Book Reviews

Michael Fernandez

Managing Data for Patron Privacy: Comprehensive Strategies for Libraries. By Kristin Briney and Becky Yoose. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2022. 176 p. $69.99 softcover (ISBN 978-0-8389-3828-7).

Data is everywhere. It comes in forms one would expect, like numbers in a spreadsheet, but it is also images of patrons and video of your building, along with other types of data. How each of these types of data is used, and maybe more importantly, is protected, is essential for libraries to consider. *Managing Data for Patron Privacy* provides an informative look at digital library data from multiple angles.

While privacy and keeping information confidential is a core practice in librarianship, authors Kristin Briney and Becky Yoose have set this book up to provide the context as to why these are important matters. The book does not serve as a critical lecture but provides cautionary examples of how data leaks and breaches of insecure data could potentially affect libraries and their patrons.

The book is organized in a manner that allows the reader to naturally progress from data novice, to then begin considering what types of data they encounter in their libraries, and finally move on to thinking about how they can improve upon current practices. Briney and Yoose do a good job of opening the eyes of their readers so that every aspect of the data involved is considered. They also make sure that data use with external vendors is covered in terms of what information vendors have access to and what librarians should think about when choosing the third-party vendors they work with. In the last few chapters, the book transitions to discuss strategies librarians can employ to better protect the data they work with.

The main goal of this book is to make readers aware of strategies they can take to protect their libraries and patrons' data by asking: how can we do better? This aim is lofty for the short page count of this book, but it is a worthy goal. Data privacy and protection is a very important topic to cover, and this book provides a unique angle on the subject. Other titles covering the subject have only aimed to provide insight into the basics of patron privacy, looking no further than the most obvious types of data and discussing how to handle them.

Managing Data for Patron Privacy always aims to question what libraries can do better, not just glossing over past data breaches and leaks. One way that the book seeks to provide relatable experiences to the reader of how to question current data practices is through case studies that build from each other at the end of each chapter. Often case studies come off as unrealistic or too hypothetical, but the ones represented in this book cover discussions and projects that believably would occur in the workplace.

The authors also do a good job of writing in a way that conveys the importance of the subject to readers that may not feel that this topic is for them because of a lack of technological skill. Everyone that works in a library deals with data in some way. While this book could be useful to all library workers, it would be most useful to policymakers that dictate how data is dealt with in the workplace. It is an interesting and enlightening read that could also provide useful supplemental reading for other library workers that would like more context as to why the data landscape is the way it is. The information presented would meet the needs of library management, access services, reference/research, and electronic resources departments. By being a book readable by many people within libraries it succeeds in broadcasting information that may be unknown. This helps the book accomplish its main goal of encouraging library workers to question how the industry can do better regarding the protection of patron privacy within the library data.

The book also succeeds in the sense that there are no glaring omissions in the types of data that libraries work with and should consider how to handle. For a book as short as this one, it is admirable the amount of content the authors were able to include. While the book does address how to assess vendor relations and how to handle vendor separation regarding library data, it does not address how libraries are often at the mercy of their third-party vendors and how they dictate procedures.

In *Managing Data for Patron Privacy*, Kristin Briney and Becky Yoose link chapters that take readers along for a ride to identify how patron data is used and kept in library systems, while looking to answer the question of how libraries can do better. The book clearly demonstrates methods and strategies for libraries to do just that in present terms. Readers do not need to wait to apply what they learn from this book allowing for an immediate benefit. This all does leave the question: What about the future? Could the data landscape completely shift changing everything? It will be thought-provoking to see where library data and patron privacy stand in a handful of years.—*Brittney Bergholm (Brittney.buckland@gmail.com), Goffstown Public Library, Goffstown, New Hampshire*