

From the Encyclopaedia to Wikipedia: A Journey Through the History of Knowledge

The history of knowledge is a long and winding one, from the first written records to the vast digital libraries of today. In this article, we'll take a journey through some of the key milestones in the evolution of knowledge, from the ancient encyclopaedias to the modern-day Wikipedia.



A Social History of Knowledge II: From the Encyclopaedia to Wikipedia by Peter Burke

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 3484 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Lending	: Enabled
Print length	: 484 pages



The Ancient Encyclopaedias

The first encyclopaedias were compiled in ancient China, Greece, and Rome. These works were typically collections of knowledge on a wide range of subjects, from history and geography to medicine and astronomy.

One of the most famous ancient encyclopaedias is the Natural History, written by the Roman scholar Pliny the Elder in the 1st century AD. This

work contains a vast amount of information on the natural world, including animals, plants, minerals, and weather.

Another important ancient encyclopaedia is the *Etymologiae*, written by the Spanish scholar Isidore of Seville in the 7th century AD. This work is a collection of knowledge on a wide range of subjects, including grammar, rhetoric, history, and science.

The Medieval Encyclopaedias

During the Middle Ages, encyclopaedias continued to be compiled in Europe. These works were typically written by monks and scholars, and they often contained a mix of religious and secular knowledge.

One of the most famous medieval encyclopaedias is the *Speculum Maius*, written by the English scholar Vincent of Beauvais in the 13th century AD. This work is a vast collection of knowledge on a wide range of subjects, including theology, philosophy, science, and history.

Another important medieval encyclopaedia is the *Summa Theologica*, written by the Italian scholar Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century AD. This work is a systematic exposition of Christian theology, and it is one of the most influential works of philosophy ever written.

The Renaissance Encyclopaedias

During the Renaissance, there was a renewed interest in classical learning, and this led to the compilation of new encyclopaedias. These works were typically written by humanists, and they often contained a mix of classical and medieval knowledge.

One of the most famous Renaissance encyclopaedias is the *Naturalis Historiae*, written by the Italian scholar Pliny the Younger in the 15th century AD. This work is a vast collection of knowledge on the natural world, and it is one of the most important works of science ever written.

Another important Renaissance encyclopaedia is the *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, written by the English scholar Bartholomew the Englishman in the 13th century AD. This work is a collection of knowledge on a wide range of subjects, including animals, plants, minerals, and weather.

The Enlightenment Encyclopaedias

During the Enlightenment, there was a new emphasis on reason and scientific inquiry, and this led to the compilation of new encyclopaedias. These works were typically written by scholars and scientists, and they often contained a mix of scientific and philosophical knowledge.

One of the most famous Enlightenment encyclopaedias is the *Encyclopédie*, written by a group of French scholars in the 18th century AD. This work is a vast collection of knowledge on a wide range of subjects, including science, philosophy, and history.

Another important Enlightenment encyclopaedia is the *Britannica*, written by a group of Scottish scholars in the 18th century AD. This work is a vast collection of knowledge on a wide range of subjects, and it is one of the most comprehensive encyclopaedias ever compiled.

The Modern Encyclopaedias

In the 19th century AD, the development of new printing technologies led to the production of new encyclopaedias that were more accessible to the

general public. These works were typically written by scholars and journalists, and they often contained a mix of popular and scholarly knowledge.

One of the most famous modern encyclopaedias is the Everyman's Encyclopaedia, written by a group of British scholars in the early 20th century AD. This work is a vast collection of knowledge on a wide range of subjects, and it is one of the most popular encyclopaedias ever published.

Another important modern encyclopaedia is the Encyclopaedia Britannica, written by a group of American scholars in the 19th century AD. This work is a vast collection of knowledge on a wide range of subjects, and it is one of the most comprehensive encyclopaedias ever compiled.

The Digital Encyclopaedias

In the late 20th century AD, the development of digital technologies led to the creation of new encyclopaedias that were available online. These works were typically written by scholars and journalists, and they often contained a mix of popular and scholarly knowledge.

One of the most famous digital encyclopaedias is Wikipedia, written by a group of volunteers from around the world. This work is a vast collection of knowledge on a wide range of subjects, and it is one of the most popular websites on the Internet.

Another important digital encyclopaedia is the Encyclopedia of Life, written by a group of scientists from around the world. This work is a vast collection of knowledge on the natural world, and it is one of the most comprehensive encyclopaedias ever compiled.

The Future of Knowledge

The future of knowledge is uncertain, but it is clear that digital technologies will continue to play a major role. We can expect to see new encyclopaedias that are more accessible, more comprehensive, and more up-to-date than ever before.

We can also expect to see new ways of accessing and using knowledge. For example, we may be able to use artificial intelligence to help us find the information we need, and we may be able to use virtual reality to experience knowledge in new ways.

The future of knowledge is bright, and we can expect to see new and exciting developments in the years to come.

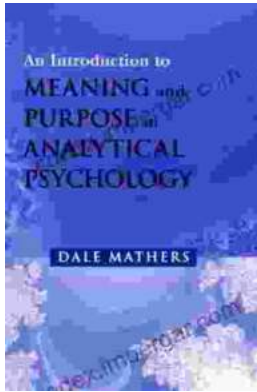


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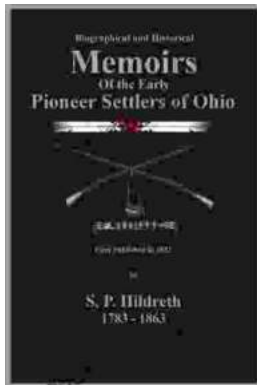
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