Review of Records and Information Management, 2nd Edition

Joshua J. Zimmerman
Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle, joshua.zimmerman@seattlearch.org

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/westernarchives

Part of the Archival Science Commons

Recommended Citation

Zimmerman, Joshua J. (2019) "Review of Records and Information Management, 2nd Edition," *Journal of Western Archives*: Vol. 10 : Iss. 2 , Article 5.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.26077/3bfa-5879
Available at: https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/westernarchives/vol10/iss2/5

Utah State University
MERRILL-CAZIER LIBRARY

Review of *Records and Information Management*, 2nd edition

By Patricia C. Franks. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2018. 528 pp. Softcover. $84.99. ISBN 978-0-8389-1716-9

Whether archivists know it or not, they are included under the large conceptual discipline of Records and Information Management (or RIM for short). Patricia C. Franks is in an excellent position to describe this over-arching discipline. Franks is the director of the Master of Archives and Records Administration (MARA) degree program in San José State University's iSchool where she teaches courses on archives, information governance, records management, and digital preservation. She has co-edited the *Encyclopedia of Archival Science, Teaching and Learning in Virtual Environments: Archives, Museums, and Libraries*, and the recently-published, *International Directory of National Archives*, and is a fellow in ARMA International. In the spirit of full disclosure: I am currently a lecturer in the MARA program.

In very broad terms, *Records and Information Management* is an updated and expanded take on the standard and usually slim records management textbook genre, which because of rapid technological change becomes quickly out of date and largely irrelevant. Franks openly acknowledges this at various points and has written a book that will be valuable well beyond any of those largescale changes. One major difference in her second edition, however, is that Franks conceptualizes traditional records management work within a larger information governance framework. Information Governance (IG) is a relatively new approach to managing information within an organization. It blends aspects of legal, risk management, and information technology, along with the more familiar records management. This approach provides RIM practitioners with an increased strategic view of their role within an organization.

Franks' aim in *Records and Information Management* is to move readers away from a narrow records management focus. She positions this book as a bridge between records management and the budding IG field. For instance, chapter 2 "Building an Information Governance Program on a Solid RIM Foundation" alludes to the transition to this new holistic framework. Additionally, she devotes the entire last chapter "From Records Management to Information Governance: An Evolution" to the topic of IG. These two information governance chapters serve as ideological bookends and can be seen as a direct response to the explosive growth of IG and what she sees as a prominent shift in RIM. She's trying to both describe and chronicle this evolution, but more importantly, she's trying to actively guide it. To address some critics of IG, she asks whether it is an entirely new profession or simply a rebranding of records management. She concedes very diplomatically that both are probably right (p. 393). And she's correct; more dynamic records managers and archivists have

always taken on larger roles, but not in any concerted manner as current IG proponents advise.

By design, each chapter in the book stands alone and can be used as a quick reference for practitioners or students looking to dive deeper into a particular subject such as data privacy, information security, risk management, or vital records. She walks the reader through the logical steps of managing information from creation and capture to storage and access. Though not completely devoid of concepts and ideas from across the globe, *Records and Information Management* is clearly written with professionals in the U.S. in mind. This is evident in the laws that Franks chooses to present within the main body of the text. She does, however, provide a detailed appendix for records laws outside the United States.

Along with its clear layout, the strength of *Records and Information Management* is its sheer comprehensiveness. Franks provides the reader with a number of handy tables of current records laws and standards, explanatory figures of concepts and ideas, and models such as the Records Life Cycle, Records Continuum Model, Digital Curation Life Cycle, Open Archival Information System (OAIS) reference model, and Information Governance Reference Model (IGRM). Perhaps, the most interesting parts of the book are what she calls the "Paradigms" or "Perspectives" at the end of each chapter. Here, Franks introduces other voices into the mix; these short case studies lend different perspectives or practical applications of concepts presented in each chapter. They ultimately help to display the dynamism and variety of RIM, give depth to the text, and breathe life into the many models, tables, and policy examples. Here, archivists will recognize some familiar names such as Luciana Duranti, Lori Lindberg, and Victoria Lemieux. Among the breadth of topics included are: lean process improvement and records management, file plan implementation, graduate archival education, and risk management.

To archivists like myself, who deal with both current and historical records, *Records and Information Management* is a valuable resource. It serves as a refresher for tried-and-true records management concepts such as records retention schedules, records inventories, and vital records, but it also contains newer topics such as managing records in the Cloud, blockchain technologies, autonomous vehicles, social media as records, the Internet of Things, and trusted digital repositories. In fact, she devotes the entirety of chapter 7 to some of these developing and emerging technologies.

Records and Information Management situates archives as merely one part of a larger information management strategy. This approach might be unfamiliar (and initially off-putting) to many archivist readers trained in the U.S., who see archivists and records managers as two distinct professions. Franks, however, encourages archivists to take a more integrated view of their role in managing information. She writes, "Recordkeepers, whether they consider themselves archivists or records managers, must understand the uses and values of records from creation through long-term preservation" (p. 39).

There are two main chapters that directly relate to archives. The first is chapter 11 "Inactive Records Management: Records Centers and Archives." This chapter introduces the reader to traditional archival functions of appraisal, acquisition and accession, arrangement and description, preservation, and access. Franks does an excellent job summarizing some of the major threads that run through the archival profession such as theoretical divides between early archivists, Sir Hillary Jenkinson and T.R. Schellenberg. She also makes a rare, but vital distinction between archival management (i.e. the practice) and archival science, which is the body of archival theory that supports that practice (p. 319). The case study that accompanies chapter 11, written by Lori Lindberg, details her work establishing a company archives at the Jelly Belly Candy Company. She discusses the importance of an effective records management program to a successful archives program thus strengthening the strong connection between archives and the larger records and information management theme of the book.

The second chapter that directly relates to archives is chapter 12 "Long-Term Digital Preservation and Trusted Digital Repositories" and is new to the second edition. In this chapter, Franks highlights some of the major considerations for preserving digital materials, both born digital and digitized, and includes different types of media, as well. She also presents the standards which are integral to digital preservation such as: Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies (PREMIS), Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS), and the OAIS reference model mentioned above. When discussing digital preservation, there's a tendency to focus solely on challenges or overly technical standards, but Franks also introduces some of the current Cloud-based digital preservation solutions such as Preservica and ArchivesDirect. Additionally, Amber D'Ambrosio dedicates her paradigm for this chapter to the implementation of one of those solutions.

For archivists who might not have a strong records management background and are trying to expand their job duties or their profile at their institution, this book could serve well as a foundational text and roadmap. Franks devotes chapter 13 to education, training, and professional development, offering valuable insight for those RIM professionals interested in a lateral move. She also intersperses small vignettes on education and professional development throughout the book. Chapter 13 ultimately highlights the reality that for those outside of archives, continuing education and professional certifications are essential for gaining skills, professional acknowledgement, and appropriate compensation.

Records and Information Management presents an accurate snapshot of the changes happening in the profession at this point in time. Ultimately, Franks succeeds in her objective of offering a compelling case for a broader conceptualization of RIM, which could in turn raise the visibility of many RIM programs, and may challenge archivists to think beyond the end of the records life cycle in order to effect actual strategic change within their parent organizations.

Joshua J. Zimmerman
Archivist/Records Manager
Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle
Seattle, Washington