S. Ratha, A.K. Samantara: Supercapacitor: instrumentation, measurement and performance evaluation techniques, XVII + 52 p. Springer, Singapore 2018, 58.84 €; ISBN: 978-981-13-3085-8

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Supercapacitors are omnipresent in electronics, electrical engineering, and electrochemical energy technology. From devices respectfully called Gold Cap decades ago they have moved into a still growing number of applications ranging from the tiny sensor needing electricity in regular intervals for reporting data by telemetry all the way up to international electric grids covering whole continents. Whether those optimistic forecasts suggesting the replacement of batteries by supercapacitors will become reality is a question only history can answer, but already the impressive number of reports on all aspects of supercapacitors from the fundamentals across materials science aspects of all components of a device to experimental aspects dealing with methods to study components and cells in this journal demonstrates the large and still growing interest of researchers attracted by supercapacitors.

Many studies report on comparisons of new, improved performance data with those already reported. For a fair and correct comparison in this highly competitive field well-defined, preferably standardized experimental methods are greatly desired. There are a few reports addressing such more practical aspects, but a comprehensive book covering all relevant practical aspects was still missing. The present book promises to close exactly this gap.

A short glance at the table of contents with only two major chapters named “Instrumentation and Measurement” and “Characterization and Performance Evaluation of Supercapacitor” seems to fulfill the promises of the book’s title. Unfortunately everything collapses on the first page, already in the first line after the chapter heading. A hardly comprehensible sentence about constituent chemistry and mechanisms of operation is only the first item in a long list of disappointments extending to the last page of the book. At this point and place it would be useless or worse to address every flaw, mistake, or error

within the following pages. Almost always chapter and section headings do not match even distantly the following content. The actual texts meanders between some basic electrochemistry, some battery and supercapacitor topics, and whatever came across the mind of the authors.

The language is sometimes even worse than barely comprehensible. The publisher is known for careful editing of manuscripts; it remains mysterious how the present volume could escape the editor’s care and attention. Unfortunately the habit of many publishers to set up new series and to fill them with works sometimes without paying too much attention to quality and to the actual need for a book seems to overwhelm critical care.

Given the slimness of the book and the overwhelming lack of relevance, even less helpful content the price is simply outlandish. Even though the book will occupy only a few millimeters on a bookshelf its acquisition cannot be recommended, it would be a waste of resources. But the book serves another purpose presumably not intended by the authors: How not to write a book. Elsewhere the book will definitely not be needed by the scientific community.

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