

Review

Locating U.S. Government Information Handbook, 3rd ed. E. Herman and T. Belniak. Buffalo, NY: William S. Hein, 2015.

Web guides of all kinds suffer from a brief shelf life, owing to rapid changes and redesigns in the online environment. It is almost a pity that the authors of this work devised such excellent chapters on FDSys and Census, as the former will be superseded by govinfo.gov, while American Factfinder has its successor in Alpha testing. Happily, this third-edition work has a sufficient strength of organization, comprehensive resources,

and easy-to-follow guides and background information that it can stay useful for several years at least.

Far more than a website cookbook, it offers concise chapters on the intricacies of data, the mysteries of geography and GIS, and the culture and missions of diverse federal agencies. Government information is bewildering in its complexity, as it can be found by subject layers, agencies, purpose or function such as statistics, technical reports, maps, GIS data, or by format such as print, electronic or multimedia.

Under the appendix, “Browsing by Popular Topics,” the authors have their own A-Z subject guide to online resources. This makes it of particular use to new government information librarians. Despite some The authors make it possible to make sense of all this material, in a way that maintains its strength as a ready-reference source for librarians to keep by their elbows.

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