

Editorial

Editor's Observations



In this message from the editor, I am focusing on various aspects of *College & Research Libraries*. These insights are not intended to be inclusive. Beginning with the July 1996 issue, I have edited nine issues of *C&RL*. Unlike a couple of other journals I have edited for which I had to actively solicit manuscripts, *C&RL* receives far more manuscripts than it can carry. The journals budget will permit it to include about six articles per issue. Based on its prestige, quality of articles, and long-standing reputation as the premier research journal in academic librarianship, *C&RL* is a publication in which academic librarians and library/information school faculty are quite interested in having their articles appear. It is fairly well known that getting published in *C&RL* is of some significance in the tenure and/or promotion review process.

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In my capacity as editor, I read all of the manuscripts received. This may appear to be a burdensome task to some, but I enjoy reading them and reflecting on their contents. I learn something new from each manuscript, even though most of them are not published in the journal. On the down side, I have the unpleasant task of telling about 65 percent of the authors that their manuscripts will not be published in *C&RL*. In most instances, notwithstanding their disappointment, authors understand and accept the reasons why their manuscript was rejected. In some cases, I have been able to assist authors by en-

couraging them to submit their articles to other journals, and several have been successful in getting their work published elsewhere.

The review process used for selecting manuscripts for *C&RL* is stringent. Shortly after receiving a manuscript, I send it to at least two reviewers who are specialists on the topic. If a manuscript gets "thumbs down" from both reviewers, it is rejected for publication in *C&RL*. If, however, one reviewer responds negatively and the other tentatively gives a "maybe" recommendation, I may send the manuscript to a third reviewer. This additional step delays my getting back to the author with a decision, but it has proved, in some instances, to be beneficial to the author.

Trends

It is gratifying to see more coauthored manuscripts. For several years, many of the articles appearing in library science journals were written by one person. In addition to receiving manuscripts authored by two or more librarians, I am seeing more manuscripts authored by a practicing librarian and a library/information school faculty member. And it is especially heartening to receive manuscripts authored by a librarian and a faculty member from another discipline. Collaborating on authorship and research methodology certainly can be a learning process for all parties involved. Moreover, coauthoring a manuscript can strengthen the works thoroughness and clarity.

Due to the unprecedented rate of change propelled by technology, I am receiving a larger number of technol-

ogy-related manuscripts. Many of these contain solid research design, and their research findings offer a fresh, new perspective of a specific dimension of library technology. Library technology offers potential authors many opportunities to contribute thoughtful, research-based manuscripts to *C&RL*.

On the other side of the technology coin, I have noticed an increase in the "how we do it good in our library" manuscripts. Unfortunately, many of these pieces do not exhibit the quality, research design, etc., expected of works published in *C&RL*. Although many of them contain interesting aspects/applications of technology, they do not survive the refereeing process. And I commend the reviewers for their high expectations. Regarding the quality of the journal, the fine work of the Editorial Board has kept *C&RL* what it has been in the past, what it is today, and its guidance will keep *C&RL* what it should be tomorrow!

Suggestions

When prospective authors ask me how they can learn more about the types of articles published in *C&RL*, manuscript preparation, and subject content, I refer them to the January issue. In each January issue of the journal, there is an "About *College & Research Libraries*" section. Authors should carefully read the two pages in this section. The "Subject Content" and "Review of Manuscripts" parts clearly delineate expectations. The "Instructions for Authors" component clarifies how manuscripts should be presented and the style that should be followed (i.e., *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition). Based on the arrangement and bibliographic style of some manuscripts submitted for publication, it is obvious that not all authors consult this section of the journal. If authors do not have easy access to the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, they should peruse recent issues of *C&RL* for stylistic details.

I would like to receive more manuscripts focusing on community college and four-year college libraries. The bulk of the manuscripts received come from university libraries; this fact may be largely due to the promotion/tenure expectations in universities. However, there are many exciting developments occurring in community and four-year colleges, and these two institutions are woefully underrepresented in the literature on academic libraries/librarianship.

Manuscripts from beginning librarians are welcomed. New librarians often have imaginative ideas and a different perspective on academic libraries/librarianship that would add value to the journal and the profession.

In addition, more manuscripts based on qualitative research are encouraged. For some known and unknown reasons, quantitative research methodology is reflected in *C&RL* far more frequently than qualitative research. We should stop apologizing for using qualitative research design and methodology.

The time has come for ACRL to seriously consider producing a publication on "current practices." There appears to be a genuine demand for how-to articles, although these types of job improvement articles are not appropriate for *C&RL*. Perhaps the "current practices" publication could appear in electronic format. In any event, ACRL currently is investigating the feasibility of this type of publication.

Special Thanks

The success of *C&RL* depends on the work of many people. Thus, I extend my genuine appreciation to Hugh Thompson (Director of ACRL Publications) and his staff, Fred Hay (Book Review Editor), the Editorial Board, the reviewers, especially the authors, and various other people who assist in producing the journal.

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