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**DANNER, Richard A. and WINTERTON, Jules. *The IALL international handbook of legal information management*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011. 392 pages. ISBN 978 0 7546 7477 1. £75**

This Handbook seeks to set out a potential research agenda for international legal information management. It is compiled under the auspices of the IALL (International Association of Law Libraries), and thus takes an international and comparative approach throughout comparing treatment of different aspects of the subject in different parts of the world. The book is split into individual chapters, each written by an author associated with IALL. Each chapter charts the development of a different aspect over time and also considers the drivers that shape current practice and challenges. References are given for each chapter, and often a list of further reading.

Some of the chapters are very wide in scope and thus less likely to have an immediate application for day-to-day legal information practitioners (e.g. how foreign, comparative and international law is taught in different countries), but may be of lively interest to a legal academic involved in course planning or to a researcher. Some chapters are highly specific (e.g. current state of development of law librarianship in specific countries) representing rare discussion and dissemination on those subjects. Other chapters are on issues that might be more normally expected in a narrower publication that concentrated on a 'how to' approach teaching legal research or legal information management in a local domestic jurisdiction. Therefore there are chapters on legal information literacy, digitising the world's laws, knowledge management, free legal information and the Legal Information Institutes, various different aspects of physical and electronic foreign collection building... These types of chapters may be more instantly practically usable in some ways for those looking for precise reasons to justify a purchase than the wider contextual discussions in that they balance an issues-based discussion with 'how to' methodology.

The approach taken throughout the book is contextual, scholarly, informed and considered and intended to give a range of views and opinions to generate debate, reflection and interest for anyone with any kind of interest in the subject. While I found some chapters more instantly engaging than others it is obvious a very great deal of work and intellectual effort has gone into the publication.

From the above you will see that the width of the scope and treatment necessarily means certain chapters are going to be a lot more relevant than others to different individuals. While not relevant to me personally I would highly recommend the chapter on collection building issues re physical foreign materials to anyone who practically needed to know how to go about this and what to consider. Extremely practical and displaying a very nice dry sense of humour! I also found the chapters on seeking to define international law librarianship and on the education and training of law librarians utterly fascinating and full of comments to ponder and references to follow up and I have since used some of the materials quoted and referenced to inform various pieces of work.

What interests me most about this book is that it is a serious piece of reflection on an international scale on issues that affect everyone involved in legal information and share many of the same challenges. The issues-based approach as compared to another 'how to' one is really useful in thinking through how issues have developed and considering current challenges –

- The impact of globalisation means we now need to be able to access materials from foreign and international jurisdictions and can't just rely on domestic law.
- The potential applicable content explosion that this and the internet as a publishing mechanism and other technological developments have resulted in.
- The differences between dissemination policies and methodologies (from free at point of access web to large commercial datasets).
- The conversations about authentication, preservation, copyright, licensing, costs and pricing and born digital information these have brought.
- The discussion about what is the legal information practitioners' skillset, about what sets us apart and defines our discipline.
- The relevance and profile discussion - what is it we do that has a value for the end-user and how perceptible is that value to them and the skill involved in it and would they agree with our evaluation of it or not?

This book is not always comfortable reading, but it is a good discussion of the above issues and more. Therefore while the sheer scope of it means parts of it are unlikely to be directly relevant to everyone and it is likely their interest will be in certain sections only (depending who they are and what they're using it for), it is well worth a perusal.

Interestingly, the work culminates with a chapter which suggests a detailed research agenda for the future.

I would be hugely intrigued to know the extent to which publishing a research agenda in this way and airing subjects for debate and discussion can actually influence the shape and extent of research in any field.

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