



The MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences (MITECS)

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Winner in the category of Psychology in the 1999 Professional/Scholarly Publishing Annual Awards Competition presented by the Association of American Publishers, Inc. and Choice Outstanding Academic Title, 2000.

Since the 1970s the cognitive sciences have offered multidisciplinary ways of understanding the mind and cognition. *The MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences* (MITECS) is a landmark, comprehensive reference work that represents the methodological and theoretical diversity of this changing field.

At the core of the encyclopedia are 471 concise entries, from Acquisition and Adaptationism to Wundt and X-bar Theory. Each article, written by a leading researcher in the field, provides an accessible introduction to an important concept in the cognitive sciences, as well as references or further readings. Six extended essays, which collectively serve as a roadmap to the articles, provide overviews of each of six major areas of cognitive science: Philosophy; Psychology; Neurosciences; Computational Intelligence; Linguistics and Language; and Culture, Cognition, and Evolution. For both students and researchers, MITECS will be an indispensable guide to the current state of the cognitive sciences.

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The MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences (MITECS) From The MIT Press Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1692547 in Books
- Published on: 1999-05-07
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 2.03" h x 8.85" w x 11.36" l, 6.11 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 1096 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The state-of-the-art knowledge about knowledge is contained within the *MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences*. Its 471 comprehensive entries cover topics as diverse as "Hemispheric Specialization," "Epiphenomenalism," and "Algorithms" in 1,000 to 1,500 words each, thoroughly cross-indexed and extensively referenced to launch further research. A few biographical entries are also included, highlighting such giants as Alan Turing and Santiago Ramón y Cajal. The editors selected their contributors well, assigning "Neurobiology of Consciousness" to Christof Koch and Francis Crick, for example. Even better, six longer essays introduce the *Encyclopedia*, each providing an overview of one of the six disciplines that overlap to form cognitive science: computational intelligence; culture, cognition, and evolution; linguistics and language; neurosciences; philosophy; and psychology. These are enormously helpful to the researcher, as they are general enough to allow easy entry but still meaty enough to be useful themselves and as pointers to specific entries. The *MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences*, while not a casual entry into the field, is an essential addition to the reference shelf for anyone seriously interested in AI, consciousness, or other aspects of natural and artificial brains. --Rob Lightner

From Library Journal

Content is king in this electronic title (known as MITECS), which is essentially an Acrobat version of the printed MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences. Encyclopedia content is itself beyond reproach. Six broad, extended essays set the stage, while 471 signed, crisply written topical entries include useful lists of references and further readings. MITECS's cross-disciplinary approach covers topics ranging from "ethnopsychology" to "game theory" to "taste." But the publishers haven't exploited the opportunities afforded by electronic access on the disc. Once Acrobat Reader and Searcher software (included on the CD) are installed, you can pull up the text of the Encyclopedia and use a small navigation bar to jump from "Title," to "CIP," to "Dedication," to "Preface." When I tried to print the Preface, my command started a printout of the entire volume. (One must use the volume's page numbers to print a desired section.) Entries are indexed A-Z, and clicking on a letter brings you to the first entry for that letter. "Name" and "Subject" index buttons bring you to facsimiles of those printed index pages. The Acrobat Searcher software allows full-text keyword searching but is awkward to use. As a CD-ROM, MITECS would be enhanced by the ability to print entries easily, a better keyword searching mechanism, and by dynamic links among related entries. These features are realized in MITECS Online, a web-based product available full text to those who purchase the printed book or CD. An abstracts-only version is provided, after free registration, to the general public (mitpress.mit.edu/MITECS/). The free version is valuable in itself, as most entries include references and further reading lists. MITECS Online has a number of enhanced features over both the print and CD-ROM: it adds graphic interest with unobtrusive color and design elements and is powered by the Excite search engine. MITECS Online also features the e-mail addresses of authors (although these are not hot links) and a collection of links to other cognitive science resources on the web. The Bottom Line: Skip the CD-ROM MITECS until more functionality is added. Academic and special libraries whose collections include any of the six disciplines that overlap to form cognitive science will want the similarly priced print title and corresponding online access. Site licenses have recently become available for the online product and may be cost-effective for heavy users. Check the MIT Press web site above for details. ABeth Ann Zambella, Lamont Lib., Harvard Univ.

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Review

"At last, a thorough, authoritative source for work in the cognitive sciences. Take the most important topics in the study of cognition, ask the world's top authorities to summarize the state of the art, and you have it: *The MIT Encyclopedia*. I have already used it to learn, to browse, to inform, to teach, and to update my own understanding. It doesn't matter which end you seek: the book will frequently be in use."

—Donald A. Norman, The Nielsen Norman Group; Professor Emeritus, Department of Cognitive Science, UC, San Diego; and author of *The Invisible Computer*

"The Cognitive Sciences emerged in recognition of the fact that scholars and scientists in many different fields shared common problems and needed to collaborate. Now at last *The MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences* has provided a forum large enough for that interaction to occur—a forum that will not only facilitate cooperation but will educate a new generation of cognitive scientists."

—George Miller, Professor of Psychology Emeritus, Princeton University

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Tony Hill:

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