
Research methods in information

Alison Jane Pickard. Facet Publishing
2007, 329pp, ISBN 978-1-85604-545-2

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This book sets itself the ambitious goal of guiding the reader 'step by step though the whole research process'. Its layout is certainly a good start, providing a comprehensive and logical overview of the research process from theoretical underpinning, defining a research question, developing a research proposal, introducing research methods and data collection techniques, and concluding with data analysis and presentation of research results.

Aimed at undergraduate students and 'all practitioners beginning a piece of research' the intention is to provide 'sufficient knowledge' for researchers to 'embark on their own empirical research'. Reassuringly the book doesn't seek to reinvent the wheel, instead drawing on well known and trusted research texts, and providing illustrations within an information context. It adopts a practical approach, breaking aspects of the research process into manageable chunks and providing opportunities to check learning in information related settings at the end of each chapter.

There are some limitations. I would have liked to have seen an 'answers' section to accompany the practical exercises to enable readers to confirm their learning. Additionally, the chapter on presentation of research results is restricted to the writing of a final research report or dissertation. Acknowledgement of writing for peer review publication (increasingly a pre-requisite of funding bodies) would have been helpful together with a list of sources for further reading.

The author emphasises that this book is intended as a brief introduction to research methods for information professionals. She should be taken at her word. This book provides a good founda-

tion for those starting to think about undertaking research, particularly at an undergraduate level. However for a more in-depth understanding of the methods and techniques discussed, the target audience would need to look further afield in order to achieve a successfully executed project. To her credit, this is something acknowledged by the author, and each chapter concludes with a list of suggested further reading.

At its most basic level, this book signposts issues which researchers should be aware of before embarking on a research project. It is a good reference book and provides a thorough starting point for those new to research or those seeking to gain a greater awareness of the range of research techniques available, highlighting their appropriateness in answering specific types of information-related research questions.