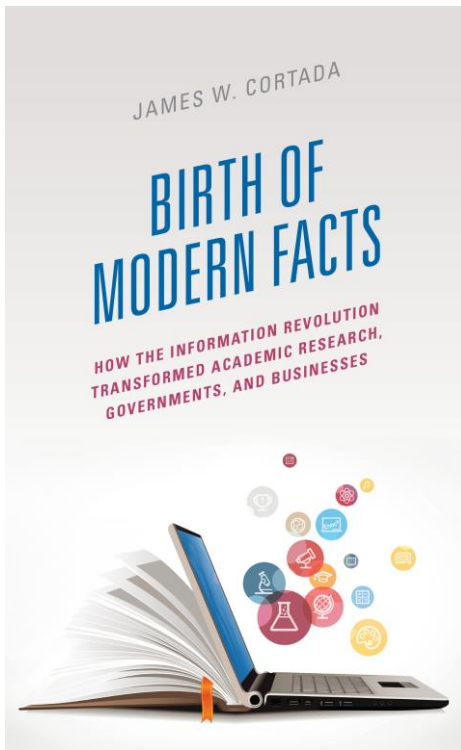


# ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD

## *Birth of Modern Facts* **How the Information Revolution Transformed Academic Research, Governments, and Businesses**

By James W. Cortada



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### About the Book

For over twenty years, James W. Cortada has pioneered research into how information shapes society. In this book he tells the story of how information evolved since the mid-nineteenth century. Cortada argues that information increased in quantity, became more specialized by discipline (e.g., mathematics, science, political science), and more organized. Information increased in volume due to a series of innovations, such as the electrification of communications and the development of computers, but also due to the organization of facts and knowledge by discipline, making it easier to manage and access. He looks at what major disciplines have done to shape the nature of modern information, devoting chapters to the most obvious ones. Cortada argues that understanding how some features of information evolved is useful for those who work in subjects that deal with their very construct and application, such as computer scientists and those exploring social media and, most recently, history. *The Birth of Modern Facts* builds on Cortada's prior books examining how information became a central feature of modern society, most notably as a sequel to *All the Facts: A History of Information in the United States since 1870* (OUP, 2016) and *Building Blocks of Society: History, Information Ecosystems, and Infrastructures* (R&L, 2021).

### About the Author

**James W. Cortada** is Senior Research Fellow at the Charles Babbage Institute at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. He formerly worked at IBM Corporation in a variety of sales, consulting, research, management, and executive positions. His research and writing have focused on the business history of information technology and in the role of information in modern societies. He is the author or editor of more than three dozen books and serves on the editorial board of key journals devoted to the history of information and its technologies. Most recently he co-authored with William Aspray, *Fake News Nation: The Long History of Lies and Misinterpretations in America* (R&L, 2019) and *From Urban Legends to Political Fact-Checking* (Springer, 2019); and authored *Building Blocks of Society: History, Information Ecosystems, and Infrastructures* (R&L, 2021).

### Praise for the Book

“Cortada provides an eloquent and accessible examination of nearly two centuries of information collection, processing, and use in the professions--from librarians, physicians, and scientists to mathematicians, government bureaucrats, and economists. Throughout, his approach is unique, and his insights are profound.”— **Jeffrey R. Yost**, author of *Making IT Work: A History of the Computer Services Industry*