

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbresourcing.com/>.
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.cbresourcing.com/clients.aspx>.
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.cbresourcing.com/candidates.aspx>.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> <https://biail.org.uk/biail-salary-survey-2020-21-published/>.
- <sup>6</sup> <https://biail.org.uk/>.
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.cilip.org.uk/>.
- <sup>8</sup> <https://sla-europe.org/>.

## Biography

**Simon Burton** is the Managing Director and Co-Founder of CB Resourcing, the leading knowledge & information management recruitment business. He is currently a Board Trustee of CILIP and a Past President (2019) of SLA Europe.

*Legal Information Management*, 22 (2022), pp. 106–107  
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# Book Reviews

doi:10.1017/S1472669622000184

Sarah A Sutherland, *Legal Data and Information in Practice: How Data and the Law Interact* (Routledge, 2022). 170 pages, 11 b/w illustrations. Hardback: ISBN 9780367649906; Paperback: ISBN: 9780367649883; ebook: ISBN 9781003127307.

Figuring out how data in the legal sector can be understood and used to create new opportunities for the future is a challenge to legal information professionals the world over; which is why books like *Legal Data and Information in Practice*, by Sarah A. Sutherland, can be so useful.

Sutherland, who is the President and CEO at the Canadian Legal Information Institute (CANLII), writes regularly on legal data internationally and is therefore well placed to tackle the subject of accessibility and exploitation of legal data in a variety of organisational settings.

This book, which is sub-titled *How Data and the Law Interact*, is broken down into nine chapters, with chapter one setting the scene, outlining why a better understanding of data is needed, and providing some examples of the benefits this brings: such as improving the profitability of a legal practice, developing insights into how decisions are made, and understanding how different legal systems produce differing data – while also uncovering sources of legal data.

Chapter two takes a more detailed look at where legal data can be found and identifies issues with accessing such data. Then the technical aspects of data formats are described in chapter three, where challenges specific

to legal data are highlighted, including a succinct consideration of why understanding formatting issues will significantly increase the success of any data driven project.

The fourth chapter gives the reader an overview of the various data analysis techniques available, including statistical analysis, machine learning, natural language processing, plus other methods, while chapter five gives more practical information, building on the previous chapter and helping the reader to formulate an approach to interpreting and analysing legal data.

Chapter six discusses in more detail the challenges faced when using legal data, noting that these are often exacerbated by the fact that data has not always been created with the intention that it will actually be used as data (for example, case law or legislation). Also, the contextual ambiguity of legal data needs to be considered, and therefore it can be hard to create reliable analysis using traditional methods of analysis.

The last three chapters look towards the future of the field of data analysis. An overview of artificial intelligence (AI) is provided in chapter seven, with a discussion on the promise and challenges automating routine data tasks will entail. Law and politics are covered in chapter eight, and in the final chapter Sutherland sets out some probable, plausible, and possible futures which take into account not only the adoption of technology within the legal discipline but also its acceptance, while also considering how concerns within the wider society might play out.

*Legal Data and Information in Practice* provides the perfect introduction to legal data and the associated key concepts

involved in locating, managing, interpreting, and analysing legal data analysis for those who are new to this technical subject. There are many social and regulatory issues that naturally overlap with legal data, along with some concepts that can be difficult to describe in plain English to the uninitiated, but Sutherland certainly succeeds in doing just this.

It is a thought-provoking book, which considers the use of legal data across a range of organisations, including law libraries, courts, governments, universities, and law practices. It also provides a very interesting international dimension, with examples of legal data and methodology drawn from across multiple jurisdictions. Sutherland is particularly fascinating when she is drawing out the differences between jurisdictions where there is an abundance of data, and others where data is missing either through it simply not being available or because the regulatory environment means that data must be redacted.

However, those readers looking for more practical tips in applying the methods in this book to their own organisation may feel that this is one area where Sutherland falls short. On the other hand, perhaps this is understandable, given that this book is aimed at a very wide readership. Also, readers who would like to delve deeper into specific discussion points can always refer to the in-depth footnotes at the end of each chapter, and the extensive bibliography provided at the end of the book.

Either way, when it comes to showing how data and the law interacts on a worldwide stage *Legal Data and Information in Practice* certainly delivers.

**Jas Breslin**

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doi:10.1017/S1472669622000196

Elyse H Fox, *Write Your Annual Report: a Guide for Law Librarians* (Elyse H Fox, 2022). ISBN: 9780941991709.  
Available at: [www.legalinformationservices.com](http://www.legalinformationservices.com)

The author writes this guide with the aim of helping library managers or directors demonstrate the worth of their service and be more visible in their organisation and to their patrons. Fox expands on some articles and a chapter of a book she had previously written on the same subject.

The structure of this book centres around in-depth research, feedback and tips from a wide range of law librarians, mostly in the US. There are quotes in the opening chapter about the impetus and benefits of why a library annual report should be written and submitted.

Whilst the content is focused on the US market, with a portion of chapter 3 dedicated to the American Bar Association removing the requirement to provide a written assessment of the effectiveness of a library; the idea that some libraries will have a requirement or obligation and

some will have a choice means that the USA angle does not detract from this being relevant to other jurisdictions. The author clearly explains the benefits of writing annual reports and encourages those who have no obligation to write such a report. Arguments include visibility, keeping the lines of communication open, highlighting accomplishments and other common sense benefits. When bought together in a single list like this, it is really useful.

Each chapter ends with opportunities for the reader to write their own notes and action points making this feel a little bit like the write up of a seminar. The author dedicates a chapter on all the reasons why people don't write reports and the counter-arguments to these are common sense but collated together create a powerful argument and can leave you feeling inspired to get over those barriers. There is guidance especially to those new to writing an annual report and helpful tips mostly again in the form of quotes to get you over any of the hindrances you face.

Tips on what type of content to include are evident even to the extent that a suggested structure is presented. What I felt was missing from this section was an acknowledgment that some topics may have value to one audience but may be commercially sensitive for another, and not in the public domain and so should be treated carefully. One of the challenges I find when writing any report to senior management is what to leave out or how to report metrics; the author acknowledges that some of these can be dull. However, she again passes on tips in quote format with the aim for those under her tutelage to convey data in value. Fox admits what to report is very much driven by each organisation. Chapters 11 to 16 on the report structure, distribution and style could have benefited from some graphical examples of how the reports, and data in particular, can be represented visually. Fox also explores who to send the report to, where else to host it and importantly that the staff need to be familiar with the report.

The Guide concludes with some examples of annual reports. These days, visualisation of data is an important way to grab attention and communicate in a speedy way. Whilst Fox acknowledges that this is important, it was disappointing to see more text and no graphical representations at all. It is therefore somewhat ironic that the author admits that pages and pages of only words and numbers will bore. However, overall it was an easy read, well researched and benefiting from the insight that the author has gained from speaking to lots of librarians in the legal sector. I'm certainly glad that I invested the time in reading this and I do feel inspired to turn my little brief end of year report into something far more polished and relevant with the help of this Guide.

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