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**OVADIA, Steven. *The librarian's guide to academic research in the cloud*. Oxford: Chandos. 2013.**

**190 pages. ISBN-978 1 84334 715 6. £47.50**

Steven Ovadia's timely book (in the *Chandos Information Professional Series*) offers a guide to the various tools that can be located in the cloud. Cloud computing is a relatively new departure for academic services, and this book provides clear guides for the use of cloud-based services (services which are accessed online, rather than being stored locally).

The book comprises eight sections, two of which cover the discovery and management of scholarly and non-scholarly information using cloud-based tools, the remainder of which highlight the plethora of tools which can now be found online (over 40 of which are described in detail).

'Capturing information' looks at the various online services which allow academics to save online information through services such as Pinterest, Delicious, Diigo, and Evernote. The advantage of such online services is that they are not tied to a single machine, or a single operating system, and so can be accessed wherever an internet connection is available.

'Managing scholarly information' looks at more robust services for the bibliographic management of metadata from online sources. Programmes discussed include purely cloud-based services such as CiteUlike and Refworks, as well as client-based systems which synchronise to the cloud such as Zotero, Mendeley, and Papers. These are described in the chapter as a sub-set of the tools discussed in the previous chapter, offering greater manipulation of bibliographic information.

The remaining chapters of Ovadia's book discuss the various tools that are available for the processes that surround academic research, such as 'Storing files in the cloud', 'Writing in the cloud', 'Staying organised', and 'Communicating'.

As a survey of contemporary online tools for the management of electronic information, this book is a useful addition to the corpus that is slowly growing around electronic academic research.

However, Ovadia also understands that there are caveats around the move away from locally-based services to the cloud. Many of the chapters, and the services mentioned therein, are presaged by the necessity (both practical and psychological) to have a back-up available locally of any work that has been carried out as:

*it becomes more likely that they will suffer a catastrophic failure or data loss of some kind. This is not an indictment of cloud services but more a comment on the nature of electronic data management... [users] may find themselves maintaining local back-ups of all of their important work.*

A further caveat states "user's still need to be concerned about issues related to the cloud, such as the privacy of files and the portability of the data [held] in the cloud". This concern is compounded by the fact that the majority of the services described are produced by independent companies, which may not offer the

interoperability to which we are used when using consolidated services such as Google, or Microsoft Office.

The book concludes with ‘The future of the cloud’, a chapter predicting that both services and users are likely to consolidate their interaction with cloud-based services. As individual providers expand the functionality and range of services that they offer, they will become more attractive to researchers who wish to access a multitude of functions through a single interface/provider. An interesting practicality is also discussed, in that if we are accessing and manipulating our data online, from a variety of mobile devices, then our data usage (and the costs involved) is going to increase. Ovidia senses that eventually this will lead to a return to “locally saved data implementation” whilst still making use of cloud-based services.

This book gives a strong introduction to the state of cloud-based tools currently available to the academic researcher. It is also instructive in its appreciation that the allure of “anytime, anyplace, anywhere” access to data and functionality should be tempered by an understanding of the impermanent nature of many cloud services at their present state of development.

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