

Records and Information Management. By Patricia C. Franks. Chicago: Neal-Schuman, an imprint of the American Library Association, 2013. 336 pp. Bibliography, glossary, index. Softcover. \$82.00.

As resources are stretched to the limit, many archivists are asked to take on additional duties, including records management. However, in the modern environment, records and information management has expanded beyond traditional records storage to include related areas such as electronic records systems, data management, change management, compliance, risk management, project planning, and business continuity strategies. For both new and experienced records professionals, *Records and Information Management* by Patricia C. Franks provides a comprehensive guide to the full scope of the records management field.

While many records management texts focus on traditional basics, including records creation, storage, and disposition, Franks takes a more holistic approach. She argues that *Records and Information Management* “places equal emphasis on business operations out of which records arise” and “the ways in which a records professional can contribute to the core mission of the enterprise” to provide the reader with the knowledge necessary to be successful as a modern records professional (p. xi). Her audience is wider than simply the records manager or the archivist; she also includes information technologists, general counsels, business analysts, and other stakeholders who work with records on a daily basis. This wide-ranging approach is very successful, as Franks manages to discuss many facets of records and information management in a detailed yet manageable way.

In 12 chapters, each with a different focus, Franks addresses the multifunctional nature of records management, covering everything from the history of records management to the future of information governance. This desire to address all elements of records management gives the writing an encyclopedic quality, as the chapters focus on providing definitions and information on best practices within the chosen area. Every chapter is illustrated with useful charts, graphs, and handouts, which include full examples of survey forms and policy outlines. While each chapter could stand alone if needed, Franks also demonstrates how multiple disciplines contribute to the larger whole of records and information governance programs. All of the chapters end with a paradigm—a brief essay written by a contributor tasked with connecting the functions and principles detailed in the chapter to a real-world situation.

Franks tends to be more interested in breadth than depth, and, as such, the book works best as a one-stop shop for records and information management guidance. Each chapter is a solid introduction to the different facets of records management. Franks addresses the full gamut of records management functions, including records creation, storage, retention, access, electronic systems, social media, and long-term preservation. Sometimes these functions are combined in nontraditional ways; for example, in chapter 11, Franks discusses records management training in terms of both professional development for records managers and internal training programs for records creators, topics usually addressed separately. Franks also chooses to discuss both paper and electronic records management; while electronic records are still a primary focus of the work, including the sole focus of chapter six, she does not ignore the important paper

environment, describing in detail traditional filing systems and procedures for conducting physical records inventories (pp. 64–67, 86–87).

Refreshingly, Franks does not shy away from addressing functions typically underrepresented in records management texts, including auditing, vital records, and managing social media. For example, chapter 8 clearly explains what vital records are, why they are important, and how a vital records program can be successfully established in relation to a records management program while also exploring the role vital records play in disaster recovery and business continuity programs (pp. 200–10). Additionally, any records manager asked to develop a social media policy or program should consult chapter 7, “Emerging Technologies and Records Management.” While many of the so-called new technologies are now out of date—a fact that Franks addresses head on—the discussion of social media policies and management is still relevant in today’s records environment. Of particular relevance is Franks’s explanation of trend spotting, or the process of focusing on identifying new technologies to be managed before they become problematic (pp. 169–72). This proactive approach runs counter to traditional records management planning, which tends to be more reactive, and, thus, this excellent idea deserves to be at the forefront of records management discussions.

Because her work explores the full scope of the records management field, Franks’s *Records and Information Management* does contain an uneven level of detail. Franks discusses social media, vital records, auditing, and business process management so effectively that one wishes every idea in the book could be explored just as thoroughly. For example, chapter 10 covers a variety of topics including records storage design, long-term preservation strategies, and traditional archival concepts, but, while the wide scope is appreciated, the chapter feels disjointed and leaves the reader wishing for a stronger focus (pp. 257–63). Additionally, Franks discusses international records management policies in a cursory manner throughout the work, as if she knows they must be addressed but does not have the proper time to discuss them in depth. While she does provide an appendix of additional international information resources, a reader interested in the international records environment may desire more.

In some instances, however, Franks occasionally provides too much detail for experienced records professionals. Chapter 1, focusing on the history of records management, is interesting and well written but feels ultimately superfluous. The discussion of records management education and certifications in chapter 11 can read particularly slowly as Franks outlines every major certification and educational opportunity available (pp. 292–97). The chapter paradigms themselves also vary in quality; while most essays provide real-world examples, some are rather generic. The paradigm in chapter 5 provides an outline for automating a manual process, but gives few specific details (pp. 141–42). Thus, depending on the reader’s familiarity with records management, individual chapters might feel simultaneously over- and underwhelming.

One of the few topics that Franks does not discuss in her work is the significant resource gap that exists between records management in corporate and other environments. Although Franks tries to provide examples of records management within a variety of different organizations, she tends to focus mostly on the corporate world and its level of

resources. When describing recommended strategies and program requirements, Franks generally assumes that every records management program will have excellent internal support and be fully funded. For example, when describing a needs assessment for a records management program, Franks states that the assessment may be conducted by either an internal team of records management staff or an external consulting firm (p. 316). However, for many programs, the cost of external consulting is prohibitive, and the records management staff may consist of only one person, particularly at smaller institutions. These resource assumptions are balanced slightly by several paradigms that provide practical solutions using a more realistic view of available resources, including one describing records management in a cloud environment, but even these essays assume staffing and budget (pp. 163–65). This book does not provide specific guidance for records management programs on a budget, and any reader looking for cost-saving solutions will be disappointed.

Despite these concerns, Franks manages to walk a fine line very successfully as *Records and Information Management* provides a comprehensive overview of records and information management in the modern era that is suitable for both beginners and experienced professionals. While some chapters may provide more value than others, this book is a useful starting place for anyone seeking information on records management and may well be the ultimate reference guide for a modern records professional.

Hillary Gatlin
University Records Manager
Michigan State University