

Glendinning, E. H., J. McEwan (2002) ***Oxford English for Information Technology***. Oxford University Press (ISBN 0-19-45-73-75-3)

This review has been written by Mariusz Marczak, who teaches British Studies at NKJOs Sieradz, and is a contributor to the British Council British Studies Web Pages*.

Although *Oxford English for Information Technology* is a coursebook for IT students on ESP courses, it would lend itself well to use in EFL classes within general courses, where it might be incorporated as supplementary material. Targeting intermediate level students, the book offers 25 units which focus on various ICT issues, ranging from *Computer Architecture, Networks* or *Data Security* to *The World Wide Web* or *Recent Developments in IT*. In the age of rapid technological development and the omnipresent computerisation of our daily lives it clearly is a good choice for the modern learner, as it not only gives them a chance to improve their language skills but also serves as a valuable source of up-to-date information on the very latest in computer technology.

IT students will naturally find it interesting but also those on regular school courses should enjoy the book, as the language used here is straight-forward and even though some specialist terminology inevitably appears here and there, it is all nicely explained and described so that even a lay-man can find it digestible and yet truly informative.

Each unit begins with a short Starter activity, which introduces the main reading text, followed by language skill work, problem-solving tasks, grammar work and word study sections. For computer buffs, each section features a specialist reading text – slightly richer in terminology and more advanced in content. As all the reading is based on original articles from IT literature, popular IT magazines, such as *PC World* (available in Poland), *PC Mag* or *PC Direct*, and popular non-IT press, e.g. *The Guardian*, students can expect a variety of topics and perspectives. To facilitate understanding, the texts come with colourful diagrams, screenshots, spider-grams, pictures and tables. Students are not only expected to read and learn but also interact with the texts and use them in practical tasks, often communicative activities performed in pairs, for which ready-made role-play sets or gapped fact-sheets are provided, complete with graphics. A real-life context is added through the listening texts, in which IT experts, IT students, hackers or average computer users are interviewed.

Reading the texts is not only a pure fact-finding mission; it also helps learners find out how the computer-based facilities work, e.g. the EPOS till at a shop or a digital camera; what IT terms refer to, e.g. AGP, LAN, XML or what different kinds of software can be distinguished, e.g. a spreadsheet or a personal info manager. But that is not all, the book goes further to tackle the problems of the IT job market, job requirements, tips and rules for computer users and the future of IT, including ideas such as high-speed optical fibres or artificial brain implants. For those lost in the metalanguage of IT, a *Glossary* section at the end of the coursebook provides an A-Z of items from the reading texts, deciphered and explained in plain English.

As supplementary material, the coursebook adds a variety to the lesson, appeals to the students, engages them in real-life, communicative interaction and most valuably equips them with the knowledge you cannot escape these days, for even the computer-shy have to know today what the difference between an internet browser and a search engine is; and if they can discuss it in English, it counts as an extra, important ability recognised by the modern world. Therefore, the book gives learning English a real purpose, which may be viewed as a factor naturally increasing foreign language learners' motivation.

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