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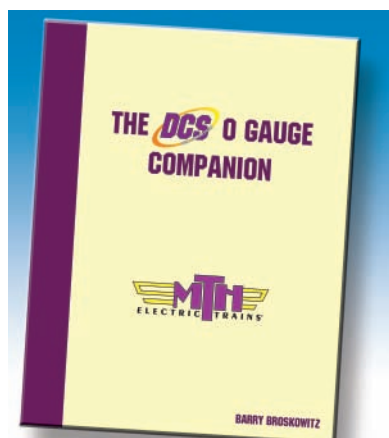
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The DCS O Gauge Companion

by Barry Broskowitz

Review by Jim Barrett



Here's a book that you can't buy at your local bookstore or train shop. Barry Broskowitz's comprehensive guidebook for the MTH Digital Command System (DCS) user is available on the Internet in a form that the user can print out, use as a handy reference, and update on a continual basis with new or revised information provided by the author. The book can be purchased and downloaded from the MTH website on-line store for \$12.95. Detailed instructions, as well as the availability of update information for *The DCS O Gauge Companion*, are available from the author on the OGR forum. In addition, Barry also provides two-way discussions of DCS issues on the forum as well.

This book is a valuable tool for learning all about DCS. It is a wonderful reference for not just new DCS operators but also experienced operators and those just considering the addition of DCS to their layouts. The book is written in a style that most everyone can understand and use, regardless of their prior level of experience with this system. As an experienced operator of command control trains, I have found Barry's

book to be the most important reference tool I have available as I build and operate my own layout. Barry is an experienced and consistent user of DCS and he is also well versed on Lionel's TMCC and Legacy systems.

The book is written in a clear and concise style that leads the reader logically and step by step through first understanding DCS and then implementing it on new or existing layouts. The easy discussion-style writing smoothly and effectively covers the common pitfalls and details of how to avoid them. Each section of the book builds on the material that was presented in earlier chapters, and all sections are amply illustrated with tables of information and other types of illustrations. The reader has the option of learning and understanding only the basics or getting a much more in-depth understanding of the advanced features and capabilities of DCS.

Where technical terms appear, Barry provides layman definitions for those not familiar with command control or electronics. The book assumes only common knowledge of O gauge trains and basic electricity. That said, even the most experienced users are sure to find nuggets of information

that they previously didn't know about. Items of limited interest are also covered in the book but are placed in appendices rather than the main body of the text.

Here's a chapter-by-chapter listing of what's covered:

1. A definition of command control vs. conventional operation
2. Overview of DCS operation and system components
3. Communication between DCS components and PS2 engines
4. The DCS menus and screens
5. Planning for a new DCS layout
6. Adding DCS to an existing layout
7. DCS considerations for large and modular layouts
8. Using DCS for remote operations of all operating accessories and switch tracks
9. Advanced features and functions of DCS including external TIU power, Z4K tracks, all engine operations, locomotive lash-ups, subways and trolleys, routes, and scenes
10. Integrating DCS with TMCC and Legacy



- In my opinion, Barry's book is unique. Nothing else published covers DCS in such depth and from an operator's perspective. If the book was to be printed and sold as a hard copy edition, the price would easily have been double the \$12.95 download price. It is professionally arranged and easily amended with maintenance updates without the need for changing the original page numbers. I've often found myself reading *The DCS O Gauge Companion* to learn about one topic, only to discover something entirely new and different that I didn't even realize the system was already capable of doing. This is one of those indispensable tools that should be in the hands of every command control operator.

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