BOOK REVIEW

Public Administration and Information Technology

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This book by Reddick is firmly grounded in public administration with a managerial perspective on information technology. The main topics of the book are relevant to public administrators and organized into both external and internal perspectives. For managing the external environment (Part I of the book), the main topics include e-democracy, e-participation, and e-governance to help public administrators understand the institutional contexts, processes, tools, and challenges associated with managing external stakeholders (citizens in particular). To manage the internal environment, Part II of the book illustrates how public administrators need to focus on leadership and management for organizational change and the infrastructure needed for successful utilization of information technology. In addition, the last part (Part III) of the book discusses specific systems (i.e. human resources information systems and e-procurement systems) and issues (i.e. digital privacy and security).

TIMELINESS, RELEVANCE, AND ACCESSIBILITY

The coherent administrative perspective adopted in the book has filled an important gap in meeting the need of public administration education. There have been about a dozen books published in the area of information technology and public administration for the last few years. However, most of them are edited volumes (i.e. Scholl (2010), Nixon, Koutrakou and Rawal (2010), and Aikins (2012)) with various topics and contexts presented but no coherent perspective. This book meets the need of undergraduate or graduate students in public administration with its coherent and administration-focused framework for understanding various issues related to information technology and public administration.

The topics covered by the book are timely and relevant to the 21st century public

administrators. Garson's (2006) book, entitled *Public Information Technology and E-Governance*, is considered one of the leading textbooks in the area of public administration and information technology. As relevant as it was for its time, this book was published before the fast growth of social media and mobile devices along with the new applications of interactive technologies. Reddick's book brings more up-to-date information that discusses government utilization of these emerging technologies and their implications for public administration. For instance, the discussions about various ways of utilizing Web 2.0 technologies for e-participation in Chapter 3 provide the readers with timely and relevant information.

Another strength of the book is the utilization of research studies and government publications. Such utilization shows not only the quality of research cited but also the relevance of the key documents referenced. I have done extensive research in the area of e-government and found the research articles cited in the book are from authoritative sources, including leading public administration journals and reputable specialized e-government journals. The inclusion of e-participation models in Chapter 3 reflects some of the best research studies to date. Moreover, the documents cited are highly relevant to the topics discussed. For example, the US GAO report on cyberterrorism is considered one of the respected sources for research on the issue.

The organization, style, and elements of Reddick's book target the audience of the book well. The chapters of this book follow a coherent organization, moving from the external environment to the internal environment and then to specific topics of interests. Within each chapter, there is an opening case study and a closing one to engage the reader as well as an introduction and chapter objectives for a quick understanding of the issues and main ideas. The inclusion of discussion questions at the end further completes each chapter for instructional purposes. In terms of the style of writing, it is quite accessible to the target readers, current and future public managers. In addition, the extensive use of summary tables for key ideas, clear headings, the use of plain English, and concise presentation all help with communicating the main ideas.

Management, Connections, and Framework

A more extensive discussion of several management topics could further meet the needs of its target readers. One such topic is the development and implementation of strategic IT/e-government plans. Strategic e-government plans are crucial as a master plan for governments addressing the challenges of internal and external environments and emerging issues. Such a significant topic is worth dedicating an entire chapter to it as seen in Garson's (2006) book. Another topic is the management and implementation of e-government projects. Public administrators or Chief Information Officers (CIOs) as the target readers would benefit from current research and knowledge about implementation of e-government projects.

In some places, the reader could benefit from a stronger connection between ideas introduced in a specific chapter. For instance, a better transition or connection needs to be made to move from the discussion about leadership to management support systems and then to CIOs. Each topic makes sense for inclusion in a chapter on leadership and management. However, the reader needs to be guided on how these ideas connect with one another. These connections between ideas could be first made in the introduction and supplemented with transition language between them.

This book can also benefit from having a more elaborate framework that articulates how internal and external environments intersect and how these major issues mentioned in Part III fit into the framework. It is understood that a public administrator needs to manage both the internal and external environments. However, it is not clear how the external environment affects the decisions made for internal management and conversely how the internal environment, such as management and leadership, affect the

pursuit of external opportunities such as engaging citizens electronically. The major issues identified in Part III, although significant in their own right, would have been better placed in a common framework with the internal and external environments. One such placement could be that these management issues and technologies are worth consideration from both internal and external perspectives.

CONCLUSION

Reddick's book excels in having a coherent framework for and important topics about information technology and public administration. Moreover, this book is written in an accessible and engaging format with opening and closing case studies, chapter objectives, and discussion questions. The topics included are well researched and grounded in current research articles as well as government reports. A critical review suggests the benefits of devoting more discussion to key management topics, making more connections between ideas, and

developing a more elaborate framework. Nonetheless, those suggestions should be put in the context of the challenge of balancing conciseness and comprehensiveness. Overall, this book has made an outstanding contribution to educating current and future public administrators about contemporary issues, challenges, and solutions for the utilization of information technology in public administration.

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