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Points of Reference A Booklist Blog

A team of front-line experts writes about reference sources and trends in reference publishing and services.

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Sunday, September 25, 2011 12:10 pm

[WEB SITE OF THE WEEK: PROCON.ORG](#)

Posted by: Christine Bulson

After reading David Tyckoson's recent blog on "Reference Sources That We Once Loved..." it reminded me of one of my favorites, *Taking Sides*. For those of you who don't remember or are new to reference (before the internet), *TS* is a multi-volume set arranged by broad topics and then includes popular issues of the day with for and against points. It was a perfect start for freshman college students who have to write a paper and have no idea where to find a topic or information on it. Do librarians still use these books or do they find ProCon.org? The web site's mission is to promote "critical thinking, education, and informed citizenship by presenting controversial issues in a straightforward, nonpartisan, primarily pro-con format." Similar to *Taking Sides*, topics such as Sex and Gender, Sports, and Media and Entertainment have at least one pro con issue. A current, popular topic is "Social Networking." The for and against text is in two columns, preceded by a "Did you know" and followed by a background essay. Footnotes are embedded in the text with many live links. No more jotting down footnotes or bibliography items and finding them in the card catalog and in bound volumes of periodicals.

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