

Trusting records in the Cloud

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This perfectly bound, succinct volume brings together the findings of the fourth phase of the InterPARES Trust (International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems, hereinafter ITrust). ITrust has been operating as a collaboration of practitioners and academics since 1998 and seeks to address the challenges in authenticity of electronic records over the long term. This collection of articles presents theoretical and methodological approaches to a broad range of challenges facing records managers and archivists today.

Trusting records in the Cloud is one of a series influential information management studies published by Facet books.

It's easy to lose sight of the wood for the trees when considering cloud computing in relation to information management. This well-structured book serves to put the challenges and opportunities offered by the cloud into a records perspective. It is organised into three broad themes: issues and policies; strategies and processes; roles and competencies.

The initial chapters on open governance and citizen engagement fall into the issues and policy theme. While it is important to be aware of this theme, it is not the day to day concern of most information professionals. The strategies and processes theme addresses more immediate issues such as retention and disposition, authentication, intellectual control and digital preservation in the cloud. The roles and competencies theme addresses the education and evolving contribution of information professionals.

ITrust is a long running project with numerous research facets, it is a complex weave of theory and praxis, of checklists, studies, strategies, models and assessments. Those entering into the pages of this volume will be enveloped by a formidable knowledge net, rich in technical terms, acronyms and nuance. But fear not, you can eat this cake one bite at a time. The chapter on retention and disposition in the cloud is a good start. This seemingly intractable issue is tackled through four case studies and the provision of a handy checklist for retention and disposition functional

requirements. This practical chapter provides a helpful overview of the field and includes details such as considerations given to third party providers and their internal backup systems in the cloud.

New Zealand's cloud first policy requires government organisations to use public cloud services in preference to traditional IT systems. This frames an imperative to which Aotearoa's information professionals must pay particular attention.

Trusting records in the cloud is an academic publication, yet there's also enough to sustain a more pragmatic records approach. It's broad enough to provide conversation points between colleagues within and without the information profession. I particularly enjoyed the chapter on digital preservation in the cloud which explored the ITrust Preservation as a Service for Trust (PaaST) model. The writing on open government and citizen engagement is cogent and far reaching in its implication for democratic governance. A slender yet fascinating chapter by Gillian Oliver et al on Cultural heritage - Indigenous perspectives outlines research into the impact of indigenous language collections in New Zealand.

Notably absent from *Trusting records in the Cloud* is thinking around the role of machine learning techniques applied to records and archives in the cloud. Machine learning offers the benefits of cloud computing at scale and is already being leveraged to automate the generation of records metadata. Perhaps this topic is being saved for another volume.

For records managers and archivists interested in cloud computing services, these essays serve to put that interest into a conceptual, and documentary framework. Some essays are of a general interest for a democratic society, such as citizen engagement. Others are technical such as the auditing frameworks proposed to utilise trust chains (i.e. blockchain for record authentication). *Trusting records in the Cloud* provides a firm ground for information professionals seeking to understand the cloud and therefore the future of the profession. ITrust has released much of their research online, including articles, models, checklists under a Creative Commons license, <https://interparestrust.org/>. I recommend you check them out.

Reviewed by Chris Meech