Book Review

Encyclopedia of Distance Learning (four-volume set)

Reviewed by Yair Levy, Nova Southeastern University, USA

The Encyclopedia of Distance Learning four-volume set is a wealth of information for researchers, practitioners, and students interested in topics including the science of distance learning, e-learning systems, distributed learning, and virtual teams. Aside from the hundreds of research papers, the key strength of this comprehensive encyclopedia set is in the valuable definitions of thousands of research terms, cognitive constructs and technology characteristics related to distance learning. The work published is the latest and most current research endeavors documented directly from the desks of leading researchers in the area of distance learning and e-learning systems.

The Encyclopedia of Distance Learning is divided into four volumes, each including research papers that were divided into the four volumes based on alphabetical order. All of the papers are in the context of distance learning, e-learning, distributed learning, and virtual teams.

Volume I includes research papers with titles from A to C. This volume includes quality research articles dealing with issues related to academic, administration, accreditation, achievement, adult learners, blended learning, building systems, building trust, changing role of faculty, cognitive issues of learners, collaborations, communication, copyright, critical factors, culture as well as curriculum.

Volume II includes research articles with titles from D to H. It includes additional quality papers dealing with issues related to design, development, diffusion, disability, distance education, distributed learning, educational technology, e-learning, e-moderating, encouraging and enhancement of participation, evaluations, facilitation, faculty, future issues, groups, history, hybrid, as well as hyper media.

Volume III includes research articles with titles from I to Q. Volume three includes research papers dealing with issues...
related to implementation, improvements, innovation, interaction, just-in-time, K-12, leadership, learning, multimedia, online learning, Open University, participation, as well as quality.

**Volume IV**, the final volume, includes research manuscripts with titles from R to Z. This volume includes valuable research dealing with issues related to research, social, stress, students, self funding programs, support, teacher, teaching, technology, threaded discussion, transformations, university, usability, videoconferencing, virtual, web-based, wireless, workplace, youngsters, as well as zones.

This review of the *Encyclopedia of Distance Learning* four-volume set is based on three approaches: (1) as a management information systems (MIS) professor, (2) as a referee of numerous scientific research manuscripts, and (3) as a researcher in the area of e-learning systems.

As a professor of management information systems teaching master’s and doctoral information systems (IS) students at Nova Southeastern University (NSU), I am constantly looking at sources to help stimulate students’ research. NSU’s Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences (GSCIS), my current school, has been a pioneer in the area of distance learning for several decades. It has been ranked by *Forbes* magazine as one of the nation’s top 20 cyber-universities, and has been listed in Princeton Review’s *The Best Distance Learning Graduate Schools* (GSCIS, 2005). Moreover, the GSCIS led NSU to its recent honorary achievement of being designated a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education by the U.S. National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security (GSCIS, 2005). As a professor, I feel that the work published in this four-volume set is extremely valuable for our doctoral students. It is especially valuable for IS and Computer Technology in Education (CTE) doctoral students who are in the earlier stages of their doctoral dissertation work. I personally hope to see several doctoral dissertations emerging as a result of the solid foundational work published in this encyclopedia.

Additionally, as a referee for numerous journal articles and conference proceedings, I am interested in quality work in the areas of distance learning, e-learning systems and IS. The four volumes of the *Encyclopedia of Distance Learning* are a must-have for libraries where online and distance learning courses are being offered.

After reviewing this comprehensive encyclopedia set, I have contacted the NSU’s head librarian (http://www.nova.edu/library/) and recommended purchasing the encyclopaedia for our own library. This set would be beneficial to NSU’s Alvin Sherman Library, Research, and Information Technology Center, a $43 million, state-of-the-art library is Florida’s largest library (Ferrero, 2005). In particular, I recommended the hard copy for the Alvin Sherman Library and the electronic copy for NSU’s e-resources. (It was not surprising that NSU’s library already purchased the encyclopedia in hard copy as well as the digital access for the e-resources previously.) Clearly, having NSU’s library purchase this encyclopedia set is another piece of evidence for the rigor NSU is placing in the research and practice of distance as well as online learning. NSU has more than 25,000 students and is the largest independent institution of higher education in Florida. Moreover, NSU is the eighth largest independent institution nationally and is pioneer in using distance learning techniques as part of the learning methodologies.

Finally, as a researcher in the area of MIS and e-learning systems, I am con-
tinuously seeking new ideas for my own research. This encyclopedia set is full of quality work, knowledgeable contributors, and stimulation of ideas for research in the area of distance learning that is second to none. Moreover, it is very time consuming for researchers to find quality definitions of key terms in any field of science. This set combines thousands of definitions of key terms (see section Key Terms at the end of each article) in the area of distance learning, e-learning, and IS under one roof.

REFERENCES