

DORNER, Daniel G., GORMAN, G.E. and CALVERT, Philip, J.
Information needs analysis: principles and practice in information organizations. London: Facet. 2015.
269 pages. ISBN: 978-1-85604-484-4

This very informative book provides an in-depth introduction to the theory and practice of information needs analysis (INA) in library and information organizations. INAs are a crucial aspect of library and information services' evaluation and development process. Therefore, this book is aimed at both information professionals who are looking to conduct their first INA and for those wishing to develop their analysis skills for future use. This book does not cover the application of results derived from the analysis or the evaluation of results.

The book comprises ten chapters and is built on the principles that there are three levels of INA: Level 1- needs of the group the service is for Level 2- needs of the service providers and Level 3- needs related to resources or solutions and four stages of INA: Preparation, Gathering data, Analysis and Report writing.

The first two chapters set out the background for the need of INA and make a case for the importance of regularly conducting them:

INA is a critical tool for many information related contexts, including planning new services, evaluating existing services, setting priorities and allocating resources for services and establishing policies.

Chapter 4 'Stages of information needs analysis' gives a key overview of each part of the INA process from preparation to reporting results. Dorner et al. explain the recursive nature of each of the stages and how each one is interrelated.

Chapters 5-8 cover the various ways you can collect data from surveys to sourcing existing data and observations.

The book concludes with the chapter 'Reporting on information needs analysis'. It advises that final presentation should be clear and written with the reading audience in mind. The authors suggest that the inclusion of charts and graphs and make a nice visual addition but will still need to be explained in the text. They also suggest that reports should be "vibrant and succinct."

Although Dorner, Gorman and Calvert advise that there is no one way to conduct INA and no single right way to analyse the data obtained, the book provides strong guidance on suitable approaches. Whilst it does not purport to be a research methodology book, it gives a good overview of the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods of data gathering and data analysis.

This book works from a variety of sources and each chapter ends with a list of references for further reading. 'Scenario' examples are provided throughout to show how different planning methods, methods of data gathering and data analysis could work.

Nicholas and Herman (2009 cited by Dorner, Gorman and Calvert, 2015, 95) are quoted in the book to say that it is "*too costly not to collect data*" and this book certainly makes the case for that.

I would recommend this book to all information professionals who conduct information needs analysis.

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