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GARVIN, Peggy (ed.) *Government information management in the 21ˢᵗ Century: International perspectives.* **Farnham: Ashgate. 2011. 230 pages. Hardcover. ISBN 978-1-4094-0206-0. £55**

Peggy Garvin has a long history of managing government information resources, particularly in the electronic environment, and therefore is well placed to have edited this book with a collection of papers from around the globe. With contributions from practitioners, academics and government officials, the scope of the content covers the full range of issues surrounding the provision and management of information from government for citizens. The chapters are divided into two sections: the first, targeted mainly towards those such as government information librarians who are responsible for stewarding and providing access to the information provided by government; and the second, focusing on the role of governments as information managers and providers. Thus, chapters cover a wide range of topics including (but not limited to) the skills and training that government information librarians need in the electronic age; the digitisation and preservation of government information; the digital divide in access to government information; handling Freedom of Information requirements; open government data; and Crown copyright. Published in 2011, all the chapters appear topical and up-to-date, although inevitably the fast pace of change in this arena will mean that content will soon date. Nevertheless, many of the principles and theoretical concepts discussed will remain intact. Although contributors are drawn from across the globe (USA, European Union, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Mexico) there is inevitably a very strong bias towards contributions from the developed nations and in particular, the USA.

There are too many chapters to be able to discuss them each individually, but a few in particular stood out for me (influenced no doubt by my own particular interests: all the chapters are written in an authoritative and informed style, but these few gave me the most food for thought). In the first chapter, Jaeger and Bertot discuss the changing skills profile and training needs of government information intermediaries that ensue from a shift away from the provision within libraries solely of government *information* to the provision of government *services* as a consequence of the electronic environment. In the same chapter, the point is well made that, without access to government information, it is possible to have freedom of expression but still not have a democratic government. In a chapter on 'Managing the digital collection', Latham and Weatherford Stevens point to the dearth of local government information, citing Morrison's (2008) identification of this as amounting to a "domestic intelligence gap". Ptolomey's chapter on 'Accessibility and the digital divide' in government information services is interesting and thought-provoking to read, but proof-reading of the chapter could have been better, with a number of typographical errors creeping in, and citations omitted from the reference list (e.g. Morris, 2009). I found Kensa's chapter on open government (which he links with open science) and public sector information flows particularly interesting. In order to achieve the goal of "open government" he maintains that we require four categories of data: data to inform policy; data about policy making processes; data about policy execution (e.g. budgetary transparency); and data about policy effectiveness and impact. He also

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highlights the importance of building the requirements of transparency and reuse of data into government information systems design. In the following chapter, Millar makes a strong case for the economic value offered from the network effects of open data: with information being a 'non-rival good' (i.e. my passing it on to you doesn't limit my ability to consume it myself), the economic value of government data and information is increased by opening it up. This also has the added benefit of increasing trust in government.

There are many other interesting chapters in the book, and I for one will not only be adding it to my collection, but will be recommending its use to postgraduate students of information policy. Final proof reading copy editing could have been given more attention and, being available only in hardback copy, it is a little on the pricey side. However, those who do opt to buy it are getting good value for money considering the wide scope and depth of the material within the book.

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