

Review

Preserving Government Information: Past, Present, and Future. Jacobs, J.A. and Jacobs J.R. San Diego: FreeGovInfo Press, 2025. 420 pgs. <https://freegovinfo.info/PGI/>

In *Preserving Government Information*, Jim Jacobs and James Jacobs (both veteran GODORT supporters and established librarians) pour literally decades of work, experience, knowledge, and collaboration into 400 pages. The book is open access, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA. That means anyone can download and use this book for free—though those in the trenches of digital government information should consider purchasing the paperback version.

Preserving Government Information (hereafter *Preserving*) is a full-scale rundown of the preservation of digital materials from the federal government. This book is salient and scary in our contemporary environment where digital government information is being consciously deleted at worst and aggressively deprioritized at best, whether that happens quickly and quietly or loudly and proudly. While many librarians and archivists touch pieces of government information regularly, this book proceeds to classify all of that used information into categories which we can, if not neatly, locate within other

categories, providing a web of materials that intersect and overlap while explaining their relevance in the same swoop. This book reads like a white paper on the ever-encompassing topic of government information; one could read it from beginning to end as a student or new to the topic entirely or piecemeal the portions for the repository librarian or the GPO enthusiast.

Split into four major parts, *Preserving* lays out the context of government information and how it can be parsed into workable categories, necessarily so, for the librarian to understand where their specific work fits in the framework. Part 1 attempts to define the landscape of government information. Part 2 places a premium on existing laws and policies that govern the current preservation of federal government information while also looking at the government's publishing wing, much altered in the digital format world. Parts 3 and 4 lay out the current preservation infrastructures and make a case for a new one altogether with an open framework. Parts 1 and 2 are interesting for everybody, a contextual rundown of the government information field. These parts run together at times and have no real clear starting point. Parts 3 and 4 are for those more deeply interested or invested

in government information, though even here language and technical jargon are digestible.

Preserving roots the need for digital preservation in the print era when there were three major justifications for preservation: the importance of an informed citizenry, the value of government information and preservation as a “principle.” With this framework as a foreground, it's easy to trace longstanding problems in digital preservation to the fact that attempts have largely been trying to place a square peg in a round hole—aka, use paper standards for a digitally dominated field. Building off what was once considered preservation, *Preserving* analyzes the way we've left some efficiencies behind, created new ones, and had to adapt to the digital landscape with federal entities that have historically tolerated the function and form of information preservation. An updated version that reflects the landscape after Trump's second presidency would be a valuable follow-up to this excellent book.

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