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Language and the Internet

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Description

Review of *Language and the Internet* / Crystal, David. Language and the Internet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

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Language and the Internet

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Crystal, David. *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

In the pages of *Interface*, we have discussed many works on the problems presented by writing within electronic environments.[1] We have also previously reviewed works by David Crystal, perhaps the most widely acknowledged expert on the development of the English language. [2] All of his books have been useful and interesting as Crystal is not only one of the most important authorities in this field, but also one of the few to seriously analyze the impact of the Internet from a linguistic perspective. In *Language and the Internet* we feel that we have his most important relevant book insofar as the Internet is concerned.

While the book is relatively old (2001) we did not find it dated because of the strength of his original analysis. Part of the strength of the work is its breadth. Crystal points out that the Internet is not, in fact, a single medium, but the technology through which a number of linguistically distinguishable dialects such as email and chat rooms are conveyed to the reader.

The author discusses a number of such dialects from a linguist's point of view, drawing upon a wide correspondence with practitioners and students of these varied realms. These discussions are useful not only to those who want to better understand the usages of various Internet channels, but also those interested in the form of English most suitable to the channel in which they are writing at the time.

Crystal's work should be read not only by all who read and write electronic materials, but it would also be a very useful text for writers and editor, as well as for students of the Internet. We cannot recommend it too highly.

[1] See several of these works reviewed at:

<http://bcis.pacificu.edu/journal/2002/11/bookrev1.php>

[2] See our review of Crystal's *English as a Global Language* at:

<http://bcis.pacificu.edu/journal/2004/06/crystal.php>

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