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CORNELIUS, Ian. *Information strategies and policies*. **London: Facet Publishing. 2010.**

209 pages. ISBN 978 1 85604 677 0. £44.95.

This is a useful publication and well worth perusal although it does not really do what it says on the tin. Those expecting a study of actual information policies will be disappointed as this is precisely what the book does not set out to do. As the author writes, "[t]his is not a description or explanation of what policies or regulations currently are, or should be, in any jurisdiction"', rather it is a "discussion of the issues that affect the determination of what policy should be". Discussion is the essential foundation of the text and within the discussion of theoretical issues are many practical examples to illustrate the issues raised.

There is no real process of definition of what information policies and strategies actually are. The nearest to a definition appears on page 9:"information policy to be about any means by which the generation, distribution and use of information is regulated".

Rather the text focuses principally round issues which relate to information policy making which are primarily the role of governmental and non governmental agencies, globalisation, the public sphere, information rights, censorship and freedom of the press, data protection, freedom of information, and IPR issues. However, that most annoying of red herrings, IT, does not get much discussion. Many apparent information policies are actually IT policies and as expert commentators have pointed out governments are happier to address IT policies rather than information policies because they find the issues easier to grasp and address than the messy and shifting world of information. One of the key issues is who creates leads and controls information policy and here government has a key role. The means by which governments generate consume, generate and control information is thoughtfully discussed. An important issue is who information policy is for. Is it to make government more efficient, or should information policies favour wealth generators to promote economic expansion? It is not just about the rights of the citizen. As the author points out, one of the functions of intellectual property rights is to make money, not guarantee liberal consensuses. As he points out, in the West information policies start from a perspective of a liberal consensus, something which does not operate in many parts of the world as a recent Nobel prize-winner is painfully aware. I particularly liked the discussion on censorship which discusses the practical difficulties that lie behind an admirable principle.

There is also a useful review of some theoretical issues, notably Habermas' concept of the public sphere which informs modern public debate and Ann Bransconb's ideas about information rights.

The bibliography, as the author himself acknowledges, is brief and mainly supports the discursive nature of the text. References in the text are also sparse. If no examples of information policy are discussed in the text, a few references for the reader to follow up would have been useful.

If the bibliography is brief then the index is a model of comprehensiveness and it is good to see that corner cutting here has been avoided.

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In a relatively short text of 209 pages, obviously no issue can be dealt with in detail, but those looking for an overview of key issues concerning information rights, censorship and freedom of the press, data protection, freedom of information, and IPR issues will find this a helpful read.

John Crawford

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