Author Meets Critics: Sandra Braman

Blanchette, Jean-François (1); Braman, Sandra (2); Jackson, Steve (3); Lievrouw, Leah (1); Mueller, Milton (4)

1: Dept. of Information Studies, UCLA; 2: Dept. of Communication, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; 3: School of Information, University of Michigan; 4: School of Information Studies, Syracuse University

The publication of Sandra Braman’s Change of State signals the importance of the topic of information policy to the field of information studies. It also illustrates both the power and necessity of the kind of inter-disciplinary analysis that characterizes the field. This panel will provide an opportunity for both structured debate and lively discussion around Change of State and the important arguments it contains. Perhaps the most important one that it makes is that “trends in information policy both manifest and trigger change in the nature of governance itself.” That is, Braman points to how information flows have radically altered the nature of the traditional nation-state and its ability to exercise power (or fails to, as the case may be).

Because of i-Schools’ strong connections with the professional world of information institutions, it is particularly important for graduates to understand the far-reaching implications of this argument. On a practical level, graduates need to become conversant with both the varied manifestations of information policy, and the mechanisms by which such policy is enacted. Change of State provides a highly useful synthesis of all the major debates in the field of information policy (including identity, immigration, innovation policy, etc.), organizing them into a comprehensive analytical framework, along with extensive bibliographic essays.

The format of this session will involve each speaker presenting a 15 minute paper which will discuss Change of State from their own disciplinary perspective. Prof. Braman will then respond to the papers. The presentations will be followed by a question and answer period with the audience. The goal is to offer both structured debate around key arguments presented in the book, while offering an opportunity for the audience to interact with the speakers. The speakers are all leaders in the field, well-informed of Dr. Braman’s work, and chosen with the goal of maximizing disciplinary perspectives (Lievrouw: communication policy; Mueller: political science; Jackson: science and technology studies).
Participants:

- Prof. Sanda Braman, Dept. of Communication, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, http://www.uwm.edu/~braman/
- Prof. Steve Jackson, School of Information, University of Michigan, Ann-Arbor, http://www.si.umich.edu/people/faculty-detail.htm?sid=366
- Prof. Leah Lievrouw, Department of Information Studies, UCLA, http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/llievrou/LeahHome.html
- Prof. Milton Mueller, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, http://istweb.syr.edu/~mueller/


Because of constraints on speakers’ schedules, this session must imperatively be scheduled for Thursday, February 28.