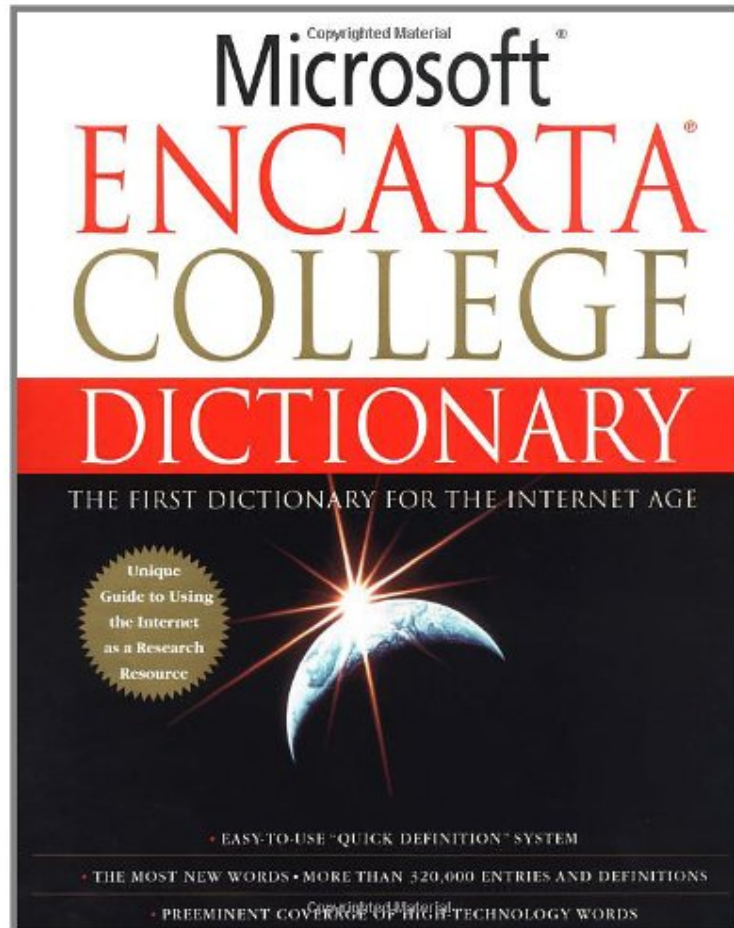


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Microsoft Encarta College Dictionary: The First Dictionary For The Internet Age

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From Publishers WeeklyAimed primarily at students and redacted from Microsoft's Encarta World English Dictionary (2001) this new volume promises two things competitors such as American Heritage lack. The first, predictably, concerns technology: Encarta includes entries for "electronic town hall," "LMK" ("let me know" in e-mail) and, yes, LINUX, marking tech-related definitions with a (silly-looking) lightning bolt. Instead of an essay on historical linguistics, Encarta gives a very practical five-page essay on Web research methods and Netiquette. The second, more substantial, difference concerns its audience. With help from many college English teachers, lead editor Soukhanov (Word Watch) and crew aim skillfully at undergraduates and others who need help avoiding common errors. Frequent wrong spellings ("vinagrette," "twelvth") appear as their own entries in gray strikethrough type; inserts following definitions explain correct usage, distinguishing, for example, "flaunt" from "flout." Other inserts give "literary links" (Camus for "stranger," Forster for "view") or offer "quick facts" about terms like "chaos theory." Encarta gives proper nouns troublingly minimal definitions: "Neil Armstrong" and "Jane Austen" get big portrait photos, but are identified only as "U.S. astronaut" and "British author." Obscure words and technical senses turn up, but not always reliably "no-kill" (of an animal shelter) but not "noisette"; "lingual" means only "of the tongue" or "of language," though it bears, in phonetics, a more specific sense. These and other choices may strike know-it-alls as bad news, but likely they will please a hurried, or less sophisticated, readership the volume may irritate purists, but it fills a genuine, perhaps an important, niche. (July)Forecast: Microsoft's Encarta Encyclopedia took a beating for its omissions and mistakes; this imperfect dictionary should compete not with comprehensive reference works (as Encarta World English meant to) but with other college dictionaries it could do very well if promoted vigorously.Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.From School Library JournalWith the MicrosoftR and EncartaR brands, St. Martin's is a growing presence in the dictionary world. In 1999, they published the EncartaR World English Dictionary (LJ 10/1/99), and now they are bringing out this new reference. The extremely well-qualified Soukhanov was also general editor of Encarta's 1999 title and is the "Word Watch" columnist for the Atlantic Monthly. Even in the face of such expertise, however, one must ask: given the recent publication of the fourth edition of the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (LJ 10/15/00), as well as the recent publication of the EncartaR World English Dictionary, do most libraries need this new title? Are its "5000 new words" worth the price? This books weights in with 90,000+ headwords (as does the new American Heritage; the EncartaR World English is somewhat larger at 100,000+ headwords). Obviously, given its title, this is intended for college students, and it offers some tools that are appropriate for them. Along with word definitions, it includes an essay titled "Using the Internet as a Research Tool" and a list of commonly misspelled words to help the budding writer. In addition, the dictionary attempts to be encyclopedia-like, offering various "Quick Facts" on a variety of topics scattered throughout and "Literary Links," which connect a word to a work of literature. These "links," it must be mentioned, are identical to the EncartaR World English's "Word Key: Cultural Note" entries. As for the definitions: while they are clearly written and often easier to understand than those in the American Heritage, in some instances the American Heritage provides more nuance and a greater variety of meanings. And the definitions here are frequently truncated or exact copies of the those appearing in the EncartaR World English (not surprising since both are based on the The Bloomsbury Corpus of World English). What this new reference does provide are words and phrases not necessarily found in other dictionaries, e.g., "dimpled chad," "left-click," "primary storage," and "sniffer." Yet many of the terms marked here as "new" (with a lighting bolt symbol) are also found in the new American Heritage. Given these overlaps in content, this new reference is only useful for libraries that serve a large student population and need a new dictionary. Those already owning both the EncartaR World English and the new American Heritage dictionaries may want to skip this one, since it adds little that is new.- Cynthia A. Johnson, Barnard Coll. Lib., New York Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalOnce again joining forces with Microsoft, Soukhanov follows up the Encarta World English Dictionary (1999) with what is touted as the first all-new college dictionary in three decades. Features include lots of high-tech vocabulary, coverage of variants from British to African English, 800 illustrations, and, of course, a guide to the

