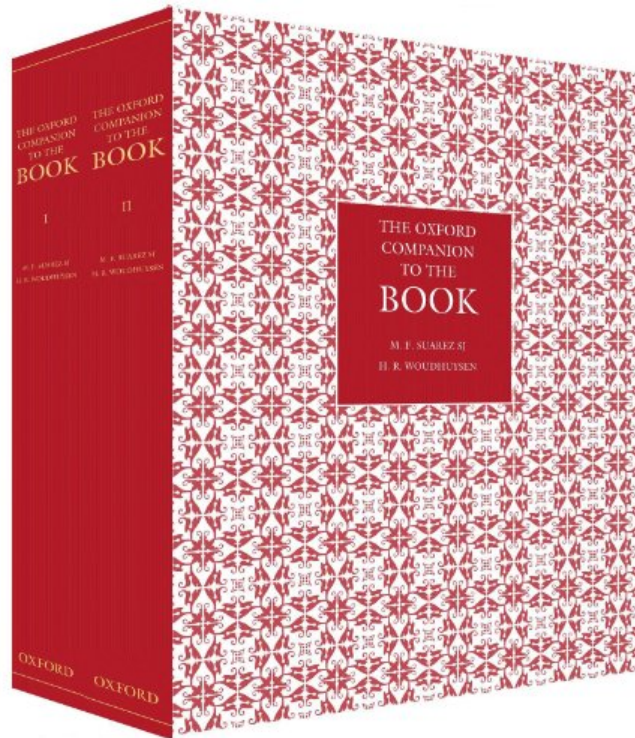


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34 of 34 people found the following review helpful. Book lovers' delightBy David RadcliffeThis volume is a departure from the usual OUP "companion" format. The first volume consists largely of substantial essays on book-related essays, the remaining pages being given over to the more conventional dictionary format. It is also physically larger: two substantial quarto volumes that are lovely to look at but comparatively unwieldy to handle.The contents resemble some other less-useful companions in being decidedly academic in character. The professional specialties get extensive treatment, the notion of "book" is extended to cover material from the beginning of writing systems to the latest (as of a couple of years ago) in digital texts, and the prefatory essays give the history of the book global scope. There is less color and humor than one might hope for in a more companionable companion.If the entries are small, they are useful starting-points for investigations that will inevitably lead users to the internet where space is not an issue. In that respect the OUP has done the right and indeed a very clever thing in making a kind of ur-book out of this companion: as a physical object it is the state of the art in reference-book production with lovely typography, heavy paper, and binding that shouts "I am a book!"Indeed it is, and a timely book that fills a large gap in the shelf. No one does reference books better than OUP and they went al-out on this signature production. The price is steep but warranted by the quality of the product.20 of 21 people found the following review helpful. An Admirable ArtifactBy James M.Two terrific tomes totaling 1,327 pages. The first 172 pages contain assorted essays on the physical

development of the book. The next 271 pages consist of country-by-country histories of book publishing, distribution, related economic issues, etc. This section is justifiably Eurocentric and makes interesting reading. The final 884 pages comprise an alphabetic dictionary/encyclopedia of book terms, publishers, printers, collectors, booksellers, etc. This section generally does not include entries for individual authors (no Hemingway, Joyce, Milton, Dickens) but does mention a few names such as Jonson and Shakespeare with regard to their role in the history of the printed word. Likewise, specific literary works are not mentioned except for a handful of historical landmark publications. The books are of high quality, strongly bound, and, surprisingly, lay pleasantly open for reading. I rather wish the slipcase had been traditionally bookish...the publisher's tablecloth pattern would seem more at home among the cookbooks in the kitchen than in one's library. Perhaps a nice can of leather-brown spray paint...it's an old trick but it might just work. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Forthcoming Alternative By Dennis Webb If you can't afford these beautiful volumes, please note that OUP will release a volume called "The Book: A Global History" on December 1, 2013, consisting of the 51 essays contained in volume one of this set. The announced price will be \$36 in hardcover. Just FYI. See the listing for further details.

The Oxford Companion to the Book is the first reference work of its kind covering the broad concept of the book throughout the world from ancient to modern times. Along with such subjects as bibliography, the history of printing, editorial theory and practice, and textual criticism, it also engages with newer disciplines such as the history of the book and the electronic book. Additionally, the companion provides an engaging analysis of how books and societies have shaped one another. Written by the world's top scholars in bibliography and book history, the companion is an authoritative and highly informative work of reference for an international readership across a vast range of disciplines. This unique two-volume work is organized into two parts. Part I is a substantial series of introductory essays—over forty essays offer generic histories of the subject as well as surveys of the history of the book around the world, including the Muslim world, Asia, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Part II of the companion comprises an A-Z section of over 5,000 entries on every aspect of this exceptionally rich and diverse subject, ranging from brief definitions and biographical entries to more extensive treatments. Both parts of the text are richly illustrated with reproductions, diagrams, maps, and examples of various typographical features.

From Booklist *Starred* The only surprising thing about this fine set is that the topic hasn't been tackled before by the Oxford Companion series. At a time in our history when the very future of the book is so often called into question, Oxford, as usual, produces what will likely be for the foreseeable future the final word on the subject, and in such a concise format. According to the introduction, this is a set that seeks to represent in a single work the world of the book as it is known at the close of the first decade of the 21st century. Admitting that the book . . . is not really an adequate emblem of many material manifestations of text, the editors point out that the idea that bibliography and book history are not inimical . . . but mutually enriching and deeply interrelated undertakings has been one of this project's primary foundations. The work is divided into two parts. The first, a series of 51 essays, opens with an overview of various topics (Paper, Children's Books) before settling on 32 essays on the history of books in various regions (The History of the Book in Italy, The History of the Book in Korea). History of the Book in America is the longest essay at 18 pages; Technologies of Print (15 pages) is the longest of the nongeographic entries. All include bibliographies. Following the essays are more than 5,000 alphabetically arranged shorter entries. Although not all of these have bibliographies, many do even the 39-word entry Lubok (a Russian broadside). Cross-references are duly noted to sections of the essays as well as to other entries. Virtually anything dealing with the book industry is covered, ranging from the paper used and the printing process to terminology (Private presses); people (Greenaway, Kate); publications (Kirkus's); libraries (Wales, National Library of); and publishers (Phaidon Verlag and, yes, Oxford University Press). Entries vary from a few sentences to some 2 1/2 pages (Scientific books and journals). The set is liberally illustrated with about 170 illustrations throughout. Oxford has gone out of its way to make the work as accessible as possible. It opens with a Thematic Index of Entries and a 2-page Notes to the Reader, which illustrates how entries are arranged and forms of transliteration used. The set concludes with an index, which the introduction notes is not a common feature of Oxford Companions, but the scope of this project and the mix of long essays and short entries . . . suggested the need for additional guidance for readers. Highly recommended for academic and large public libraries. --Ken Black "'The Oxford Companion to the Book' is a monument to mankind's most effective means of communication, one that is infinitely portable, transmissible and treasurable, intimate and tactile in ways that none of its rivals can attain. Suarez and Woudhuysen are great exponents of conventional bibliographic wisdom." --Wall Street Journal "[This] could occupy those of us interested in books and book history quite happily for the foreseeable future. The OCB has been designed for both ready-reference and systematic study, made possible by a detailed system of cross-referencing, thematic indexing, and an extensive general index. It's awe-inspiring." --Fine Books Collections "Entries on every aspect of this exceptionally rich and diverse subject richly illustrated." --Pricy-Spicy.com "At a time in our history when the very future of the book is so often called into question, Oxford, as usual, produces what will likely be -- for the foreseeable future -- the final word on the subject, and in such a concise

formatEL Highly recommended for academic and large public libraries." --Booklist, starred reviewIt provides a global approach to the world of the book and is, in every way, a monumental achievement. Highly recommended. -- CHOICEAbout the AuthorMichael F. Suarez, S.J. is University Professor, Director of the Rare Book School, and Hon. Curator of Special Collections at the University of Virginia. He is co-editor of *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume 5, 1695-1830* (2008) and co-general editor of *The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, (OUP, 2006).H. R. Woudhuysen is Professor of English at University College London. He has edited *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse* (1992), with David Norbrook, *Love's Labour's Lost* (1998) and, with Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare's Poems* (2007) for the Arden Shakespeare third series.