

Book Review

Michael Fernandez, editor

Records and Information Management, Third Edition. By Patricia C. Franks. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2025. 584 p. \$79.99 softcover (ISBN: 979-8-89255-588-3).

The digital revolution has ushered in rapid technological advancements that continue to transform practices and activities across many industries, thereby greatly impacting records and information management (RIM). Organizations are confronted with “formidable challenges” and new opportunities regarding managing records and information (57). Disruptive technologies, such as cloud computing, machine learning, and artificial intelligence (AI), present both challenges and opportunities. In addition, the abundance of data and information that comes with this digital age further proves that RIM is just as relevant as ever. It is essential to equip existing and future professionals with a solid foundation and understanding of the core elements and many complexities of RIM.

Within *Records and Information Management, Third Edition*, Patricia C. Franks provides a comprehensive exploration of RIM that serves as a helpful resource for students and professionals alike. This book addresses “the basics of records management, information governance, and data governance” while covering the many challenges, opportunities, and changes that records and information professionals face today (xxi). With knowledge and expertise as a Certified Archivist, Records Manager, and Professor at San José State University, Patricia C. Franks has positioned herself as a notable voice in the RIM field.

The introduction and first two chapters begin by laying a solid foundation that provides readers with a detailed history and overview of recordkeeping and how it has evolved from ancient civilization to the twenty-first century. From cave drawings and stone tablets to paper and digital records, as humans evolve so do the ways in which records are created, captured, managed, stored, and preserved. According to Franks, “the methods used to create and store the content of these records have changed over time based on the tools available to record the content and the medium in which the content could be recorded and stored” (21). While recordkeeping dates back to ancient times, RIM began to really take shape in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the establishment of widely accepted practices, guidelines, and standards.

Following that thorough introduction, the subsequent chapters explore key concepts of RIM, including the various stages of the RIM life cycle, information and data governance, and the core elements of records management programs. The book’s structure appropriately flows as each chapter builds on the previous concepts and themes. Chapter 2 emphasizes the importance of an “integrated, strategic” RIM program built on information governance and a solid foundation and framework (33). Franks goes on to state that “RIM programs vary across organizations and industries, but they all possess certain core elements (e.g., retention and disposition, preservation) and activities (e.g., records identification, disaster preparedness, and business continuity planning)” (57).

Chapters 3–6 unpack the various stages of the RIM life cycle, including creation and capture, distribution and use, storage and maintenance, retention and disposition, and preservation. Within chapters 7–9, Franks continues to address key concerns and considerations, including emerging and disruptive technology, innovation and trends, essential records, disaster preparedness, and information value and risks. Chapters 10–11 cover physical records, record centers, and archives, as well as digital preservation and digital repositories. Chapters 12–13 explore data governance, automation, artificial intelligence, records management, and information governance.

The last chapter focuses on the records management professional. Franks concludes by discussing management and leadership and the importance of training, lifelong learning, and professional development. Leadership is not always about a particular title or position, and Franks encourages readers to strive to be both managers and leaders. Also, the author emphasizes an important message for students and early career professionals and a timely reminder for seasoned records managers. According to Franks, “lifelong learning is necessary when working in a dynamic environment” such as records management (492).

I appreciated the author’s updates to the third edition, including how she addressed present challenges and opportunities. For example, a notable change was the inclusion of the “Paradigms and Perspectives” section at the end of each chapter. These sections moved beyond theory and principles to offer practical, real-world examples and viewpoints from professionals. According to Franks, “it provides an overview of the evolution of technology and thinking in our field while in every chapter acknowledging the influence of emerging and developing technologies and encouraging new ways of meeting the resulting challenges” (xxi).

Within *Records and Information Management*, Franks successfully addresses current technology trends facing RIM, including that of artificial intelligence. We cannot avoid this disruptive technology that reaches each aspect of our everyday lives, from how we go about our day to how we communicate, work, and accomplish tasks. The majority of chapter 12 explores the crucial subject of AI, a notable addition to the third edition of this book. Franks provides an in-depth exploration of AI, covering its background and evolution, as well as advances in technology over the years. Additionally, Franks discusses common standards and ethical considerations such as transparency and accountability.

Most importantly, the author addresses the connection between artificial intelligence and records and information management. AI is certainly here to stay and will continue to have a tremendous impact on RIM. Therefore, Franks stresses the need to consider AI from different viewpoints. She states that “records and information managers must look at AI from two perspectives: (1) as users, to improve records management functions, and (2) as recordkeepers, to provide evidence of transparent and responsible AI use within an organization” (422).

Records and information professionals must remain diligent, proactive, and adaptive. According to Franks, “in a perpetual state of sociotechnical change, there is one constant: data, records, and

information are still created, managed, used, shared, retained, and disposed of or preserved for future generations” (xxi). It is imperative to keep a firm footing in the foundations of records and information management while being able to anticipate and embrace evolving technology and how it impacts each stage of records and information management. This comprehensive book provides insight into the complexities of records and information management and will position readers to walk away with a better understanding of the field and its current landscape.—*Dawn Stump (dastump@bsu.edu), Ball State University Libraries, Muncie, Indiana*