

# Net Results

by Joshua Harris

## For Those Who Can't Quit: Sites about Science Books

From time to time, even science editors take a break from analyzing one manuscript after another. But that doesn't always mean they stop reading. If you're interested in publications about science, consider visiting the Internet to find your next read. Here are a few sites specializing in science books and related items.

### **American Scientist Online—[www.americanscientist.org/template/Index](http://www.americanscientist.org/template/Index)**

This is the official Web site of *American Scientist*, the magazine of Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society. The Bookshelf section of the site features online versions of book reviews from the current issue of *American Scientist*. It also contains an archive of reviews from issues as far back as 1998. At the end of each review is a list of other publications of possible interest that have been reviewed and a link for requesting articles from *American Scientist* for classroom or commercial use. There are also options on the site for ordering back issues, subscribing to the magazine, and signing up for an electronic newsletter that features links to author interviews and highlights of forthcoming science books. The books featured on *American Scientist* Online can be purchased through [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com). Members of Sigma Xi and *American Scientist* subscribers can receive a discount when purchasing through *American Scientist* Online.

### **Nonfiction Reviews—[www.nonfictionreviews.com/](http://www.nonfictionreviews.com/)**

This site is a great resource if you're searching for a title that was written to entertain but is also based in fact. Reviews of titles featured on the site are divided by topic: history, science, religion, true crime, biography, paranormal and fringe science, entertainment, medicine and psychology, and politics. The reviews are detailed and give the reader a definite sense of what the book is about. Unfortunately, many of the reviews are too detailed (many take up the better part of two single-spaced pages), but this is a minor gripe if you plan to buy the book on the basis of the review alone.

There is a link to [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) at the end of each review in case you wish to purchase the book. A helpful feature of the site is instructions on how to submit a book for review and even how to apply to review books for the site (a great way to get more of your writing seen by others). The site is largely ad-driven, but fortunately there are few pop-up ads to get in the way; most ads are in areas along the edges of the screen.

### **Science Books & Films—[www.sbsonline.com](http://www.sbsonline.com)**

*Science Books & Films* is a publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). The site is easily accessible by the public and offers a wide variety of resources, including an online store, a science marketplace, and community bulletin boards; subscribers to *Science Books & Films* have unrestricted access to its online database containing over 9000 reviews. A Hot Links section contains links to other sites related to science, including virtual science museums and sites for researchers. Every review that appears on the site has been featured in *Science Books & Films*. There is an online store section if you want to read reviews and buy publications. The store is arranged in seven categories: From Our Current Issue, Gifts, Field Guides, Children, Young Adults, Adults, and Seasonal. Each category contains five featured items and lists several past features; at the end of each review you have the option of buying the book through [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

### **Books et al.—[www.sciencemag.org/feature/data/books/index.shtml](http://www.sciencemag.org/feature/data/books/index.shtml)**

The Books et al. Web site consists of reviews that have appeared in *Science* magazine. Here you can find reviews, by subject-matter experts and occasionally by publication staff, of many scholarly works and a few popular books as well. There is a full-text review, and a summary of it, for each book; there are also instructions on how to submit copies of a book that you feel would be a good candidate for review by *Science*. In case you wish to buy a book

after reading the review, a link directs you to the Barnes & Noble Web site to order the book; AAAS members who purchase publications through Books et al. receive a discount. The site also provides a list of publications received in the preceding week and the preceding 3 months. No reviews of these books are available, but there is a link for purchasing them. One or more short reviews of the book, if available, can be read on the Barnes & Noble Web site. An archive of reviews from 1998 to the present is also available on the site.

**John F. Ptak Science Books—[www.thesciencebookstore.com](http://www.thesciencebookstore.com)**

John F. Ptak Science Books specializes in rare or out-of-print science publications. With over 20,000 items in stock, many from the 19th century, this online book-

store is a great place to look for those hard-to-find publications. The site's online catalog contains books, pamphlets, manuscripts, and prints (searchable by author, title, subject, artist, and so on) concerning the sciences and the history of science. A wide array of publications are available; subjects range from alchemy to technology. If you cannot find a rare or out-of-print book in the store, simply send an e-mail to [jfptak@thesciencebookstore.com](mailto:jfptak@thesciencebookstore.com) with the name, title, and publisher of the book, and someone at the store will search for it for you at no charge. According to the Web site, search results are usually returned within 3 weeks.

JOSHUA HARRIS *prepared this column while a Science Editor intern.*