Introduction to information science.

OPPENHEIM, C.

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Book review

David Bawden and Lyn Robinson, *Introduction to information science*, 2nd Ed. London: Facet. 2022. 386 . ISBN 978-1-78330-495-0
Reviewed by: Charles Oppenheim iD, *Robert Gordon University – Garthdee Campus, Aberdeen, UK*

This is a second edition of a book first published in 2012. Both authors are well known academics who between them run the library and information science courses at The City University in London.

The book comprises 19 chapters covering all the aspects of information science theory and practice that a student is likely to encounter, plus a Foreword by Professor Luciano Floridi (about whom more later), a list of acronyms used in the book, a useful guide to further resources, and a (it must be said) fairly superficial index.

The book is extremely well written, is up to date and is authoritative, and offers lots of useful references at the end of each chapter. It is international in scope. The book is intended as a very basic text on information science, but it doesn't really succeed in that aim, as it assumes the reader is familiar with some terms and peoples' names already. A good example of this is on page 342, when the authors refer to theories about pedagogy without explanation or sources. In other words, the book requires some prior knowledge of relevant concepts. It is therefore a supporting text for someone undertaking a course in information science, and I assume it is used for this purpose in The City University. The chapters cover all aspects one would expect to see covered in such courses, though I was surprised that there was no mention of the one well-known "law" in information science, namely the inverse relationship between recall and precision. Each chapter is supported by a summary, plus a short list of key readings. There is, unfortunately, no list of all the references cited in the chapters provided at the end of the book, and the book's index is no help for checking which authors have been listed at the end of chapters.

A niggle is the constant citing of works by Floridi. Professor Floridi writes in a way that is difficult to understand. In the second paragraph of his Foreword for this book, he mentions "Westphalian nation-states," something that few, if any readers, will already know about, and later uses the term "semantic capital," a phrase which only he uses and yet this book assumes the readers will be familiar with it. Floridi's writing style is likely to turn most readers off, so constantly recommending him is unhelpful. Incidentally, the Flesch reading ease score of the book's Foreword is about 3, that is, "extremely difficult to read."

I noted some minor mistakes. For example, the acronym for the American Society for Information Science and Technology used in the book is not the officially approved acronym; the spelling out of LISTA gives the wrong name for the abstracting service; also, DIKW and DIKUW, used on page 89, and MOOCS on page 341 of the book aren't in the list of acronyms. On page 11, it gets the name of the Institute of information Scientists wrong. Page 35 claims that national postal services developed in the 1840s, when in fact they were already well established in the 17th century; what is true is that they became affordable to the masses in the 1840s. On page 125, the authors cannot decide if the right term is "domain specialist information work" or "subject-specialist information work". On the following page, the list of activities an information worker is expected to do is incomplete, for example not including keeping up to date with new information resources, new software features, important legal developments of relevance, etc. The description of abstracts on page 159 is much too brief. On page 277, the authors mistakenly claim copyright is not part of intellectual property.

I disagreed with one statement, on page 194. The authors say that Boolean logic searches are difficult to use. I guess we will just have to agree to differ on that point. The book says nothing on how to evaluate information retrieval systems. This is somewhat surprising. On page 220, the authors fail to evaluate the h-index, so widely used by senior administrators. On pages 210–216, there is no mention of the fact that Bradford's distribution and Zipf's law are normally treated together as the Bradford-Zipf Law. On page 278, the authors should have added "breaking the law, such as copyright or data protection" as an information risk. There are spelling mistakes on page 306 that should have been picked up by a proof-reader. Pages 353 and 368 mis-spell Miggie Pickton's name, and on page 360, "Likert" is mis-spelt.

I was surprised by the book's failure to mention some of the key contributors to information science, such as Bertie

Brookes, Woody Horton or Nick Moore. Gene Garfield only gets a passing mention. The section on page 298 on intellectual property had quite a few misunderstandings in it - sorry! Also, the authors are not consistent – is it "fair dealing" (p. 298) or "fair use" (p. 300)? The two are not identical. The addition of URLs to the section on "Additional Resources" would have been helpful.

Although this list of quibbles is extensive, this book is an excellent textbook, suitable for anyone in the middle of studying for a degree in information science. I am deeply impressed by this well-written and up to date book. Assuming there is a third edition, I hope the mistakes get corrected, a full index is included, and Floridi is less prominent in it.

Charles Oppenheim
c.oppenheim@btinternet.com

ORCID iD

Charles Oppenheim https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8195-3572