Letters

To the Editor:

My article, "Grass Roots Cataloging and Classification," which was published in the July 1996 issue of *LRTS*, contained a blind reference on p. 275. The article by Taylor (1995) should have been listed in the references as follows:

Taylor, Arlene. 1995. On the subject of subjects. *Journal of academic librarianship* 21, no. 6: 484–91.

I apologize for the oversight and hope that you will publish this letter as a correction.—*David G. Dodd, Cataloger and Archivist, Kraemer Family Library, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs*

To the Editor:

In the July 1996 issue of *LRTS*, Brendan J. Wyly writes about user behavior with large retrievals from online public access catalog (OPAC) searches.

Regarding our analysis of such behavior, he states (pp.213–14), "were such a searcher to scan only the first of several hundred screens, find [a] book, and then leave the online catalog with a promising reference title and call number, Wiberley, Daugherty and Danowski (1989, 1995) would classify the search process as a case of information overload because of the nonpersistence in scanning records." Mr. Wyly apparently believes that in our studies of user persistence, we considered users to be overloaded if they linked to a catalog record giving shelf location but did not scan all records retrieved.

Mr. Wyly has misunderstood our method. We assumed that anytime a user links to even a single record that gives shelf location, the user may have had a successful search. In these instances we made no inference about whether the user was overloaded, nor did we attempt to measure the persistence of such users. As we stated in "User Persistence in Scanning LCS Postings: A Report to the Council on Library Resources" (University of Illinois at Chicago Library, 1989, pp. 21–22), "We assume, as do other catalog studies, that users search a catalog to find a call number of a known item or a call number to serve as a starting point for shelf searching for books about a subject. Because call numbers are found in detailed LCS records, this assumption means that, with LCS, a user who is not overloaded will find and display at least one detailed record if his or her search retrieves the known item sought or an item that the user thinks is about the subject sought." (For those unfamiliar with LCS, retrieving a detailed record is similar to the process of linking that Mr. Wyly focuses upon.) Similarly, in "User Persistence in Displaying Online Catalog Postings: LUIS," *LRTS* 39: 256, we state: "The user could display one or more bibliographic records, but not display all records. Such a user could be called a record displayer.

"The persistence of record displayers could not be assessed because the bibliographic record(s) the user displayed might have been just what was sought, obviating the need for further persistence. Consequently, the behavior of record displayers will not enter into the discussion of persistence."—*Stephen E. Wiberley, Jr., Robert Allen Daugherty, University Library, University of Illinois at Chicago*