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**Creator:** MacLellan, F.

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Getting started with cloud computing

Edward M. Corrado and Heather Lea Moulaison (eds)

London: Facet Publishing, 2011. 214 pp.

ISBN: 9781856048071. £49.95

Rating: 4 = Very good

The title for this book caught my eye, I've heard the term cloud computing banded around with alarming regularity and whilst I had an idea of what cloud computing was I had only really considered it in relation to my own personal needs rather than from a professional view point. The blurb on the back of the book describes it as a one-stop guide to cloud computing and on one level I would agree with this summation. The book gives a good basic introduction to the concept and having read it I feel I've got a better understanding of how cloud computing could be useful for in my professional life. However, as a relative layperson in terms of technical jargon I found parts of the book quite difficult to understand as there are lots of abbreviations and terms I was unfamiliar with, some of which were described or explained once but sadly not all. From this point of view I feel that the book would have benefitted from a full glossary.

The book was split into three parts, the first part covering 'general concerns', part two covered 'technologies' whilst the third part contains specific "case studies" although many of the chapters in section two also could be classed as case studies. I found this approach useful, and it made the possibility of dipping in and out of the book more appealing.

The first part is aimed more at readers trying to persuade others of the value of adopting cloud computing within their organisation. The ideas in the first part covered areas such as pros and cons of cloud computing, what it means for libraries and a discussion paper on what it means or could mean for Library and Information Services education. Part two whilst highlighting the technologies underlying cloud computing also gave real life examples which gave not only context for the use of cloud computing but also gave insight into the specific projects discussed. Part three was described as the case study section, however many of the

earlier chapters were also written as case studies which, to my mind, reduces the effectiveness of this section. The case studies discussed were all interesting and ones which I could envisage being common across many different library organisations.

Overall the book was positive towards cloud computing whilst there was always due respect given to the potential negatives of using a cloud based service. The only negative aspect of the book I noticed was the American bias; all the contributors were from the USA. The reason for this, I assume is that they are earlier adopters of cloud computing; however I believe the book would have benefitted from a more global perspective.

The book is worth reading by librarians and library managers alike and offers a relatively easy to read overview of cloud computing and its potential within the specific library and information arena, where the ethics and data usage is vastly different from other sectors.

Reviewer: Fiona MacLellan, Academic Librarian at the University of Northampton