

## Hindsight is 2020

As the parent of a high school student who is currently looking at colleges and trying to figure out what she wants to be when she grows up, it has prompted me to think back on my own experience and career trajectory. Admittedly, the climate in higher education and in libraries is very different from what it was when I first determined I wanted to be a librarian. And my daughter, while interested in information and research, is seriously considering pursuing a career in psychology (and foreign languages). Nonetheless, it puts in mind of how individuals arrive at these decisions (or stumble onto these career paths), which ultimately lead us to where we are. That is not to say that we can't change course individually or as an organization or a profession. Certainly, there have been numerous discussions about how the profession and higher education are changing—constantly—and being driven by too many factors to mention.

From these discussions and looking at all these changes in the profession, I too have been infected by this “What do I want to be when I grow up” attitude - more than just the standard attention to professional development. I love working with students and faculty directly, but I also recognize that the movement to “go to college in my pajamas” (the increase in online/distance as the access point is the new norm for many students—and faculty), and that reality needs to be addressed. Having face-to-face consults with students is a privilege, but it is one that, as with many privileges, the majority of students may not access. Many of the traditional library services are not sustainable and are perhaps not the most effective models. On the last day of work before the holiday, I received an email from a college dean asking me to accompany some of his faculty to visit

another college program (in another state) and assess the library there. It was flattering - and it also affirmed (for me, at least) that these programmatic efforts are one of the other effective ways for librarians to contribute to learning—What does best practice in library service and curriculum support look like it? and How do we model it, especially at a distance? I am not just talking about approximating the physical experience online—there are so many tools and technologies to transform the services and expertise we offer—but I find it interesting in so many cases that we often build new ones that are branded *library* instead of going to where our patrons now are (in terms of their virtual environments). There are many examples and cases in *C&RL* of libraries who have responded to these changes and who have transformed throughout the years.

The guest editorial in this issue is a studied reflection on the past with its examination of historical trends in the journal and how it was representative of the profession at the time—and how much it anticipated the environment we see now. Margaret Nichols takes a look at the historical articles in the journal with “From Storehouse to Laboratory: Trends and Ideals in Academic Librarianship Reflected in *C&RL*, 1946–1968.” While the period examined is a number of years ago, Nichols identifies trends at the time that are still influential today and are, in fact, addressed in some of the articles of the March issue: the focus on science and technology and the swiftly evolving automation of libraries, which Timothy W. Klassen speaks to in “Science A&I Database Holdings at ARL and Oberlin Group Libraries, 2011–2016;” the attention to bookmanship and reading, topics relevant in the article by Cindy Pierard et al. in “Undesirable Difficulties: Investigating Barriers to Students’ Learning with Ebooks in a Semester-length Course;” and the importance of cooperation and specialization in the profession is also represented in the studies by Heather Moulaison et al., Camielle Crampsie et al., and Laura Saunders. Nichols also discusses

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overarching sociopolitical issues, ones that still inspire dialogue, such as the preoccupation with status and the questions that gender, ethnicity, and identity raise within the profession, topics that may be explored through narrative inquiry, as Emily Ford describes on her article. Nichols also points out the role that education plays as a route to democracy and “as a national defense,” underscoring the advocacy that libraries have for equitable access and intellectual freedom and empowerment. Through her examination of these historical studies, we can see some of the harbingers of where we are now. Similarly, perhaps current articles herald what the future will bring.

“Undesirable Difficulties: Investigating Barriers to Students’ Learning with Ebooks in a Semester-length Course” by Cindy Pierard, Vanessa Svihla, Susanne K. Clement, and Bing-Shan Fazio. Our ability to make informed decisions about ebooks is constrained by our limited understanding of how students perceive and use them. A team of librarians and a professor in learning sciences asked graduate students to serve as informants on student experience with ebooks. In two semester-long studies, we analyzed student work, focusing on barriers and affordances they identified. In the first cohort, students who chose to explore ebooks uncovered affordances. In the second cohort, student comfort levels with PDF formats increased, while comfort with ebooks decreased. We discuss strategies for minimizing challenges and increasing desirable difficulties to support ebooks as learning tools.

“Innovating Support for Research: The Coalescence of Scholarly Communication?” by Heather Moulaison Sandy, A. Illion, and Cynthia Hudson-Vitale. Information professionals housed in academic libraries are increasingly taking a role in supporting scholarly communication activities. This article investigates the extent to which a formal role has grown in ARL libraries, the skills and competencies necessary for supporting work with data in this capacity, and how those skills and competencies relate to the research lifecycle. We find that scholarly

communication has formalized in ARL libraries since 2012. We also find that the requisite skills and competencies for scholarly communication work have coalesced since 2009 in support of a core group that, when the research lifecycle is considered, also support the work of scholars.

“Science A&I Database Holdings at ARL and Oberlin Group Libraries, 2011–2016: A Longitudinal Study” by Timothy W. Klassen. After instituting major cuts to discipline-specific science abstracting and indexing (A&I) databases at an ARL library due to significant budget cuts, the author sought to determine if such cuts were being made by other academic libraries and what trends could be found in holdings of such databases. Annually, over the course of eight years, 108 ARL libraries and 74 Oberlin group library website A-Z database lists were reviewed to look for the presence of 21 Science and Technology A&I databases. Additions and cancellations were recorded and verified. The results indicate little change in the holdings of several discipline-specific databases, including MathsciNet, SciFinder Scholar, and GeoRef, while there were declines in holdings of several other databases, including INSPEC, Biological Abstracts, and Compendex. Also measured were holdings of Proquest and EBSCO science A&I databases, which saw small declines in holdings, as well as holdings of comprehensive A&I databases Scopus and Web of Science, which saw a significant increase for Scopus holdings.

“Tell Me Your Story: Narrative Inquiry in LIS Research” by Emily Ford. Narrative inquiry, a phenomenological qualitative research methodology, examines individual human experiences—stories. Yet, researchers in Library and information science (LIS)—a human-focused profession—have infrequently used it. This article introduces narrative inquiry and provides a literature review of the few LIS studies utilizing it. Next, it extrapolates on Coralie McCormack’s “storying stories,” a multifaceted approach used to analyze narrative inquiry research data. Finally, the article outlines potential uses for narrative inquiry in LIS research.

“Academic Librarian Publishing Productivity: An Analysis of Skills and Behaviors Leading to Success” by Camielle Crampsie, Tina Neville, and Deborah Henry. Scholarly publishing continues to be a prominent expectation for many academic librarians. This survey explores characteristics, behaviors, motivations, institutional supports, and educational opportunities that help library practitioners become successful authors. It also looks at perceived confidence in research skills of both novice and experienced librarians. Many librarians show confidence in research activities related to their overall job assignments (literature searching, writing, etc.) but find more sophisticated research skills, such as statistical analysis more challenging. Findings indicate that having additional graduate research experience beyond the library degree, time-management skills, and collaboration with other researchers may provide useful benefits.

“Information Literacy’s Influence on Undergraduates’ Learning and Development: Results from a Large Multi-Institutional Study” by Kevin Fosnacht. This paper investigated the reliability and validity of the National Survey of Student Engagement’s Experiences with Information Literacy module, an assessment instrument

developed in collaboration with a group of instructional librarians. After identifying three information literacy-related factors in the module, it assessed the relationship between the factors and students’ engagement in Higher-Order Learning and Reflective and Integrative Learning activities and students perceived gains. The results from these analyses indicated that information literacy activities were positively and significantly correlated with student engagement and students’ perceived gains.

“Core Knowledge and Specialized Skills in Academic Libraries” by Laura Saunders. Academic libraries are challenged to keep pace with major changes and trends in the fields of library and information science and higher education generally. Through a nationwide survey of information professionals and LIS faculty, this study explores the knowledge, skills, and abilities currently in demand for academic librarians and compares them to that expected of information professionals in other areas of the field. The results show a strong emphasis on interpersonal and communication skills as well as certain domain knowledge. The results also suggest some significant differences between expectations for academic librarians compared to other information professionals. ¶¶

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*(“Instructional design,” continues from page 150)*

[www.linkedin.com/learning](http://www.linkedin.com/learning) (or through your local library or academic institution).



- **The Rapid eLearning Blog.** Tom Kuhlman, an ID professional and the manager of Articulate Software’s user community, writes the Rapid eLearning Blog. Although housed by Articulate Software, you do not have to be a customer to read the blog. The posts are general and not exclusively focused on using the software, so it is helpful for anyone designing learning experiences. The focus lies on practical ID tips and techniques, such as using vid-

eos in learning management systems or adding captions to videos or live presentations. What I find most helpful are the course examples and scenarios. Browsing through existing learning objects and courses can spark inspiration for your  
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