Like many encyclopedias, this volume contains an eclectic collection of articles. Unlike other large collections, this set of articles assembles the forefront of an emerging body of work under an umbrella that helps to make sense of how technology is shaping collaborative activity. The term “e-collaboration” was penned by the volume’s editor to bring together research that had previously seemed to inhabit a set of smaller, self-contained worlds. In prior generations of research, these worlds were called “group decision support,” “computer-aided collaborative work,” “e-learning,” and even the recently popular “social network.” Ned Kock, as editor of this volume, editor of the International Journal of E-Collaboration, and author of many journal articles on the topic, is to be credited with pulling together work in these and other related areas to produce not just a new compendium of articles, but a new, cohesive, and important area of study.

As presented in the Preface and in most of the articles in the volume, e-collaboration is defined as “collaboration among individuals engaged in a common task using electronic technologies (p. xvi).” Topics in the book describe the technologies, uses and applications of technologies, impacts of technologies, and social constructs governing user and organizational adoption and success. Articles cover conceptual, theoretical, and applied e-collaboration issues. There are histories, literature reviews, short research pieces, curricular descriptions, and technology depictions. Readers who are new to the topic, and readers who are not, will find much of interest in the wide expanse of issues presented here.

I have but one criticism of the encyclopedia. Like all encyclopedias, articles are presented in alphabetical order. This makes it difficult to locate all articles on a particular topic, in a particular stream, or using a particular research method. Those searching for tutorials will wade through research papers. Those looking for curricular guidance will need to search it out among research literature reviews. A second table of contents, perhaps organized by topic, approach or keyword, would be extremely useful. In addition, the index at the back of the book is incomplete. The index would be greatly improved by the addition of the key terms found at the end of each article.

This volume will have long-lasting benefits to those who own it or can access it in their libraries. It is the kind of work that will be consulted often, providing enduring value to those who read it.
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