



Change of State: Information, Policy, and Power (MIT Press)

By Sandra Braman

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As the informational state replaces the bureaucratic welfare state, control over information creation, processing, flows, and use has become the most effective form of power. In *Change of State* Sandra Braman examines the theoretical and practical ramifications of this "change of state." She looks at the ways in which governments are deliberate, explicit, and consistent in their use of information policy to exercise power, exploring not only such familiar topics as intellectual property rights and privacy but also areas in which policy is highly effective but little understood. Such lesser-known issues include hybrid citizenship, the use of "functionally equivalent borders" internally to allow exceptions to U.S. law, research funding, census methods, and network interconnection. Trends in information policy, argues Braman, both manifest and trigger change in the nature of governance itself. After laying the theoretical, conceptual, and historical foundations for understanding the informational state, Braman examines 20 information policy principles found in the U.S. Constitution. She then explores the effects of U.S. information policy on the identity, structure, borders, and change processes of the state itself and on the individuals, communities, and organizations that make up the state. Looking across the breadth of the legal system, she presents current law as well as trends in and consequences of several information policy issues in each category affected. *Change of State* introduces information policy on two levels, coupling discussions of specific contemporary problems with more abstract analysis drawing on social theory and empirical research as well as law. Most important, the book provides a way of understanding how information policy brings about the fundamental social changes that come with the transformation to the informational state.

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Editorial Review

Review

A seminal book, impressive in its range, skill, and depth. Sandra Braman is one among a vanishingly small number of scholars with the skill and theoretical imagination to 'think' the information policy fields together. An important book for researchers, students, and policymakers.

(Steven J. Jackson, University of Michigan)

This is stimulating work and, although the focus is upon US information policy and most of the examples are drawn from the USA, the conclusions and the lessons to be learnt are valid universally.

(**Professor T.D. Wilson**, Editor-in-Chief *Information Research*)

Masterwork...complete control of the literature...

(Donald M. Gillmor, University of Minnesota)

An important reconceptualization of the policy landscape, putting communications and information policy at the center of power and control. Braman's revisionary arguments suggest new directions for research and advocacy in the public interest.

(Pat Aufderheide, American University)

Braman makes the case that the bureaucratic welfare state has a successor: the information state. She uses social theory to help us understand just what this new creature is.

(Jonathan Zittrain, Harvard University)

This book is an excellent and up-to-date review of information policies and related social issues in the United States from the standpoint of legal theory. It would be a good choice for a textbook or for ancillary reading for classes relevant to sociolegal issues and social change... A pleasure to read, it is valuable after reading as a reference work.... in this important and growing area of scholarship.... virtues include lucid writing on the basis of great erudition, coverage of many different issues within a fairly unified perspective, and the courage to offer at least as many questions as answers.... The author has [created] a vast but accessible source of ideas and information on an important sociotechnical topic, and she deserves the profound thanks of anyone who has the good judgment to read her book.

(William Sims Bainbridge *Social Science Computer Review*)

an important and very well-documented book, a true reference manual or research tool... Although the book's

contents are strictly contextualized in [the US], the conceptual framework and the type of approach it offers may be of great value for those who want to study the information mechanisms of other states and societies which already have a high level of information technology available, as is the case of Brazil.

(Michel Thiollent *RECHS: Electronic Journal of Communication, Information & Innovation in Health*)

Change of State is a deeply thought, deeply felt... account of information policy that takes the subject much more seriously than do many practitioners in the field.... In developing her argument, the author covers a tremendous amount of interdisciplinary ground. The bibliographic essays that accompany the text and the standard bibliography at the end are richly informative all by themselves.

(Steven Aftergood *Secrecy News*)

Braman's organization and thorough treatment of each topic informs those new to the field of information policy, serving as a well-laid foundation from which to enter into any one of the discussions. Despite its comprehensive and exhaustive nature, and perhaps to some extent due to its precision, the text is accessible to graduate students just beginning their research into the field. At the same time, its almost encyclopedic wealth of information, sculpted and organized with Braman's insights and analyses, earns *Change of State* a place on the shelf of every serious scholar, researcher, and policy maker as a most welcome and essential resource.

(Heather M. Crandall *The Review of Communication*)

Braman's analysis is unusual in going beyond legal implications of information policy to put the analysis in the broadest possible context of social theory.... the connections Braman makes are logical and enrich understanding of the nature and implications of the decisions governments make about information.

(Karen Hogenboom *Government Information Quarterly*)

This is stimulating work and, although the focus is upon US information policy and most of the examples are drawn from the USA, the conclusions and the lessons to be learnt are valid universally.

(T. D. Wilson *Information Research*)

This book... [exposes] the reader to new perspectives and methods for thinking about information policy.

(Paul Jaeger *The Library Quarterly*)

Sandra Braman... has given the academic community the rarest of gifts: a timely analysis that is thorough, well-reasoned, and provocative.... Scholars of media law, international and development communication, political communication, communication theory, social influence, and communication technology would do well to take full advantage of the wealth of insight Braman offers."

(Robert G. Magee *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*)

"... this model could easily be a platform for subsequent studies by students and researchers, and facilitate dialogue between academics and policymakers engaged in this field.... *Change of State* certainly has something to offer, for the sheer volume of issues confronted, for the model of information policy analysis proposed, and as a trigger for further consideration of the problems Braman raises.

(Ben O'Loughlin *Information Polity*)

If even only some of the problems of the informational state, as portrayed by Braman, come to pass then there is much to be garnered from [the US] case.... this book has the ability to provoke the reader into thinking more deeply about the issues it raises and, in that respect alone, it is a volume well worth reading.

(Seamus Simpson *Telecommunications Policy*)

Valuable insight into the way the U.S. state (particularly under the administration of George W. Bush) has developed its information policies

(Lee Salter *Global Media and Communication*)

This is an impressive and thoughtful volume with plenty of new notions.

(Chris Sterling *Communication Booknotes Quarterly*)

Change of State provides an important new reframing of the field of information policy and its key issues. The synthesis of established issues like intellectual property with emerging concerns like borders and identity makes Braman's book a major contribution to contemporary debates. And its clear organization and accessible writing style will make it an indispensable introduction for students and nonspecialists alike.

(Leah A. Lievrouw, Professor, Department of Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles)

About the Author

Sandra Braman is Professor in the Department of Communication, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She is the editor of *Communication Researchers and Policy-Making* (MIT Press, 2003).

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