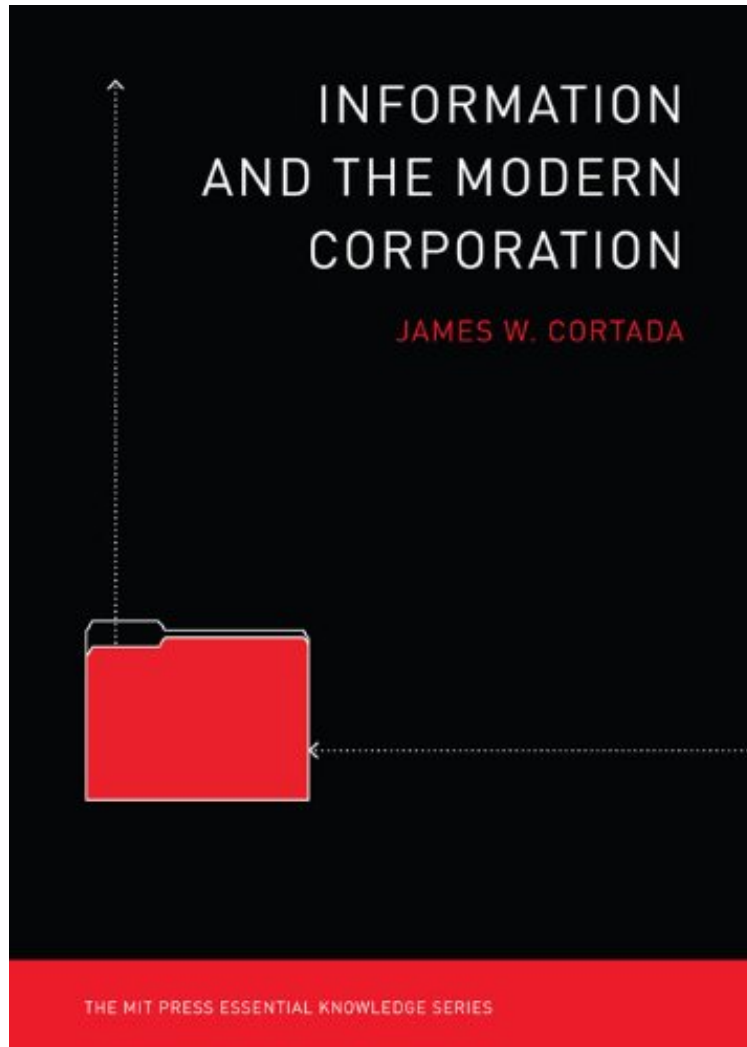


Information and the Modern Corporation (The MIT Press Essential Knowledge series)

James W Cortada

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James W Cortada : Information and the Modern Corporation (The MIT Press Essential Knowledge series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Information and the Modern Corporation (The MIT Press Essential Knowledge series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Converting Data Into KnowledgeBy F. Tyler B. BrownJames W. Cortada describes this short book as one that is "not graced with charts, graphs, numerous examples, case studies, and endnotes--information baubles--because it is not a monograph. Rather, it is an essay--an extended conversation--highlighting the role of information." And it is an important and delightful conversation at that.This essay, or extended conversation, highlights the growing role of information in our economy and society as a whole. It is about the

"fundamental transformation of whole firms and industries into giant information-processing engines." No matter what industry you work in, whether you realize it or not, whether you want it to be the case or not, you work for a "giant information-processing engine". Banks, retail giants, restaurants, online retailers, the government, social networks, media companies- thanks to the advent of cheap computer processor chips, cloud computing making data storage cheaper, Radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags, the increased use of mobile smart phones, etc.- all have at their disposal seas and seas of data. But as Mr. Cortada makes clear- data is not information nor is it knowledge.

"Information is slightly different in that it combines various data to say something that the data alone can't say." And, "Knowledge is more complicated than data or information because it combines data, information, and experiences from logically connected groups of facts (such as budget data from a department) with things that have no direct or obvious connection (such as previous jobs and experiences)." So while all corporations can more easily and cheaply acquire data in today's world, this does not mean that they also automatically and necessarily convert that data into useful information and actionable knowledge. And I suppose that that is precisely where books like this one come in. Mr. Cortada in this essay helps to provide the contextual background on how to begin to think about information in today's economy. This essay is not an endpoint, but a launching pad for further inquiry into the role that data, information, and knowledge do, must, and will continue to play in the world's information economy. As Mr. Cortada notes, "If everyone in a company collects, stores, and uses information, then everyone in the company is, by definition, a manager of those assets." In an information economy, we are all managers of information assets. Every person collects and stores such assets every day, and probably most times does so below a level of conscious awareness. Regardless of how we acquire such assets, it is vital that everyone in an information economy see themselves as a manager, as someone who in the collecting and storing of data has a responsibility to efficiently convert that data into information, and then to do what so few people go on to do: apply the correct analytical questions and framework to the information so that it becomes knowledge. This is the imperative of the information age that confronts us all. The benefits, particularly in a corporate setting, for those who are able to convert data all the way into knowledge will far outstrip those that are unable to do so. In this short book, Mr. Cortada makes this imperative- that "employees in the future... know how to collect information, work with it, and share it with organizations beyond the legal boundaries of their enterprise"- both obvious, and impossible to ignore.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Coordination Use of Information By J. Ilog Both reviews by F. Tyler B. Brown (March 25, 2012) Mark P. McDonald (February 6, 2012) are correct in their assessment of this intriguing book on how "Information is the core of the modern enterprise, and the use of information defines the activities of a firm...(showing) managers and employees better ways to leverage information by design and not by accident." It gives a brief history of the importance of the use of information in business and provides a reasonable future projection. I'll give it 3.5 stars. With over 40 ideas worth using for this review, I will provide a few here. On its purpose theme: "...to describe, indeed highlight, the role of information in the modern corporation, with only a tip of the hat to information technologies. People collect, analyze, and use information to do their work, to gain insights, to make more informed decisions, and even to share those roles and decision making capabilities with machines, some of which are computers and some of them have computers built into them. The main theme of this book is that information-rather than information technology--is the fundamental building material of the modern enterprise, and that its use now defines the activities of the firms far more than we might have imagined even 20 years ago. Discusses the different business models of online firms and regardless of the variant chosen... "they all share one universal feature: they are largely about collecting data, doing something with it, and causing themselves or their bricks and mortar business partners to respond--for example, to ship a product sold by an online intermediary, such as an online florist." On p.35 and p. 37, definitions of the supply chain and value chain is given. On use of information: "Data pour into the modern corporation from sensors and from multiple websites. A corporation cannot shape or control this information; it can only use it; and it must integrate the information in order to make sense of it." On managerial challenges: "...will depend on the degree to which their companies can integrate internal and external data in one location or a few locations (virtual and real), the extent to which customers can share and borrow data with which to influence their relations with a company and affect and inform their own buying habits, and how management and expert employees can enrich data for analysis." On why paper documents will still be needed: "...much information that once would have been on paper is now in electronic form, but there are three reasons why paper documents will not disappear: 1) Legal requirements in some countries that call for hard copies of contracts and other documents. 2) Old habits and old policies on retention of corporate records, in some of the world's most high-tech firms. 3) Human thinking practices... People often need to look at data in a physical way, such as on paper, 3X5 cards, a stack of paper receipts, even a box of objects rather than just as information on a flat screen."

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A view on technology's advance over the past 100 years By Mark P. McDonald The book *Information and the Modern Corporation* captures James Cortada's experience and observations on technology and its progress over the last 100 years. Cortada has worked for IBM for more than 35 years and his experience and the IBM context strongly flavors the views presented in the book. The book *IMC* and the views of IBM are very similar in this book. Cortada takes a long term and broad view of technology moving from mechanical technologies at the turn of the 20th century to today's digital technologies. He shows the march of technology as one of continuous evolution,

innovation, advancement and its impact on companies and industries. In this regard Cortada's observations and insights are similar to other authors on the same subject. That is part of the reason for the three stars in the review as the book sheds little new light on the relationships between technology, business and society. The book's organization and tone will be familiar to IT professionals, CIOs and others who see technology as the more powerful transformative force in our society. Cortada's sees the future as "a world in which much information is more interconnected than it is today, and in different types of data and from more disparate sources than are available today will affect each other at much shorter intervals than in the past." Page 129. This passage provides illustrates the nature of the book. Cortada's views, insight and experience reflect his experience and worldview. This makes for a solid book on the subject. Those new to the idea of technology, information and connectivity in business change will find this brief book interesting and helpful. Others who are engaged in making this transformation a reality will learn less from reading Information and the Modern Corporation.

While we have been preoccupied with the latest i-gadget from Apple and with Google's ongoing expansion, we may have missed something: the fundamental transformation of whole firms and industries into giant information-processing machines. Today, more than eighty percent of workers collect and analyze information (often in digital form) in the course of doing their jobs. This book offers a guide to the role of information in modern business, mapping the use of information within work processes and tracing flows of information across supply-chain management, product development, customer relations, and sales. The emphasis is on information itself, not on information technology. Information, overshadowed for a while by the glamour and novelty of IT, is the fundamental component of the modern corporation. In Information and the Modern Corporation, longtime IBM manager and consultant James Cortada clarifies the differences among data, facts, information, and knowledge and describes how the art of analytics has all but eliminated decision making based on gut feeling, replacing it with fact-based decisions. He describes the working style of "road warriors," whose offices are anywhere their laptops and cell phones are and whose deep knowledge of a given topic becomes their medium of exchange. Information is the core of the modern enterprise, and the use of information defines the activities of a firm. This essential guide shows managers and employees better ways to leverage information--by design and not by accident.

"For you, for all of us, the path to work wisdom and success. An easy and important read."- Barbara Jacobs, Booklist
About the Author James W. Cortada has worked at IBM for more than thirty-five years in various sales, consulting, and managerial positions. He currently works in IBM's core business research center, the Institute for Business Value. He is the author of many books, including Making the Information Society, The Digital Hand, and How Societies Embrace Information Technology.