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Koltay, Tibor. “Abstracts and Abstracting: A Genre and Set of Skills for the Twenty-first Century” (Book Review)

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Koltay, Tibor. **Abstracts and Abstracting: A Genre and Set of Skills for the Twenty-First Century.** Oxford, UK: Chandos; 2010. (Chandos Information Professional Series). 277 p. \$85.00. ISBN: 978-1-84334-517-6. ©

Reading abstracts is part of the usual routine for reference librarians, especially those employed in health sciences and academic settings. The importance of abstracts to knowledge transfer and to the library and information science field is overlooked and deserves review. This book is written to fill a void in recent English-language books on this important subject. Tibor Koltay is a library and information science professor in the Faculty of Applied and Professional Arts, Szent István University, Jászberény, Hungary. Koltay approaches the topic of abstracts and abstracting as both a literary genre and a process. The author intends the book for an interdisciplinary audience: professional abstractors, researchers who publish in scholarly journals, linguists, and language arts teachers. Librarians would also benefit from this book, especially those serving scholarly writers, researchers, and the higher education community.

Koltay discusses theoretical interdisciplinary underpinnings of abstracting along with chapters on the practical skill and knowledge needed to write good abstracts. Koltay theorizes that there are three types of abstracts: the frequently used informative abstract that summarizes important methods and findings contained in the article, the indicative abstract that describes the content but does not report data in the article, and abstracts that are both indicative and informative. Librarians who love to read theoretical discussions will find much here to keep them absorbed, but the theoretical chapters can be skipped or skimmed to focus on more practical discussions, such as what exactly an abstractor has to know and what the process of writing abstracts is. A discussion of the limitations of author abstracts (those written by the author of a manuscript) versus those of professional abstractors and the connection to information literacy

and database searching are among the many useful discussions.

Koltay seems familiar with the North American library scene, quoting information literacy standards of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), and the use of familiar databases such as EBSCOhost's Academic Search Premier. A chapter with examples and discussion is also provided.

American readers will need to adjust to British spellings and didactic style, and forge ahead through acronyms that are not always explained or found in the index. After working through these limitations, readers will find that this book contains useful, well-documented knowledge that can be used to help authors write better abstracts and can be used in teaching the scholarly publishing process. The book can be used as a self-help guide to learn the abstracting process and could be used in library and information science courses, but the cost may be prohibitive. This book is recommended for academic libraries, especially those supporting graduate programs and researchers who publish, but is optional for the typical hospital and public library.

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