[Review Guidelines](#)

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The Value of H-Net Reviews

Reviewing books and multimedia materials is one of the most important functions of H-Net discussion networks. While print journals generally take a year or more to review new works, H-Net obtains and distributes professional reviews in a matter of months.

Since the inception of H-Net Reviews in 1994, network editors and staff have continued to explore the possibilities of web publishing. With no printing costs involved, reviewers are able to write more in-depth analyses than most print journals allow. Further, H-Net Reviews facilitate a real dialogue between authors and readers. Discussion networks are able to arrange simultaneous reviews by several reviewers--in effect, creating an online conference on important new works. On H-Net networks, authors are encouraged to respond to reviews and discuss their work, engaging in a public forum with their reviewers.

H-Net Reviews are stored on an Internet database, where they are readily retrievable at any time and accessible worldwide. Links at the bottom of each review take readers to archived threads of discussion commentary, written by authors and scholars respected in their fields. In the year 2014, H-Net's reviews database contains over 37,000 book and multimedia reviews, published in seven languages. H-Net currently publishes around 2,000 book and multimedia reviews each year.

Effectiveness

The most effective review will place the work within a broader context, explaining what important issues are worth the attention of scholars. Multimedia reviews should be written with a computer-literate, academic audience in mind, avoiding descriptions that are too technical or overly simplified.

Content

Reviews should include a brief summary of the scope, purpose, and content of the work and its significance in the literature of the subject. For multimedia reviews, evaluate the significance in relation to similar multimedia products and relevant

literature. Many readers will depend on your summary for substantive information on a topic, so it is important to be precise and clear.

Evaluation

Reviews should go beyond description to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the work, paying attention to the use of sources, methodology, organization, and presentation. Evaluation should consider the work's stated purpose. For software or CD-ROM reviews, pay attention to user friendliness, appropriate audience, organization, and presentation. In the age of rapid technological change, the software's longevity should also be kept in mind. Also, does the use of a software/CD-ROM package enhance the presentation of this material.

Audience

Reviewers need to keep in mind the audience (the specific [H-Net Discussion Network](#)) for which they are reviewing. All H-Net networks include subscribers from many different disciplines and departments, so it is important for reviewers to provide historiographical background.

Professionalism

Whether the evaluation of a work is favorable or unfavorable, reviewers should express criticism in courteous, temperate, and constructive terms. Reviewers are responsible for presenting a fair and balanced review and for treating authors with respect. Electronic communication is a hot medium in which intellectual exchange is all too often lost to verbal conflict. As with all items posted to their networks, H-Net editors will be responsible for maintaining a constructive review process and may ask reviewers to reword or rewrite sections of their reviews. H-Net editors have the prerogative to refuse submissions.

Author Responses

One goal of H-Net Reviews is to facilitate discussion of new works. To this end, H-Net is endeavoring to develop new professional norms that encourage dialogue between authors and their reviewers. New standards need to be established for this new medium of reviewing. Authors may receive copies of reviews in hopes of encouraging their response. H-Net network editors may delay posting of a review to allow authors time to respond.

Editing Reviews and Responses

H-Net editors' primary responsibility is to maintain the intellectual integrity of their networks and the civility of the dialogue. Review editors may edit with a light or heavy hand, but all changes must be agreed to by reviewers and/or authors. H-Net editors reserve the right not to post reviews and responses.

Guidelines for Other Multimedia Reviews

H-Net takes interactive academic publishing in a new direction, with multimedia reviews of museums, exhibits, websites, films, videos, concerts, and more. Reviews of exhibits and concerts should be descriptive evaluations that consider context, presentation, and background. They should not be written as mere announcements.

It is necessary to take the longevity of the material under review into account. How will this film, exhibit, or website be considered in five to ten years? What special contribution does it make (or fail to make).

Website reviewers should consider not only the potential lifespan of the site they are reviewing, but its upkeep as well. Are links updated regularly? Is the site user-friendly? Is it frequently visited.

Finally, as with any good scholarly review, your analysis should make reference to related sources, and should help readers consider how the material or presentation being evaluated fits within its discipline.

Copyright Information

All reviews will carry the following H-Net copyright statement at the bottom of the review:

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License](#).

Reviewers retain copyright of their reviews and license them to H-Net under a Creative Commons license. Authors retain the right to reprint their reviews in any format that they choose, without the payment of royalties, subject to giving proper credit to the original publication on H-Net. H-Net permits all of its reviews to be copied and distributed for nonprofit educational use provided proper credit is given to the review author and H-Net. Reviewers should not agree to write a separate

review of the same work for a print journal. Any conflicts arising out of the review process will be adjudicated by the Editorial Board of that network under the guidelines established by the H-Net Charter.

World Wide Web

All H-Net solicited reviews will be available through the world wide web at: https://networks.h-net.org/reviews.