

# From the Chair

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Benjamin Aldred

I'm writing this having just returned from LibLearnX in Baltimore, a week after the GODORT Virtual Midwinter Meetings, and have been feeling reflective on the value of relationships developed through GODORT and ALA. Professional friendships are distinct from other types of friendships, what brings you together is a complicated combination, one part shared sense of purpose, one part co-mentorship, one part venting about the same struggles, one part excitement over career developments and just a dash of shared work humor.

Getting involved in GODORT has been an excellent opportunity to form some of these friendships, but in the current environment, things have changed from the conference of generations past. It's harder in a business driven environment to justify the cost of attendance, with travel, lodging, etc. just to support the development of friendships, but those professional friendships bring benefits to individuals and organizations alike. Professional friendships bring shared expertise. Professional friendships reduce feelings of burnout. Professional

friendships help reinforce a sense of mission. These benefits are often overlooked by libraries who seem to think that only direct support of library work is worthwhile. It's a shortsighted view but one that librarians should continue to push back against.

In GODORT, one of the ways we push back is with trying to find ways to develop these relationships virtually. The GODORT Virtual Conference Meetings are one way, facilitating collaborations without requiring costly travel. The GODORT Friday Chats are another, allowing for social contact and relationship development without the need for costly travel. But there's nothing quite like meeting in person. I hope to see many of you in San Diego this summer and I hope you all find ways to build your relationships within GODORT and ALA.

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