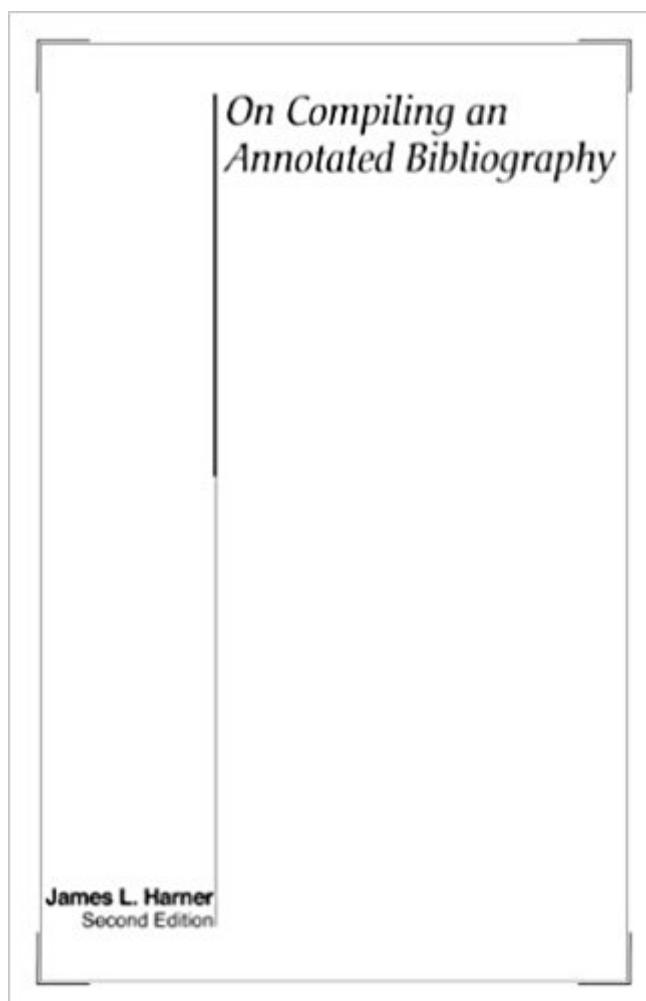


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On Compiling An Annotated Bibliography



Synopsis

James Harner's popular pamphlet, first published in 1985, has been revised and updated in the light of advances in computer technology and the availability of humanities databases. Harner offers useful information on planning research, organizing an annotated bibliography, compiling entries, using a computer to prepare the manuscript, and editing. While the booklet focuses on the preparation of a comprehensive bibliography on a single literary author, the procedures and techniques are easily adapted to selective or subject bibliographies and to other periods and disciplines.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

James L. Harner is Samuel Rhea Gammon Professor of Liberal Arts and Professor of English at Texas A&M University. Among his numerous books are *Literary Research Guide* and *On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography* (2nd edition), both published by the MLA. He is also editor of the *World Shakespeare Bibliography Online*, which has been awarded both the Besterman Medal (Library Association of Great Britain) and Besterman/McColvin Medal (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals).

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"On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography" offers a quick, concise guide for those interested in writing and publishing an annotated bibliography. However, given the scope of such a project, the book is amazingly short - too short. While I did learn a great deal from the author, I feel as though he only scratched the surface. Although "On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography" is one of the few how-to guides I could find on the subject, I don't think I'd recommend it to aspiring annotated bibliographers - the book is just a bare skeleton without any real "meat." At 42 pages, "On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography" shouldn't even be called a book - rather, it's more like a pamphlet. It measures 8.5 x 5.5 inches, so it isn't even oversized, and the pages feature fairly generous margins to boot. Finally, the author wastes three of these pages on an introduction and another three on the works cited - leaving only 36 pages of actual discussion! Given the complexity of devising, researching, organizing, writing, publishing, and marketing annotated bibliographies, you can't even begin to delve into the process in so few pages. Personally, I'd expect a decent book on the subject to run at least 100-150 pages - and even that would cut the conversation short! And at \$10, the book is outrageously overpriced. Period. I've written longer, more complicated papers in a weekend. Nonetheless, the information included in "On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography" is quite useful, for both amateurs and experienced scholars alike. Author James L. Harner explains the following:

- * How to determine whether there's a need for the bibliography you envision;
- * How to determine whether you have the resources necessary to complete the project;
- * The different components of an annotated bibliography, and how to best organize/structure them;
- * How to plan and carry out your research;
- * How to obtain and evaluate the works;
- * How to compile, structure, vet, and write the bibliographic entries;
- * How to edit and index your book; and
- * How to consult existing bibliographies for guidance.

Harner is an effective and engaging writer, and I found "On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography" to be extremely interesting. My main gripe - well, my ONLY gripe, really - is that the guide is so ridiculously short. It's just a tasty appetizer, when what I really need is a four-course meal!

This is the definitive work on compiling an annotated bibliography. Easy to read and well organized, this guide provides answers about technique and style of production. Many helpful insights about the preface and the body of the bibliography. A must read for those considering producing an annotated bibliography for publication.

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