Notes

1 Eight chapters which focus on Europe were originally presented at the 2014 British Academy conference, and an additional three chapters (on Zurich, Guatemala, and Japan) were solicited specifically for this volume.

2 Beginning in 2003, the eight I-CHORA (International Conference on the History of Records and Archives) have featured the presentations of nearly two hundred individuals. Over sixty peer-reviewed articles have been published after presentation to an I-CHORA audience, "15 Years On: iCHORA Returns, *Archival History News* (May 28–30, 2018)," *Archival History News* (May 23, 2018), https://archivalhistory.news/?s=15+Years+On%3A+iCHORA+Returns; and "iCHORA Bibliography: Works Published from iCHORA Papers," *Archival History News* (May 23, 2018), https://archivalhistory.news/?s=iCHORA+Bibliography%3A+Works+Published+from+iCHORA+papers.

3 "The Social History of the Archive: Record-Keeping in Early Modern Europe," ed. Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters, and Alexandra Walsham, *Past and Present* 230, Supplement 11 (November 2016): 9–359, https://academic.oup.com/past/issue/230/suppl_11.

4 Elizabeth Yale, whose work does not appear in this volume, authored several works about the early modern manuscripts of natural historians, including *Sociable Knowledge: Natural History and the Nation in Early Modern Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

Ethics for Records and Information Management

By Norman A. Mooradian. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2018. 224 pp. Softcover. $75.00. ISBN 978-0-8389-1639-1.

Norman Mooradian is an information technology professional specializing in enterprise content management solutions; he also holds PhD and MA degrees in philosophy from The Ohio State University and has taught university coursework in business and professional ethics. His new publication, *Ethics for Records and Information Management*, is intended not only as a resource for professionals, but also as a textbook for coursework on records and information ethics. Apart from the general goal of providing a text on information ethics, his specific purpose in this work is to "present ethics as a systematic body of knowledge that has developed over time and that has been extended and further articulated to apply to issues in the management of information and business records" and "to clarify the core ethical principles and rules that have been adapted and articulated as new developments in technology unfold, and to show how these principles and rules provide a framework and foundation for an ethics of records and information management" (p. 159). The systematic presentation of ethics tends at times to overshadow his coverage of the application of ethical norms to specific records and information management (RIM) related job duties, but, overall this book should serve admirably as a text for related coursework.

The first two chapters, "The Structure and Content of Ethics" and "Ethical Reasoning," comprehensively address theoretical aspects of ethical norms and

reasoning. As might be expected in a book mostly intended as an adjunct to classroom study, this coverage is technical and comprehensive in its focus on ethical theory. Instead of beginning with a discussion of RIM job responsibilities, Mooradian starts out with a rigorous presentation of the basics of ethics and ethical reasoning. The first chapter defines and elaborates on the components of a framework for ethical reasoning, describing a continuum ranging from highly abstract principles (such as the principles of nonharm or beneficence) and general ethical rules to more specific ethical rules which, when formulated in practice, may constitute elements of RIM ethics. Rather than defining or listing RIM-specific rules, the second chapter moves along to present additional methods and forms for ethical reasoning that will enable the reader to make the decisions. This toolset is informed by coverage of the characteristics of ethical judgments (such as universality and impartiality), an examination of the premises and possible conclusions of two different forms of ethical reasoning (top-down and bottom-up), and discussions of moral dilemmas and effective ethical decision-making methods. The disclosure of records containing personal information is used to demonstrate the identification of abstract principles involved in parsing a moral dilemma, but here the examples serve to illustrate the use of the tools that enable the reader to make ethical judgments.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6, "Management Ethics," "Whistle-Blowing and Information Leaks," and "Information Privacy," address practical topics at a somewhat greater length. "Management Ethics" discusses the intersections of general business ethics with records management practice, primarily by considering professional activity from the viewpoint of stakeholder theory. The discussion of stakeholder theory covers the need for RIM managers to consider multiple groups of stakeholders with competing interests: first, by using the example of protecting a variety of personally identifiable information while balancing the needs of employees and clients; then, through an examination of considerations related to the protection of copyright and trade secrets in the workplace; and, finally, with a discussion of the various interests involved in capturing and maintaining employee monitoring information. Chapters 5 and 6 would seem to delve even deeper into practical aspects of RIM ethics, but their focus on whistle-blowing, information leaks, and information privacy seems to retreat slightly back into the format of encouraging use of the framework for independent reasoning. Or, perhaps the issue is that these subjects are more valuable for RIM practitioners' consideration and reaction and are not necessarily topics that benefit from the framework for direct ethical reasoning emphasized in the design of this book. RIM practitioners may not always make decisions about these events. So, while chapters 5 and 6 include impressively detailed and clearly

written content on those topics, neither chapter consistently links specific records-related duties to the needs of either whistle-blowing or privacy related situations.

The central and perhaps most valuable portion of the book is chapter 3, "Professional Ethics." Here, Mooradian addresses the records management profession in a more direct and constructive way, beginning with a discussion of the characteristics of professionality that places records and information management specifically into a theoretical context of rights and obligations. Notably, he goes one step further to identify the characteristics of "professional responsibilities" as being the ethical core of RIM: "records professionals are called upon by society to apply their knowledge and skills to create the conditions under which public and private organizations can be held accountable" (p. 50). Whistle-blowing and information breaches are dramatic but somewhat infrequent events. These are good topics for illustrating examples of ethical reasoning, but the requirement to maintain information that enables accountability is a daily responsibility requiring regular, constructive effort and constant monitoring. RIM support of compliance efforts is key. A discussion of conflict of interest is also included here, and, while it tends to abstraction, this coverage springs into direct relevance by pointing out records management's crucial (and, in some organizations, primary) role in support of compliance with anticonflict regimes. However, an examination of support for compliance regimes designed outside of RIM prerogatives begs the question of agency for records management practitioners. The chapter ends with a discussion of nondisclosure, highlighting the question of exactly how much records managers can do to protect or disclose information, or to drive the compliance regimes mentioned above. Some records and information management professionals may have more central and trusted roles than others, but RIM roles are often subordinated to the prerogatives and needs of the organizations and administrations they support (especially when the unit is within a library, probably a familiar setting to *American Archivist* readers with records management duties).

The identification of compliance and nondisclosure regimes as particularly important operations for records managers also brings to mind the question of exactly what records management brings to the table in terms of specific professional aptitudes and values, and to what extent these values can be deployed in any independent program of ethical reasoning. Records management programs generally do not devise an organization's compliance and nondisclosure rules— they operate in reaction to and in concert with them. Records disposition, which is not discussed much in this volume, may be the one duty that seems reserved unambiguously to records management. RIM practitioners are responsible for creating and implementing retention guidelines (rules reflexively drawn from

and in support of the compliance and nondisclosure regimes already mentioned) and for coordinating and validating the actual process of destruction or deletion. Given the somewhat limited scope of duties definitively owned by records and information management programs, it seems fair to ask whether or not any general bureaucratic or business ethics text might be as useful as Mooradian's admittedly well-crafted and thorough text.

A general evaluation of this book must account for these questions surrounding agency for RIM practitioners and concomitant questions regarding the utility of a highly theoretical ethical reasoning framework in an environment that does not always offer many avenues for independent action. The focus on theory is a matter of presentation: Mooradian's rigorous presentation of abstract ethical principles, frameworks, and terminology provides a stark contrast to more prescriptive, practice-oriented approaches (as seen, for example, in a counterpart work for archivists, Elena Danielson's *The Ethical Archivist*).[1] Beyond presentation, the focus on theory might also be interpreted as a function of the lack of workplace options for RIM practitioners, and the work may be viewed as aspiring to a greater role for records professionals. How much theory is needed to teach and learn records and information management ethics? Can this be accomplished through a simpler approach, by listing salient issues and offering normative appraisals of them? And, is a primarily theoretical approach somehow more respectable or imposing? In the late 1980s and early 1990s, *American Archivist* published two memorably titled articles by John Roberts: "Archival Theory: Myth or Banality?" and "Archival Theory: Much Ado about Shelving."[2] Roberts argued that archival theory at the time was mostly a form of public relations and only useful for promoting the archival profession. The records management community has not had occasion for a similar debate on the uses of records management theory for professional advancement (although aspirational nomenclature like "information management" and now "information governance" cause differences of opinion). In the end, it might be that the reader's opinion on the amount of theory and abstraction needed for RIM ethics will determine whether *Ethics for Records and Information Management* looks like a case of "much ado about shredding" or not.

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NOTES

1 Elena Danielson, *The Ethical Archivist* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2010).

2 John W. Roberts, "Archival Theory: Much Ado about Shelving," *American Archivist* 50, no. 1 (1987): 66–74, and "Archival Theory: Myth or Banality," *American Archivist* 53, no. 1 (1990): 110–20.