

Review

Foundations of Information Law. Paul T. Jaeger, Jonathan Lazar, Ursula Gorcham, and Natalie Greene Taylor. Chicago: ALA: Neal-Schuman, 2023. 197 pgs. \$58.49. 978-0-8389-4797-5.

Foundations of Information Law looks like a textbook but reads like historical nonfiction with some practical, professional slants. The authors' tone and stylistic choices make it more engaging than expected. Rooted in the real world of where law "is" (was, at the time of writing), its straightforward approach provides American librarians what they need to know when their world bumps into the law. The only caveat—it's changed. Published in 2023, *Foundations* was written off the tail end of Trump's first presidency. Unfairly pitted against the stark reality of today's political climate, some of the information is, as they say, "bad law." Cases like *Chevron* no longer hold the same weight as described, and the chaos of the current administration's upheaval of federal agencies leaves many questions unanswered. It remains a useful read, with contemporary audiences experiencing what has changed, and why, since its publication.

Jaeger et. al. give an honest run-down of necessary knowledge for librarians, across issues and library type. Some legal problems are perennial between library types, like book bans and other censorship efforts. Other issues may occur more for libraries open to the public. One of the book's greatest strengths, then, is that it can be both an excellent primer and a reference book to use as needed, if these situations occur.

The book begins with legal research basics and an explanation of sources most frequently encountered before the authors include a brief history of law. This base helps set the stage by offering a refresher on federalism and the intentions of federal power, which helps with the remaining sections. The authors divide the law around primary problems librarians encounter, with chapters focusing on the big three: Intellectual Freedom, Intellectual Property, and Information Access. Depending on library type, some sections one may be more important to some readers than others. However, it's helpful for everyone to know the basic considerations at play for situations such as patrons attempting

to photocopy whole books or sleeping all day in public reading areas. The book also addresses more practical areas of Law Enforcement, Professional Practice, and the Future, with the first two at least remaining constant. The main take away from law enforcement is always ask for a warrant; professional practice addresses the rarity of librarians getting sued for malpractice.

This book can be digested in just a few sittings, with the authors using an entertaining style that breaks legal jargon into compelling pieces while also consistently reminding readers of its relevance. Library professionals can read the book linearly to gain an overall understanding of their rights or in a more piecemeal fashion, referencing the needed topic in the moment. The prudent director, or even middle manager, would do well to read and re-read the book to gain some basic knowledge on issues commonly occurring in the field. This book is recommended for anyone working in libraries or archives—just make sure it's still "good law."—*Alexandra Acri Godfrey* (agodfrey@os.pasen.gov), *Librarian of the Senate of Pennsylvania, Senate of Pennsylvania*.