have been added. In this yearbook, each country begins with a short introductory survey, followed by a statistical profile, the constitution,

government, political parties, diplomatic representatives, judicial system, religion, the press, publishers, radio and television, trade and industry, transportation, higher education, and miscellaneous facts about that country. It is also available online: www.eurapaworld.com

6.4.2 General Yearbooks- Regional

The regional yearbooks usually cover a particular region. There are several general yearbooks which are published to cover the countries of a particular region. These yearbooks depict the economic and political picture of the region. The country survey includes, inter alia, history; geography; economy; statistical survey; constitution and government; legislature; political organizations; judicial system; religion; press; radio and television; finance; trade and industry; transport; defence; education; atomic energy; and so on.

Examples:

- Central and South-Eastern Europe 2014. 14th ed. London: Europa Publications, 2013. Annual.

This yearbook presents a comprehensive survey of the countries and territories of this region, incorporating the latest economic and socio- political developments. Its characteristic feature is that every edition includes some new information, and in the current edition it has covered an essay on the Black Sea; information and analysis about the election results across the region; deals with crisis in euro zone; and fully updated directories of political and other organizations.

- The Far East and Australasia 2014. 45thed. London: Europa Publications, 2013.

Written by leading experts, this yearbook provides incisive analysis and regional issues. It presents a comprehensive survey of the countries and territories of East and South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand along with 22 Pacific islands. It is fully revised to reflect current economic and political developments, hence assumes the significance of being as essential resource for the Asia-Pacific region. The essay on each country includes information about its geography, recent history, economy, statistical survey, and a select bibliography. The new features of the present edition are an in depth analysis of tensions on the Korean peninsula; transition to a new group of leadership in China; coverage of recent legislative and presidential elections in Cambodia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and Philippines. It also includes a calendar of main political developments.

6.4.3 General Yearbooks- National

National yearbooks provide descriptive and statistical account of a specific country. They include information about area, population, government and constitution, administration, economy, social welfare, commerce, communications, etc. These yearbooks also include annual events and activities of the concerned country.

Examples:

- India 2013: A Reference Annual. Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. 1953 to date. Annual.

From 1998, the title of this yearbook is changed to add the year in the title, e.g. India 2013. Being an official publication of the Government of India, this yearbook is an authoritative and authentic source of information. It includes reliable and accurate information and data, because the information is gathered from the government departments and closely scrutinized by the editors. It provides information about Indian economy and industry, trade, commerce, energy, land and people, national symbols, the polity, finance, defence, education, scientific, research, planning agriculture, water resources, transport, communication, labour, housing, sports and games, India and the world, and so on. It is followed by general information on President of India, Vice Presidents of India, Prime Ministers of India, Chief Justices, information about various awards, etc.

- Britain 1999: The Official Handbook of United Kingdom (UK the Official Yearbook of the UK). London: Central Office of Information, 1946 to date. Annual.

It is compiled by the Central Office of Information since 1946, and is the official handbook of the UK. It is, therefore, an authoritative compendium of Britain that provides up to date account of all the latest government policies and other important developments, describing the workings of government and other major institutions; the various sections of the economy; social, cultural and environmental matters; international affairs; and British achievements in many fields. It also includes some information in statistical form. This yearbook gathers together a complete range of official information.

6.4.4 Subject Yearbooks- International

Similar to general yearbooks, there are also subject yearbooks with coverage of various geographical areas. The subject yearbooks describe the developments in the particular subject during the preceding year. Some of the notable subject yearbooks prepared at the international level is discussed as follows:

- Statistical Yearbook. New York: The United Nations Publications. 1949 to date. Annual.

It is considered as one of the best-known authoritative and reliable international statistical yearbook. This compilation covers the basic data, predominantly general or economic, from over 150 areas of the world. The information included in it is arranged under broad subject headings.

- Yearbook of International Cooperation on Environment and Development. Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Norway, 1992 to date. Annual.

This yearbook was published as Green Globe Yearbook of International Cooperation on Environment and Development till 1997 when the term Green Globe was removed, and it is now published under the current title. Its 11th edition, edited by Olay S. Stoksu and O. B. Thommessen, was released in 2003-2004. Its main objectives were to demonstrate the international community's position on specific

environment and development problems, to show various obstacles to effective international solutions, and to analyse how to overcome them. Thus it reveals as openly and objectively as possible the controversies, conflicts and constraints encountered in promoting, development and protecting environment.

6.4.5 Subject Yearbooks- National

The national subject yearbooks usually discuss about the developments that have taken place in a particular subject during the preceding year.

Examples:

- Yearbook on India's Foreign Policy 1989. Edited by Satish Kumar. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1990. Annual.

It provides an ongoing discussion forum for analysis of India's foreign policy. The yearbook includes commissioned and analytical essays on a particular region or country and presents important primary documents relating to the issues. Each volume reviews foreign policy concerning the year covered. It also reviews India's relations with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China, Japan, Germany, Russia, and the United States of America.

- Family Welfare Programme in India Yearbook 2001. New Delhi: Department of Family Welfare, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

This yearbook provides detailed family welfare performance statistics up to date in respect of various facets of family welfare programmes. It provides a wide range of demographic, social, economic and related statistics according to the latest population census data. It is a useful source of information about India's family welfare programmes.

6.4.6 Organizational Yearbooks

Organizational yearbooks contain information about various types of organizations at international, regional or national level. Examples of this type of yearbooks are given below.

Examples:

- Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2012. Edited by Eileen W. Lindner. Nashville, Tennessee, USA: Abingdon Press, 2012. Annual.

Published continuously since 1916, this yearbook contains information about denominations, churches, clergy, seminaries, and other religious organizations in the USA and Canada. It is regarded as the most complete and accurate compilation of essential information about religious organizations in North America. It reports membership of top 25 churches in order of size and reports on 227 national churches bodies. Information in this yearbook is kept up to date in two regular electronic updates each year.

- Library Association Yearbook 2000-2001. By KattiyrnBeecroft et al. London: Library Association Publishing, 2000.

This yearbook is divided into three main parts. Part one contains practical information about the regional branches and special interest groups of the Library Association, listing committee members and publications. Part two features Royal Charter, code of professional ethics and conduct, by-laws for election, rules, regulations, and other procedures. Part three contains a complete listing of Library Association members, personal and institutional, in the UK and overseas, etc.

6.5 Supplements to Encyclopaedias

The leading publishers of important encyclopaedias have been issuing yearbooks known as “Supplements to Encyclopaedias”. The basic objectives of publishing such annual supplements are:

- To update the basic set by incorporating the latest developments, and
- To summarise the preceding year’s major events.

The yearbooks or annual supplements issued by the publishers usually record the major events of the preceding year, like any other yearbook. In practice, it is observed that these yearbooks do not update the original set of the encyclopaedia but are yearly reviews only. These yearbooks or annuals vary in their coverage, arrangement, quality and quantity of illustrations, presentation, special features, index, and so on. Some supplements/yearbooks of the important encyclopaedias are mentioned as follows:

6.5.1 Adult General Encyclopaedia Supplements

These supplements serve as annual additions to general encyclopaedias.

Examples:

- The Americana Annual: An Encyclopaedia of Current Events. New York: Americana Corporation, 1923 to date. Annual.

The American Encyclopaedia was the first to start an annual compendium of events of previous year as a supplement to the main set. This yearbook was continued until the year 2000.

- 2013 Britannica Book of the Year. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1938 to date. 2012. Annual.

The latest edition of this yearbook for 2013 revisits the major events of 2012 from uplifting moments at London Olympics to the horrific events at Sandy Hook Elementary School. It remembers those lost in 2012 including astronaut Neil Armstrong. It provides a complete, accurate and stimulating account of 2012 along with exclusive commentaries on today’s world by distinguished experts. Also covers 40 special reports on topics covering milestone anniversaries of the year. It brings biographies of those who made a difference in 2012. It also gives facts and figures about demographics, foreign trade, education, and health.

6.5.2 Subject Encyclopaedia Supplements

These supplements are regarded quite useful for both the subject specialists and non-specialists as they cover the important developments in a particular subject during the year.

Examples:

- McGraw- Hill Yearbook of Science and Technology 2013. New York: McGraw Hill, 1962 to date. Annual.

As a supplement to the famous McGraw- Hill Encyclopaedia of Science and Technology, this yearbook presents an annual round up of the amazing breakthroughs in science and technology. It makes information on the latest advances in science and technology accessible to the specialists and non-specialists through concise and richly illustrated articles. With entries written by international experts in their respective fields, this yearbook covers a broad range of science and technology disciplines. Thus, it is an important ready reference source in this field.

- The American Library Association Yearbook. Chicago: American Library Association. 1976 to date. Annual.

This yearbook is a supplement to the ALA World Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Services. However, the yearbook covers only the developments that took place in America, while the coverage of the encyclopaedia is of the entire world. Despite this difference in scope, it serves as a useful ready reference source for the library and information professionals, teachers and students of library and information science.

7. Evaluation of Handbooks and Yearbooks

Handbooks, manuals and yearbooks are also known as ready reference sources of current information hence are very useful for all types of users and libraries. But as their number and kinds have been increasing tremendously over the years, it is rather difficult for the librarians to make a judicious selection for their libraries. Due to shrinking library budgets and limited fund allocation for such reference and information sources, many libraries in India, particularly of small sizes, cannot afford to buy these annual publications. The libraries need to purchase these ready reference sources according to the needs of their users which vary drastically from public libraries to university libraries to special libraries. It is, therefore, prudent for the librarians to carefully evaluate each and every such source before their acquisition.

Although general rules for evaluation of a reference source, from authority to cost to readership, are applicable to ready reference sources also, yet some checkpoints for the evaluation of this variety of reference sources are briefly discussed here.

7.1 Authority

The authority of the source must be carefully examined, which may be either the author/editor/compiler, or publisher, or both. Most standard ready reference sources, acquired in libraries year after year, have been found to be authoritative. The authority is established, as Katz affirms, “due to a conscientious publisher and compiler, as well as frequent fact check editing”, among others. However, to be on the safe side, the facts should be double checked, preferably from the original source.

7.2 Scope

Scope is particularly important in such ready reference sources. The scope depends upon the purpose as stated in the introduction and preface to the work. The scope of handbooks and yearbooks, etc. also varies from source to source. It may be either general or subject or restricted to area of coverage. The coverage of such sources, therefore, can be current or retrospective, comprehensive or selective, international, national or regional, etc.

7.3 Arrangement

The arrangement of data, facts and other information is of much significance in these ready reference sources because the facts need to be accessed quickly. The arrangement can be alphabetical, chronological, geographical, or classified by subject. Whatever may be the mode of arrangement, it should be systematic and consistent to facilitate easy search of facts, etc. If not in alphabetical order, the source must be equipped with a helpful index.

In digital form, arrangement has a natural substitute in the availability of navigational tools which serve as an index to the work.

7.4 Current Information

In this category of ready reference sources, currency of information is very important because these sources are usually referred to locate latest information on dates, events, figures, achievements, etc. The frequency of their publication, if it is annual, keeps them quite current.

However, where data must be minute by minute up to date, these sources cannot be compared with the online databases which are updated more frequently.

7.5 Treatment

It is to be ascertained whether the treatment of information given in this category of sources is biased in favour of a country, a region, or an area. The yearbooks and handbooks which are also published on yearly basis should be checked for their up-to-datedness, thoroughness, reliability, simplicity, objectivity, accuracy, etc. The style of presentation of the information should be according to their objectives. For example, style of treatment for manuals and practical handbooks should be simple and practical, while the treatment of information for subject handbooks should be scholarly.

7.6 Audience

While evaluating these reference sources, the reading level of the audience should be taken into consideration. It is different in a public library than in a college and university or special library. It should be kept in mind whether the source is meant for students or for general adult public.

7.7 Format

The format of a ready reference source can be assessed by verifying the following aspects:

- a. **Size:** These sources, as far as possible, should be handy, in single volume, and easy to consult works.
- b. **Typography:** The size and style of typefaces should be clear and legible with suitable heading and sub-headings. The reasonable spacing between the letters, words, and lines, and layout of the columns helps to improve the readability of the sources.
- c. **Paper:** In view of the heavy use of these sources in the library, good quality paper should be used for durability.
- d. **Binding:** The handling of these sources in the library is generally rough; hence the binding should be strong enough to withstand the wear and tear. Binding may be of leather, rexin or calico cover.
- e. **Physical Appearance:** The physical get up and appearance should be appealing, functional and pleasing with golden or ink print lettering on the spine and front cover.
- f. **Illustrations:** Inclusion of quality illustrations according to the need of the text and the age and educational level of readers is essential. The physical quality of such illustrations is very important.

7.8 Special Features

A careful perusal of preface, introduction, etc. will give an idea about its special features. Some of them are mentioned as follows:

- a. **Methods of Compilation:** There are different methods of compilation of this category of ready reference sources. It depends upon the nature, scope and coverage of the source. The sources of collection of data and the method of data collection may be checked carefully.
- b. **Trends in Development:** These sources should indicate trends in development of the subject over the years as these are important both in scientific and social science research.

- c. Bibliographies: A useful feature of these sources may be that they may also contain, at the end of articles in handbooks, bibliographies for further reading. These references will help the experts to obtain more information from other sources.
- d. Others: Some other special features may include (i) emphasis on information on a particular subject, organization, area, etc., (ii) information otherwise obtainable in biographical sources, and (iii) keys to abbreviations, how to use, appendices, etc.

7.9 Indexes

In order to facilitate easy access to data, facts and other current information contained in yearbooks, handbooks, etc. provision of detailed index having cross references, is a must. Most of the reliable yearbooks and handbooks, etc. cite sources of information and thus can be used as informal indexes for additional key to information. Specific citations to government sources of statistics may guide the user to primary material otherwise difficult to locate.

7.10 Electronic Version

Many of the ready reference sources are now also appearing in electronic version, either CD-ROM or online. The larger libraries having sufficient funds may go for the electronic version as they provide more up-to-date and recent information in comparison to the print version.

The checkpoints for evaluation as mentioned above are deemed to be useful for judging the worth of any ready reference source. However, it may be mentioned that the experience of librarians/reference librarians are the best guidelines available at hand.

8. Summary

This Module explains the concept and gives the definitions of handbooks, yearbooks, and manuals as useful ready reference sources. It discusses about their uses to their users as individual and in various types of libraries. These sources are found to be useful in locating answers to fact finding questions.

A handbook can be defined as a collection of useful information, combining some of the features of both a dictionary and an encyclopaedia. It is also a publication that reviews available information concentrating on critical data and/or guidelines for accepted and tested procedures, techniques, processes and standards. Handbooks are very popular and have widespread uses, particularly in science, technology, industry, manufacturing, healthcare and other related subject areas. A manual on the other hand is a concise reference handbook dealing with a particular process, procedure, operation, mechanism, job instruction, etc. It is essentially a how-to-do-it document prepared with meticulous care containing details of the concerned subject-matter. Anyearbook also known as an annual, is a publication that is published annually and includes records, highlights, and commemorates the past year events. It is defined as an annual publication giving current information and listing events or aspects of the previous year, especially in a particular field.

It further describes the various types of these sources of current information. Attempt has been made to present a survey of these sources and explained with suitable examples from each category of handbooks, manuals and yearbooks for the benefit of the users. In view of the availability of increasing number of these ready reference sources, the Module further describes the various checkpoints to evaluate the worth of these sources before their acquisition in the library.

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