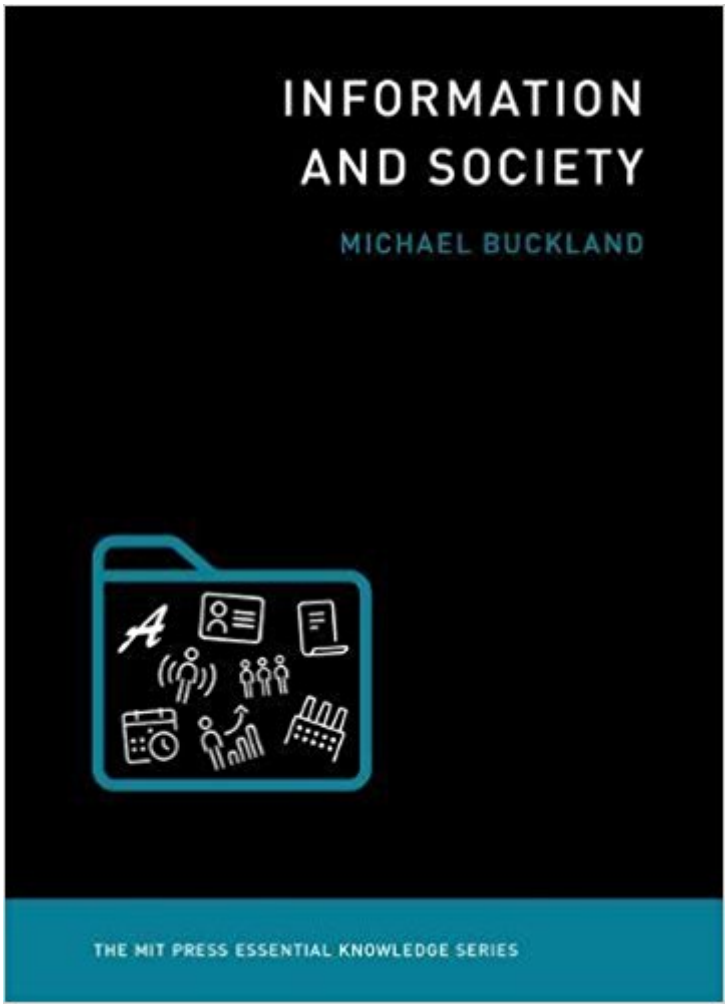
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Information And Society (The MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series)



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Synopsis

We live in an information society, or so we are often told. But what does that mean? This volume in the MIT Press Essential Knowledge series offers a concise, informal account of the ways in which information and society are related and of our ever-increasing dependence on a complex multiplicity of messages, records, documents, and data. Using information in its everyday, nonspecialized sense, Michael Buckland explores the influence of information on what we know, the role of communication and recorded information in our daily lives, and the difficulty (or ease) of finding information. He shows that all this involves human perception, social behavior, changing technologies, and issues of trust.Buckland argues that every society is an "information society"; a "non-information society" would be a contradiction in terms. But the shift from oral and gestural communication to documents, and the wider use of documents facilitated by new technologies, have made our society particularly information intensive. Buckland describes the rising flood of data, documents, and records, outlines the dramatic long-term growth of documents, and traces the rise of techniques to cope with them. He examines the physical manifestation of information as documents, the emergence of data sets, and how documents and data are discovered and used. He explores what individuals and societies do with information; offers a basic summary of how collected documents are arranged and described; considers the nature of naming; explains the uses of metadata; and evaluates selection methods, considering relevance, recall, and precision.

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Customer Reviews

Buckland’s tour through the essentials of information handling -- also because of its clear and mind-refreshing language -- opens a new perspective on cyberlaw. The book invites us to take a step back from ever-changing technological characteristics, regulatory reactions, and accumulating caselaw and to take a fresh look at what all this is about, at how our societies create, handle, organize, share and restrict information and at how all this should be done considering our constitutional value systems -- in short, to look at information law properly and then from there to discuss and evaluate the implications of technological change. (Herbert Burkert Jotwell)

Michael Buckland is Emeritus Professor in the School of Information at the University of California, Berkeley, and Codirector of the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative there.

Great overview; I am coming at this from a computer science perspective. The writing is clear and concise with some new ideas I haven’t seen articulated in information retrieval, information theory, or library science that I have read (sociologists may be familiar with the ideas here already). The bibliography has many points to jump, and a nice set of notes in the back. I took many pages of notes while reading and expect this to be useful in my work.If you’re interested in information from any variety of angles, this is a good investment.

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