Foundations of Information Policy

Paul T. Jaeger
Natalie Greene Taylor

Foreword by
Alan S. Inouye

Afterword by
Nancy Kranich

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ACRONYMS

AASL American Association of School Librarians
ACA Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare")
ACLU American Civil Liberties Union
ADA Americans with Disabilities Act
AI artificial intelligence
ALA American Library Association
APA Administrative Procedure Act
ARRA American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
ASL Anti-Saloon League
AT&T American Telephone and Telegraph
CCCE Citizens' Councils for Constructive Economy
CD compact disc
CDA Communications Decency Act
CFR Code of Federal Regulations
CIA Central Intelligence Agency
CIPA Children's Internet Protection Act
COPPA Children's Online Privacy Protection Act
CPB Corporation for Public Broadcasting
CRS Congressional Research Service
CTC Community Technology Center
CTEA Copyright Term Extension Act
CTO chief technology officer
DARPA Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
DHS Department of Homeland Security
DMCA Digital Millennium Copyright Act
DOS denial of service
DVD digital video disc
ECIA Education Consolidation and Improvement Act
EEOC Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
E-FOIA Electronic Freedom of Information Act
EIFL Electronic Information for Libraries
EPA Environmental Protection Agency

E-RATE education rate
ESEA Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESSA Every Student Succeeds Act
EU European Union
EULA end user licensing agreement
FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCC Federal Communications Commission
FDLP Federal Depository Library Program
FERA Federal Emergency Relief Administration
FISA Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act
FOI Freedom of Information
FOIA Freedom of Information Act
FTC Federal Trade Commission
GMO genetically modified organism
GPEA Government Paperwork Elimination Act
GPO Government Publishing Office, formerly the Government Printing Office
HIPAA Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
IAL Innovative Approaches to Literacy
ICANN Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
ICT4D information and communications technologies for development
IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IETF Internet Engineering Task Force
IFLA International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
ILL interlibrary loan
IMLS Institute of Museum and Library Services
IMS Institute of Museum Services
IOT Internet of Things
ISP information search process
ISPS Internet service providers
ITU International Telecommunication Union
LAP Library Awareness Program
LGBTQ lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning
LIS library and information science
LOC Library of Congress
LSA Library Services Act
LSCA Library Services and Construction Act
LSTA Library Services and Technology Act
MLIS Master of Library and Information Science

MPAA Motion Picture Association of America
NACL National Advisory Commission on Libraries
NAFTA North American Free Trade Agreement
NARA National Archives and Records Administration
NASA National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCLIS National Commission on Libraries and Information Science
NEA National Endowment for the Arts
NEH National Endowment for the Humanities
NFIL National Forum on Information Literacy
NFL National Football League
NGO nongovernmental organization
NIH National Institutes of Health
NII National Information Infrastructure
NIMBY not in my backyard
NISO National Information Standards Organization
NKOTB New Kids on the Block
NLD National Legion of Decency
NLM National Library of Medicine
NPR National Performance Review
NPR National Public Radio
NREN National Research and Education Network
NSA National Security Agency
NSF National Science Foundation
NSL National Security Letter
NTIS National Technical Information Service
NYA National Youth Administration
OCLC Online Computer Library Center
OMB Office of Management and Budget
OPAC online public access catalog
OSTP Office of Science and Technology Policy
OTA Office of Technology Assessment
PAC political action committee
PBS Public Broadcasting Service
PITAC President's Information Technology Advisory Committee
PL public law
PLA Public Library Association
PLG Progressive Librarians Guild

PMRC Parents Music Resource Center
PRA Paperwork Reduction Act
RFID radio frequency identification
RSS really simple syndication
SERU Shared Electronic Resource Understanding
SEVIS Student and Exchange Visitor Information System
SLAA State Library Administrative Agencies
SRRT Social Responsibilities Round Table
SSAE Student Support and Academic Enrichment
STM scientific, technical, and medical
TIA Total Information Awareness
TOS terms of service
TSA Transportation Security Administration
UDHR Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN United Nations
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US United States
USA PATRIOT ACT Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act
USC United States Code
USCIS United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
UX user experience
VCR videocassette recorder
VOA Voice of America
W3C World Wide Web Consortium
WAI Web Accessibility Initiative
WGIG Working Group on Internet Governance
WHO World Health Organization
WIPO World Intellectual Property Organization
WMD weapon of mass destruction
WPA Works Progress Administration, later Work Projects Administration
WSIS World Summit on the Information Society
XML extensible markup language

FOREWORD

Information policy, a field once reserved mostly for Washington, D.C.-based specialists, now makes headlines. Issues such as the regulation (or the lack thereof) of online privacy, social media, and net neutrality are discussed not only in the halls of Congress but also at the statehouse and the coffee shop on the corner. Indeed, in the 2017 proceeding to reverse the net neutrality rule, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) received more than twenty-two million comments—at a regulatory agency that typically receives tens or hundreds of comments on a proceeding. And, FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel and net neutrality were the subject of an article in *InStyle,* a fashion magazine (Von Oot, 2018). As the Internet and information technology have permeated every aspect of daily life from driving to dating, information policy has become everyone's business.

For information professionals, obtaining a firm understanding of information policy is even more important. To fully appreciate its importance, a brief history of information policy is called for.

There is no definitive way to describe information policy. In a broad sense, information policy may be framed as the public policy implications of the information revolution. But it can also be seen as broader and older than this. Sandra Braman (2011) offers this succinct definition: "Information policy is comprised of laws, regulations, and doctrinal positions—and other decision making and practices with society-wide constitutive effects—involving information creation, processing, flows, access, and use" (p. 3).

Information policy was prominently present at the birth of the nation. The US Constitution and Bill of Rights include the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the basis for intellectual property, and provisions for post offices and postal roads (the forerunner of today's conceptualization of universal access to information and technology), and more. But because most Americans were engaged in the agrarian sector at that time, only a few had direct involvement with information policy.

Of course, information technology and science have evolved radically since the eighteenth century. The modern information revolution was sparked by advancements during the Second World War, paving the way for the advent of IBM mainframes and data processing in the 1950s. The focus in this era was on information technology and what it could do—from a hardware and software perspective. Information policy remained the province of a small group of technologically and legally oriented specialists.

Technology continued to advance, and the Internet became a mass market phenomenon in the 1990s and began to have direct implications on the daily lives of Americans. The rise of online commerce, e-government, social media, and smartphones in the mid-2000s firmly established information technology as a part of everything we do. Consequently, the Internet has become a critical tool for daily life—a necessity, not a luxury.

The new capabilities and conveniences afforded by the Internet and technologies enhance our quality of life. But because technology is so interwoven into our lives—and thus our sensitive financial, health, and personal behavior details—profound public policy issues have emerged concerning the control of this information. As information professionals

charged with enabling access to and engagement with information services and technology, we are at the center of grappling with these challenges. In this position, we work to manage and influence public policy so that our users may obtain the full breadth of possibilities that new technologies enable, while simultaneously minimizing adverse effects.

One of the most fundamental challenges is ensuring that everyone has access to high-capacity Internet under equitable terms. Public policies concerning federal funding of broadband infrastructure and its technical and economic regulation (such as net neutrality) by the FCC and other federal agencies need to be shaped and leveraged for the benefit of all.

The websites that we visit and the smartphones in our pockets raise privacy and cybersecurity considerations. With technology that can now track where we are and what we are doing, basic questions are raised, such as: Who has access to this information and under which circumstances? Is it properly protected? Can an individual turn off or reduce such tracking? And, do we derive fair benefits for relinquishing our personal information?

I can't delve into every aspect of information policy here in this foreword—that's what this book is about! But some other important policy issues include copyright and licensing—the terms under which one may access copyright-protected information, as well as government information. Additionally, First Amendment issues come to the fore as well as questions of social justice. As new technologies enable the creation of virtual quasi-public spaces, who may access them? Inequities in society in the physical world are reflected online (and also change in good and bad ways). Finally, information flows and the Internet are not naturally constrained by national borders, and so international policy becomes implicated in the digital world—even if one's focus is on the domestic scene.

Information policy also provides the framework for how information technology can be deployed to advance positive outcomes in areas such as employment, education, health, the creation of new knowledge, and a myriad of other spheres. Information policy can both encourage and inhibit such applications.

Managing and leading information-based institutions—such as libraries, museums, archives, colleges and universities, schools, and others—presents multiple information policy–related challenges. Issues relating to internal management arise, such as digitization and preservation policy as well as executing contracts with technology and content service providers. Information-based institutions must also manage client access and use of the institution's resources, which can include safeguarding individual privacy and regulating the ownership of content developed on the institution's online platforms.

Therefore, information professionals clearly need to skillfully develop and employ information policy as an operational matter. But more than that is needed. Technology and its application to society will continue to advance and evolve. There will likely be continued growth in services of all kinds. This evolution will be driven by things such as ever-increased broadband capability and the massive computational power and local storage capabilities of smartphones or other (perhaps smaller) individual devices, as well as the same in the cloud. That said, the future architecture of information and technology is not completely known. No doubt new or evolved questions and challenges for information policy will arise in correspondence with technological change, and so having a knowledge of foundational information policy concepts and processes will serve the information professional well in the years to come.

Information professionals have a responsibility to be advocates for the overall advancement and health of the field, just as Americans have a responsibility to participate in the political process. This engagement is particularly important at this time as the basic roles and configuration of information institutions in society are undergoing a revolution—including

the roles of libraries, newspapers, television, museums, and colleges and universities. Moreover, the seemingly ever-increasing political conflict in the United States means that ensuring widespread access to a broad range of credible information sources is more important than ever, and information professionals have a responsibility to make their voices heard toward this end.

One direct way to help is to respond to requests from professional associations such as the American Library Association. When receiving action alerts, for example, to call or e-mail your legislators to support federal funding for libraries or copyright and privacy laws in the public interest, be responsive! You can also make your voice heard through writing letters to the editor of your local newspaper, sharing your views via social media, or inviting national or local public officials to your institution to demonstrate how modern and increasingly digital information institutions of all types contribute to every facet of a community. Of course, the most fundamental action is to vote and encourage your friends, relatives, and colleagues to do likewise.

The authors of this volume are well situated to provide a guide to information policy for information professionals. The expertise of Paul Jaeger and Natalie Greene Taylor covers the waterfront of information policy as they delve into issues ranging from human rights to e-government to information access by youth and people with disabilities—and everything in between. Furthermore, by serving as coauthors rather than editors, they offer an integrated presentation—and a unique contribution to this field. I wish you well in your journey through the fascinating, critically important, and evolving web that is information policy.

Alan S. Inouye, PhD
Senior Director, Public Policy and Government Relations
American Library Association
Washington, D.C.

CHAPTER 1

Searching for Information (Policy)

INFORMATION—ALONG WITH THE TECHNOLOGIES that enable access, sharing, search, and all the ways we use and interact with information—is so central to everyday activities as to have become nearly an invisible part of life. As we write this book, studies indicate that the average American checks her phone eighty times a day. That's once every eighteen minutes in a twenty-four-hour period. Presuming someone sleeps eight hours a night and does not check her phone in that period, the rate becomes once every twelve minutes during the sixteen waking hours. Most people rely on social media platforms for their news, to communicate with friends, and to find answers to questions, along with the general entertainment of searching for videos of goats wearing pajamas[1] or baby wombats frolicking.[2]

And it is not just phones. Information is now literally everywhere. Homes are filling with Internet-connected smart appliances, such as refrigerators, baby monitors, thermostats, picture frames, mirrors, and security systems, as well as appliances that are designed to run many of the operations of the home via connectivity. If you have a question, you only need to speak it into the ether, and the device will respond. It also monitors and records what everyone says in your home, raising all kinds of privacy and security challenges, but most users do not worry about such things because they place greater priority on the convenience these devices offer. Did you know that a robot vacuum maps the owner's house and reports those data back to the company (Knight, 2015)? Most owners of these devices probably do not.

Underlying all these things that provide information access and automate life are countless decisions that you never have to think about. You probably expect Wi-Fi to be available everywhere you go, and you're probably bummed, if not genuinely surprised, when it is not. Yet, the presence of Wi-Fi requires a huge amount of technological infrastructure and accompanying investments of time, money, and resources. Ubiquitous Wi-Fi also depends on many decisions being made by governments to support—or at least not interfere with—its availability, along with companies prioritizing it as part of their business strategies, offering these services and building and maintaining the necessary infrastructure.

It is clichéd to say that information is everywhere, but it is also true. People have never had greater access to or ability to share information, which also makes it easier to take it for granted. Information can seem as evitable as breathing out and breathing in. Yet, it is actually only available to such an extent due to policies, laws, regulations, and financial decisions from many levels of government, international organizations and agreements, and business interests, among other players.

This book is written to help you understand everything that occurs to create the policy environment in which information and information technologies exist and the roles that they play in your life. This area is known as *information policy*. It is not necessarily the best name in terms of capturing all that it encompasses, but it is a name that has existed for decades as information and communication technologies have gone through mind-bending evolutions from landline telephone service to broadcast television to the browsable Internet to the mobile technologies of today. And though it is most tangible to discuss in terms of specific technologies, it is actually far broader. It includes issues of the ways in which you have the rights to express yourself and to access information, how much privacy you have for your information, protections for the ownership of new information, and countless other issues that are not dependent on specific technologies.

You are certainly well acquainted with the first word in the term. *Information* is a term you hear myriad times a day, but you may not think about how much it really means. Information, in a broad sense, is everywhere and always has been. It is not even limited to humans. As long as trees have existed, they have relied on information—in the form of temperature, chemicals in the air, sunshine in the sky, and water in the ground—to make decisions about how to invest their energies to promote long-term survival. Animals that hunt have always used information—in the form of scent, sight, sound, and tracks—to stalk their prey. And even before any means of writing were invented, humans were using other means of communication to collect and share information. To continue to be alive is in many ways dependent on successful use of information.

Human inventiveness and ingenuity in the past five hundred or so years, however, have greatly changed the ways in which information can be collected and shared and how much is available to access. Before the invention of writing, information exchange was limited to people who occupied the same physical space.[3] Writing allowed for information to spread more widely, and the printing press accelerated how many times and places the same information could be shared. The Internet made information infinitely shareable and connected the whole world—for better and for worse—in ways that were previously impossible.

The way you think about and interact with information now would be utterly inconceivable for people even twenty years ago, much less five centuries ago. Hunter-gatherers certainly would have had an easier go of things had drones with cameras been available to help them find food. For all but the slightest fraction of human history, information was essential to life but highly limited. Now it flows forth in quantities well beyond what anyone can handle or make sense of. Rather than being a problem of paucity, it is now a problem of overload.

Technologies have developed with such great speed in the past few decades that we have not had the chance to adapt to them. Or, at least, to adapt to using them well. The information available online is often utter nonsense. Yet, many people believe what they see, no matter how foolish it is, because they lack the information literacy skills to determine what is good information and what is not. Near to where one of the authors of this book lives, a member of the city council of Washington, D.C., Trayon White, recently made a series of statements and even posted videos discussing his belief that wealthy Jewish families have machines that control the weather, simultaneously displaying bigotry and idiocy (Jamison, 2018; Jamison & Straus, 2018). But he read this nonsense online somewhere and decided to believe it. Similar ridiculousness happens all the time with many astounding and awful bits of misinformation, with this case really only being notable for the fact that the believer of the misinformation is an elected official in the government of the capital of the United States.

So, when we say *information,* it is not a simple thing. It means there are issues of access (whether or not you have it) and literacy skills (whether or not you can accurately assess the validity of information). There are issues of how to keep track of and sort through all the information now available. There are issues of all the investments that need to be made and need to continue to be made for information to be available at the levels it is—cables, towers, Wi-Fi hot spots, server farms, satellites, and so on. Information being everywhere requires a huge number of decisions and actions and investments.

That is where the second half of the term comes in. *Policy,* at least in this context, is meant to capture the decisions and actions and investments that occur to create and shape the environment in which information is made available. From the perspective of a government, it means enacting laws to enable and expand information and technology innovation or to set parameters on how information can be used. It means drafting policies and regulations that implement the laws. It means making decisions about how to support or limit business interests in these areas. It means determining what research to fund in these areas. It means negotiating international agreements that set standards for information across national boundaries. Again, none of these are simple things.

The ways in which these processes work and different interests are weighed can produce very different outcomes in the policy area. For example, privacy has become an ever more important aspect of information policy, as technologies have increased the ability to gather information about individuals. In the United States, the policy decision was to rely primarily on corporations to regulate their own information collection about consumers. This approach to privacy is often called *notice and consent:* companies tell you what they do with your information, and you can either acquiesce or stop using the product or service, though in many cases a lack of alternatives may not make that so easy to do. In the European Union (EU), however, the policy decision was to put the power in the hands of consumers themselves to dictate the amount of information to give to corporations. Not surprisingly, corporations serving residents of the United States have much more information about their customers than do corporations serving residents of the EU. In the United States, consumers get convenience and accurate recommendations of what might interest them, while in the EU, consumers get a much higher degree of privacy. This large difference is due entirely to the way in which the different governments have created information policies related to privacy. And, because of the structure of the EU—which is designed to facilitate what the members call their four freedoms of movement of people, capital, goods, and services—these protections apply in all EU member nations and to all EU member citizens.

Discussing information policy can quickly feel overwhelming because so many different areas are impacted by information decisions. One of these impacts is the sheer cost—information decisions usually have huge financial implications. Consider once again the example of Wi-Fi. To make connectivity more available and convenient, a massive network of telecommunications infrastructure is required. That infrastructure is constructed and maintained at great cost to governments and businesses, which means funds allocated to it do not go to address other issues. Roads are not repaired, firefighters are not hired, homeless shelters are not built, but Wi-Fi is plentiful (Mackenzie, 2010; Koepfler, Mascaro, & Jaeger, 2014). And, on the other side, this plentitude leads to economic growth as well as rapid technological innovation and significant social change.

Information policies also intersect with policies of many other types. Have you ever wondered about the consequence to the environment of your Internet use? Probably not, but it's big.[4] Data stored in the cloud is located somewhere. Every video, tweet, game, instant message, search, and other kind of online activity is processed by and stored on

physical computers somewhere in what are called *server farms*. These farms are each filled with tens of thousands of computers that require power, give off heat and gases that hurt the environment and contribute significantly to global warming, and have to be frequently replaced, filling landfills (which is where your discarded technologies also go) with toxic technology components. Server farms are numerous and enormous, so the cumulative negative impact to the environment by the Internet makes it one of the biggest users of energy and biggest sources of environmental degradation. Bitcoin mining alone now expends as much energy as many individual nations, including ones like Ireland and Australia. But the Internet makes money for lots and lots of companies, and people really like to use it, so it gets priority over ecological concerns. Therefore, in this context, decisions of information policy have massive impacts in the area of environmental policy. And just imagine if all the time, money, and ingenuity that went into building the networks had gone into studying how to abate global warming.

Finally, it gets a bit hard at this point to even identify areas that do not have something to do with information technology. Applications for jobs and schools are done online, and few jobs or educational programs do not require the use of computers in some way. When you travel, you probably buy and receive your tickets online. In fact, you may well pay all your bills online. The financial sector and the utility grids operate through the Internet. Issues of access, literacy, expression, security, transparency, accessibility, and so much else are truly issues of information policy.

It is worth remembering, though, that while the scope of information policy has expanded greatly with recent technological advances, it is not a new idea. Although the term was not used in the 1700s, information policy issues are at the heart of the documents that created the foundation of the United States. The Declaration of Independence notes the lack of access to legal information in the colonies as a key grievance. The Constitution establishes the Post Office as a means of information dissemination. The Bill of Rights begins with a First Amendment that is devoted to protections related to information access and exchange. Many of the issues that were the central challenges of information policy then remain so now; there is just much more information and technology to consider today.

FOUNDATIONS OF INFORMATION POLICY FOR INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS

Clearly, based on the preceding short overview, no book could cover the entire landscape of information policy in a comprehensive manner. Fortunately, this book is written about information policy for information professionals, which narrows the focus considerably. Even at that, the activities and impacts of information professionals and information institutions are heavily shaped by information policy, so we still will not be able to cover everything as comprehensively as we wish that we could. Nevertheless, we do believe that the book will give you the tools you need to understand the big issues of information policy and the ways in which they impact information professions and institutions. Further, the book is designed to prepare you to better engage with policy processes and advocate for information policy decisions that will better serve your patrons, institutions, and the values and ethics of the information professions.

Information policy issues have impacts at a number of levels. Take cybersecurity, for example, and its intersections with broader concepts of privacy and security. For individual users, cybersecurity is vitally important for their devices, programs that they use, and their

activities online to protect personal information and control of their devices. The individual may focus on cybersecurity as a privacy issue, but it is still cybersecurity at the most individual level. For corporations and public institutions, cybersecurity is a major concern as they seek to protect their networks, their data, and their reputations. For governments, cybersecurity is a vital issue of national defense and national security, such as protecting the utility grids in a country or ensuring operations of government agencies. And, for information professionals, it is an issue of their work, as they teach others to be better able to protect their own privacy and security.

With these various levels and types of impacts of policy in mind, the goal of this book is to provide a thorough introductory and reference text for the myriad information policy issues. By exploring information policies as issues shaping the activities of individuals, communities, institutions, and societies, this book is intended to not just give context to information policy but to ready information professionals to navigate policy issues in their work, improve their ability to react to and craft institutional policies in response to information policy, educate patrons about relevant information policy issues, and be stronger advocates and activists for improved information policies.

Because they are part of a field dedicated to making information widely available and helping others to use information more effectively to improve their lives, information institutions and information professionals are perhaps more directly impacted by a wider range of information policy issues than is any other profession. Imagine all the information policy issues raised by the basic functions of an academic library: providing access to and education about using computers, the Internet, and many subscription databases; teaching literacy skills; sharing and exchanging existing information in electronic formats; creating new information in electronic formats; curating openly available information resources; cataloging information; using electronic systems that monitor collections, checkouts, and use; leasing and managing proprietary databases; and on and on. Then there are the information policy issues raised by extraordinary circumstances, such as what happens when a law enforcement officer shows up with a warrant to search the library computers.

The relationship between information policy and information professions is also unique because of the activist roles of many information professionals and institutions in their communities. In 1972, former Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish asserted that the construction of a library could only be seen as a political act because building a public library demonstrates a commitment to a learned and engaged populace with the freedom to educate and express itself. The mission of providing access to information and helping people use it to improve their lives is one that is inherently a mission of social justice and societal change (Jaeger & Sarin, 2016a, 2016b).

Information professionals and institutions, whether or not it is articulated in this way, are often serving to promote individual rights and to create more equitable communities through information. As information policies shape what information professionals and institutions do, they also shape how information professionals and institutions can further justice in their communities (Gorham, Taylor, & Jaeger, 2016; Jaeger, Taylor, & Gorham, 2015). "What made it really one of the most dangerous places there could ever be was the simple fact that it was a library" (Pratchett, 1989, p. 183).

Yet, given the extensive relationship between information policies and the information professions, no book has previously been written as an introductory textbook on information policy for information professionals. There have been collections of essays on various topics of information policy that impact information professions and institutions, often with titles alarmingly close to "Now That's What I Call Information Policy Issues of the

1990s!" And there have been books devoted to a specific issue or sets of issues of information policy—such as cybersecurity or net neutrality—related to information professions and institutions. Additionally, there are resources that exist with the term *information policy* that do not relate to the information professions at all, focusing on information policy implications for other fields, such as the telecommunications professions. It is worth noting that Sandra Braman wrote a very influential book called *Change of State* in 2006, which details the ways in which information policy has altered the philosophy of governance; it will not help you understand policy as a part of your career, but it is worth reading if you find yourself wanting to learn more about information policy in the abstract after reading this book. As a result, this book has been written to fill a fairly significant gap.

In trying to fill this serious gap in the resources available to current and future information professionals, this book is written specifically for use by current and future information professionals and as a resource for information institutions. It simultaneously presents and examines information policy in terms of the individual issues (net neutrality, filtering, privacy, etc.) and the broader societal issues shaped by policy (access to infrastructure, digital literacy and inclusion, accessibility, security, etc.). It also is an authored text (rather than a collection of essays by different writers) to increase the cohesion in the explanation of these complex topics.

We also hope that we bring some unique contributions to the book because information policy is what we do. We have a long record of collaboration, writing extensively together and individually about a wide range of information policy topics in literally hundreds of articles, book chapters, conference papers, and books, as well as giving many professional and academic talks on the subject. Having worked in multiple kinds of information institutions, we are able to bring firsthand experience in a range of institutions to help illuminate the discussions of the topics. Further, one of the authors has both a PhD in information studies and a JD, providing added ability to explain the legal mechanics and procedures underlying information policy. Finally, we teach in Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree programs, which helps us understand how to discuss policy issues within the larger pedagogy of the field. We have done our best to use this experience and expertise to try to make often rather complicated topics understandable and actionable.

The book has eleven chapters, which divide into three sections. The first four chapters of the book provide the context and history of information policy. Following this introduction, chapter 2 provides a more detailed explanation of information policy and its broad societal impacts as well as its specific impacts on the information field. Chapter 3 details the wide range of sources of information policy—some of them already briefly introduced earlier in this chapter—and the ways in which they interact with one another. Chapter 4 explores the reasons for paying attention to, studying, and engaging with information policy.

The second section of the book focuses on specific issues within information policy and their larger societal implications. Chapter 5 offers a description of the process of the creation, development, and adoption of information policies. Chapters 6 and 7 provide a detailed dive into specific information policy issues and the ways in which they have evolved. Chapter 6 emphasizes issues related to information access and the necessary accompanying technological infrastructure and information management strategies. These information policy issues fall primarily on the provision of information, technology, and services by governments and by corporations and the impacts of such provision. Chapter 7 focuses on the information policy issues that directly impact individuals, institutions, and communities, including the rights accorded by information policy—in the form of both affirmative rights

and protections from government interference—and the responsibilities that are given by policies. These two chapters also examine the application of information policies within specific contexts, such as education, commerce, health care, and governance. And, yes, it is intentional that both chapters 6 and 7 have *access* in the title.

The third and final section of the book is devoted to what you can do and what comes next. Information policy is not just an abstraction to learn about; it is something that all information professionals engage with as part of their careers and do so pretty much on a daily basis. Building on the foundational and contextual elements introduced in the first and second sections, chapter 8 focuses on how information policy has been and continues to be influential in the development of the information professions and other information organizations. Chapter 9 explores the roles of information policy within broader social and legal concepts, such as civil rights, social justice, and information ethics. Chapter 10 examines the advocacy and activism roles of the information professions, on behalf of the professionals, the institutions, and the patrons. It provides not just an understanding of the established advocacy mechanisms within the field but also guidance on how to become an advocate for better information policies. Chapter 11 concludes the book with a discussion of the issues that seem to loom large in future intersections of information policies and information professions.

This book has been written after many years spent contemplating the best means of conveying these issues in a cohesive, digestible, and usable fashion. Those who devote their lives to studying and teaching about a topic believe, it is hoped, that topic is pretty important. Perhaps it is natural, then, for us to believe that learning about information policy is an essential part of preparation for being effective as an information professional. We are not entirely alone in this opinion because information policy courses are offered in pretty much every program that offers a library and information science degree.

This book cannot possibly cover every development in information policy over time or even the most current developments because they will no longer be the most current by the time the book is published. This book is intended to give you an understanding of the importance of information policy, the key sources of information policy, the fundamental laws and policies related to information, activism and advocacy issues related to information policy, and the impacts of information policy on individuals, communities, information professions, and information institutions. Therefore, we have strived to provide a tool kit for working with information policy issues in your career: helping patrons, advocating for your institutions, analyzing policies and their implications, and engaging your communities. We hope that, when you are done reading, you'll feel ready to tackle these important issues as a regular part of your career.

An alert reader—or even a semiconscious one—will note that we return to certain topics or specific laws as examples at multiple places in the book. This is not because we were inattentive while writing or are easily distracted[5] but because certain laws, actions of government, and actions of the information professions are especially poignant in helping to understand information policy as it impacts our field. Although there is a chapter that focuses on the historical issues between information policy and information institutions, we have not hesitated to include discussions of historical issues in parts of other chapters as well. Again, inattentiveness is not the reason.[6] First, the historical development of a policy is often essential for understanding where that policy currently is and where it might be going. Second, information professionals have limited opportunities to learn about the history of the field, yet we have a long history of doing amazing stuff, and you really should know more about the amazingness.

We also try to use examples from a range of contexts in various information institutions without relying overmuch on any one type of institution. One could easily write a book devoted to information policy and just public libraries, or information policy and archives, or information policy and school libraries, or information policy and museums, and so on. We have tried to select examples from specific institutions that seem to best reveal the policy issue at hand and the extent of its impacts on the field. These examples are not evenly spread across information institutions, though, simply because some parts of the field interact more widely with the public and are more often dragged into public policy debates. Not surprisingly, public libraries and school libraries are the ones that the public and politicians are most familiar with and, therefore, most inclined to pull into policies. It's not that we are neglecting museums and archives; it's just that they tend to be better behaved, or at least are perceived as being better behaved.

You will find many citations to other materials in this book. The reason for this—beyond indicating that we aren't making too many things up—is to give you entry points into learning more about topics that are of particular interest to you. This book can merely provide an introduction to the topics discussed, and we have tried to give you the best options we are aware of for diving more deeply into the topics from perspectives relevant to the information field. And, yes, you'll notice that we reference a lot of things that we have written; we're not trying to show off—this is what we do after all.

We also have tried to talk about these weighty topics by not taking them too, too seriously. Composer and keyboard virtuoso Domenico Scarlatti prefaced a 1738 volume of his daunting compositions modestly entitled *Essercizi* with a note suggesting that readers should view his work as "an ingenious jesting with Art" (Kirkpatrick, 1953). Although neither of us is a keyboard virtuoso or a composer of any note,[7] we certainly are not above jesting with information policy. To leaven the very heavy topics that this book covers, we have included more than several asides, many of which are located in the endnotes to each chapter, to express general bemusement or outright frustration with the state of information policy. Think of the book as a kind of XKCD for information policy[8] but without the constant, gratuitous *Star Wars* references.[9] Even if our sense of humor is not to your liking, at least you will get a clear sense that people who focus their careers on information policy can find it bewildering and infuriating as well. And, ultimately, if one of our side comments leads you to find out about Akira Kurosawa (or XKCD), so much the better.

Additionally, we want to make very clear, just in case it is not already clear, that this is a textbook introducing you to policies, laws, and political issues related to information. Nothing in here is being offered as or should be construed as legal advice. We just made a Yoda joke in the preceding endnote, for goodness' sake.

For those of you who are new to the field, we hope that this book serves as a vital introduction to a complex set of issues that are central to the calling that you are now pursuing. For those of you who are established in the field, we hope that this serves as a vibrant resource for the policy issues that you regularly navigate. For all readers, we hope that this book makes you feel ready to engage information policy issues and become an advocate and an activist. Our voices should be an absolutely essential part of discussions and debates about information policy, speaking for our professionals, our institutions, and all the individuals and communities that we serve.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Think about your morning routine. How many types of technology do you encounter before breakfast? Can you think of how these interactions relate to information policy as we describe here?
2. Is it true that increased physical access to information (e.g., the Internet, smartphones, etc.) has in some ways limited our intellectual access to information? If so, how?
3. If you asked a friend how he would define information policy, what do you think his answer would be? (Yes, it's an odd question—roll with us.) What do you think are the implications of this answer in terms of the way that media, politicians, and, yes, information professionals approach this policy area?
4. What role do you think the information professional has in the development and implementation of information policy? (We'll ask this again in a later chapter, so consider your response a trial run.)

NOTES

1. "Goat Kid Pajama Party," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN50R3gycgo.
2. "George, the Baby Wombat," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCZ9Zyi6XaA.
3. Except in Robin Hood movies, where sending a message via arrow over improbable distances seems surprisingly effective.
4. You really should put down the screen and get outside more.
5. Oh, look, a deer!
6. Squirrel!!!
7. Yet.
8. XKCD for information policy should really exist. Your move, Randall Munroe.
9. Well, we did write an entire chapter using Yoda's inverted syntax. See if you can identify which one; we think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

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