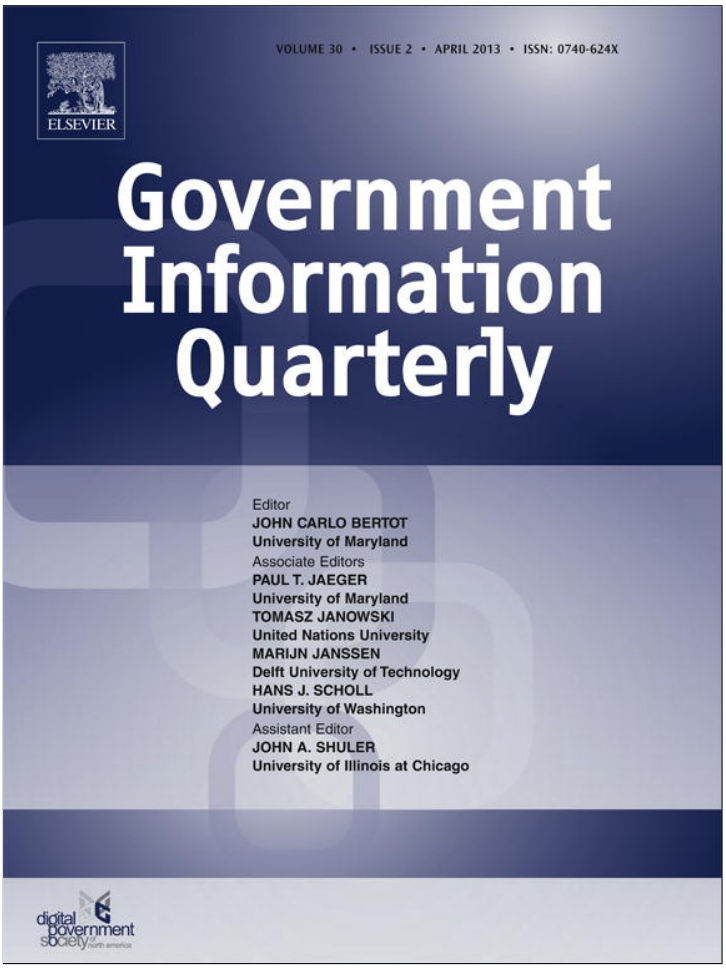
Provided for non-commercial research and education use.
Not for reproduction, distribution or commercial use.



This article appeared in a journal published by Elsevier. The attached copy is furnished to the author for internal non-commercial research and education use, including for instruction at the authors institution and sharing with colleagues.

Other uses, including reproduction and distribution, or selling or licensing copies, or posting to personal, institutional or third party websites are prohibited.

In most cases authors are permitted to post their version of the article (e.g. in Word or Tex form) to their personal website or institutional repository. Authors requiring further information regarding Elsevier's archiving and manuscript policies are encouraged to visit:

http://www.elsevier.com/copyright

Author's personal copy

Government Information Quarterly 30 (2013) 211–216

Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Government Information Quarterly

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/govinf

Book Reviews

The National Security Archive. The George Washington University, Suite 701, Gelman Library, 2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. Retrieved November 1, 2012, from http://www.nsarchive.org.

The National Security Archive is a center for investigative research, a library of declassified U.S. documents, a global open-government advocacy organization, and a reference publisher. The Archive's uniqueness lies in the sum of its parts.

Responding to a perceived need to place a check on government secrecy by making available documentation illuminating how elected officials make decisions that affect citizens' lives, journalists, scholars, librarians, and others collaborated to open the Archive's doors to the public in 1985.

Housed first at the Brookings Institution, and at George Washington University's Gelman Library since 1995, the independent, nonprofit group receives no government funding, instead relying on grants from individuals and foundations, and on publication revenue. While nonpartisan, the Archive also functions as a public-interest law firm by defending government openness and by delivering declassified documents to truth commissions and human rights investigators. In these and other activities, the Archive makes extensive use of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), passed in 1966, requiring federal agencies to release records to private requesters, with certain exceptions that the U.S. government must substantiate.

Currently, the Archive's holdings total roughly eight to ten million pages of previously classified documents, many of which have been brought into the public domain through targeted FOIA requests. In addition, documentary materials obtained through Mandatory Declassification Review requests (another route to the declassification and release of security-classified agency records),[1] primary research at relevant archives and repositories, court testimony, and occasional donations form the basis of the Archive's published collections and staff-authored books. These products cover a wide range of topics pertaining to U.S. foreign and economic policy making since the 1940s.

The Archive's sizable holdings are available through www.nsarchive.org; through library subscription to the Archive's flagship series co-published by ProQuest, the Digital National Security Archive (DNSA); and by visiting, by appointment, the Archive's Smith Bagley Reading Room at GWU's Gelman Library. According to the Archive's most recent annual report, more than 380 people from 19 countries visited the reading room in 2011.

While journalists, students, policy makers, and other researchers find great value in the collections' size and scope, users may find the highly curated nature of the collections of singular utility. Staff analysts' expert knowledge of their subjects informs the selection of documents for inclusion in collections, and adds context meant to increase understanding of the content of Archive products. For example, users will find introductory essays, chronologies, and other front matter accompanying the almost 40 (to date) professionally indexed and abstracted DNSA databases and their print and microfiche counterparts. Further, more than 400 "electronic briefing books" reproducing, and summarizing the significance of, selected documents about newsworthy international-affairs topics are available free on the Archive's website.

The website, which hosted more than two million unique visitors in 2011, also provides opportunities for visitors to connect by participating in real-time, online events; by subscribing to an email list of regular Archive news releases; by absorbing "unedited and uncensored" views posted on the Archive's blog, *Unredacted*; and by exploring the Archive's special, standalone web portals. Such companion sites include the Torture Archive, a major, searchable database of documents on U.S. policy on torture, detention, interrogation, and rendition; and FreedomInfo.org, "the global network of freedom-of-information advocates," which serves as a forum for advancing overseas initiatives and as a one-stop source for latest news of reforms, text of legislation, and global rankings of foreign governments' openness.

Such expanding digital initiatives – and the Archive's staying power – point not only to the Archive's recent revitalization of its information policy, but also to the continuing generosity of donors, to the dedication of approximately 30 staff members and fellows, and to the public's apparent lasting interest in the mix of unbiased products and services that the Archive offers, in its ongoing effort to advance that public's right to know.

Stacey Chambers
National Security Archive
George Washington University
2130 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20037, USA
E-mail address: schamb@gwu.edu

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2013.01.001

Government Information Management in the 21st Century: International Perspectives. Peggy Garvin (Ed.). Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2011. 232 pp. $99.95, ISBN: 9781409402060.

Garvin, a long-time contributor to the world of government information, brings together library professors, managers, consultants, trainers and practitioners to provide reflection and advice on the management of government information in the 21st century; or,

[1] http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/foia/foia_guide/foia_guide_chapter4.pdf.

Author's personal copy

perhaps more accurately, the first few decades of the 21st century. This print compendium is an ambitious endeavor made herculean by the sensitivity of government output to changes in political will and technological advancement. While the phrase "mercurial change" is rarely ascribed to government policy and bureaucracy, this collection of essays makes it clear that stakeholders in multiple sectors are grappling with a quest for best practices in a quickly changing world. This work provides an important introduction to a conversation about how governments produce and how information professionals acquire and preserve government information. To this end, fourteen chapters are organized into two parts: Libraries as stewards and access points for government information; and Governments as information managers and providers.

1. Libraries as stewards and access points for government information

Like the end users of born digital government information and services, the chapters in this section fall on one side or the other of the digital divide. In one of the first chapters, Wilson-Roberts recognizes that a reliance on public libraries as providers of e-government services will only be successful if an attempt is made to rectify the imbalance of the digital divide personified in rural and urban libraries on both sides of the 49th parallel. Later, Ptolomey underscores the benefits of collaborative efforts to mitigate this imbalance by providing case studies based in the United Kingdom.

Fittingly, most of this section addresses a different balance — the complementary but often competing stewardship needs of government information in print and digital formats. Chapters by Hurley as well as Latham and Weatherford Stevens note the inherent issues involved in accessing print materials. They provide suggestions for embracing the advantages of digital and enhancing access to print with an eye to the benefits of legacy systems of organization. There is an underlying idea here that merits further attention.

As government information professionals know, material produced by government agencies is different from academic scholarship or the output of the trade presses; it is produced under direct political influence (and control). The need for arms-length stewardship of this output cannot be over-stated. While this is exacerbated by electronic formats, it is not a function of them. Independently and collectively, we have grappled with disappearing documents and changing information policies for many years — the tools we developed to deal with these uncertainties (e.g., depository systems) should be examined for elements of enduring value. We see this opportunity with digital preservation programs like the LOCKSS Program, a distributed preservation method noted in multiple chapters of this collection.

The Kupfer and O'Donovan chapter, in particular, provides a realistic assessment of the costs involved in digital preservation. These costs are often borne by institutions on the "have" side of the digital divide; in North America, these are increasingly academic libraries whose staff accept a responsibility to the collective that comes with privilege. Intra-governmental web archiving projects are also noted, including a short case study by Hawthorne outlining the efforts to capture and archive the output of the Northern Territory in Australia. Of course, none of these projects would be possible without the support (or at the very least acquiescence) of our fellow information professionals in government agencies.

2. Governments as information managers and providers

Anyone who works with government information knows that many of the challenges of managing this material are rooted in its production and initial dissemination. This section provides an array of essays from the producer's perspective.

The technical aspects of digital authentication are tackled by Coggins and Holterhoff in a chapter that also provides a nod to practices in multiple U.S. states, France, Australia, and the European Union. This flows nicely into chapters about the Open Access movement. In a reflective essay on Open Government, Kansa rightly notes that, "Open government needs to promote access to the right data, meaningfully shaped and organized." Both Kansa and Millar (in a later chapter on Open Data) recognize the potential and challenges of Open Access movements in government, something that is underscored by the need for Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation. The latter is nicely introduced in a comparative chapter by Byfield on the state of FOI in Estonia, Hungary, and Uzbekistan. Millar's chapter is also comparative in nature, providing information about Open Data initiatives in multiple countries and noting the activities of the United Nations where relevant.

In an eclectic twist, this section of the book is rounded out by Missingham's astute observations of a more participatory Government 2.0 in Australia, a useful (although, sadly, already out of date) overview of Crown Copyright in select Commonwealth countries by Judge, and a short Mexican case study by Rodriguez that speaks to the impact of corruption on information policy. While not stated overtly, the dominant theme in this section is about the driving force of policy and how we might respond to it as information professionals.

There is no question that the case studies, first-hand accounts, and arguments provided in this collection will serve practitioners as we navigate the 21st century of government information management. Jaegar and Bertot's opening chapter provides inspiration for moving forward with the training of future government information librarians in the United States. Exploring these ideas from an international perspective would also prove valuable.

Information professionals in democratic countries have more in common than ever and, as noted by Coggins and Holterhoff, we should be working together to develop best practices that might one day serve as standards to enhance access to government information (worldwide, I might add). The Internet has been a democratizing force for more than twenty years. It's time government information professionals worked together to harness this potential for both access and preservation.

Readers of this text are fortunate to have so many evolving approaches covered in one volume but will need to investigate further for updates on various projects and resources. Additionally, there is a dearth of information about the work of international governmental organizations like the United Nations. When one considers that this book gives space to issues of e-government (an extension of e-governance) and its intersection with the digital divide, it is surprising that there is no mention of organizations like the United Nations Development Programme and their support of over 200 projects related to access to information and e-governance in 92 countries. In addition, organizations likethe World Bank and U.N. Statistics Division have been modeling open access practices for the past few years, but are not noted.

Amanda Wakaruk, MLIS, MES
University of Alberta Libraries
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2J4
E-mail address: amanda.wakaruk@ualberta.ca

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2012.12.001