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# Editorial

## Mary Beth Weber



In the course of my work and in my personal life, I frequently encounter people who ask about my work and are unfamiliar with how libraries operate, particularly technical services. They are unaware of how materials are selected or obtained, the steps necessary to catalog a resource and enable users to find it, the importance of carefully and properly handling materials, the challenges of collection management, and the importance of preserving fragile and damaged materials. Our community is built around shared standards and ideals. I suspect many of us were attracted to this profession because we are “information junkies” and share the goal of bringing together people and information, regardless of whether one serves on the frontlines or coordinates the behind-the-scenes work that makes delivery of information possible.

Librarians are generous with sharing expertise. We benefit from conferences and other opportunities, such as webinars, e-forums, and discussion lists, to share and discuss information. Discussion lists abound with messages about patron-initiated purchasing, transitioning to RDA, tracking perpetual rights or determining number of users, etc. Library professionals also benefit from belonging to professional associations. Professional associations take on an added benefit when one is actively involved. Shrinking (or nonexistent) travel budgets and improved technology have led to virtual participation, making it possible to be engaged and active from a distance.

Publishing papers in scholarly journals is another way we disseminate and share information. Scholarly journals and other publications (e.g., white papers, newsletters) provide the benefit of shared expertise that can guide our work. A benefit to me as *LRTS* editor is the opportunity to work with authors and guide their papers through the publication process, which includes a double-blind review by two members of the editorial board. This process is applied to all submissions, regardless of who the author may be.

Technical services is in a time of transition, which is fueled in part by the economy and shrinking budgets. We are developing creative solutions to deal with fewer staff and growing workloads. Emerging areas of interest, such as research data, are an added consideration. Technology enables us to serve more users simultaneously and often remotely, yet it also brings a host of new complications to our work. Acquiring an electronic resource includes considerations of licensing and rights, particularly perpetual rights. It may include a decision to keep or discontinue a print version of a title. Adding electronic resources to a collection may require cataloging decisions such as whether to provide separate records for each version or to use merged-format records. Cataloging can also include the choice of vendor-supplied records and how to handle them for one’s local needs and catalog. The process does not end with cataloging because electronic resources include collection management implications. Preservation takes on added significance in the electronic era. Fragile and rare materials are digitized so that they may be shared widely, and this often spurs a desire for users to see the originals. Preservation and archiving of digital content is also a consideration.

Any of these topics are appropriate for a research paper. I encourage you to consider submitting a paper to *LRTS* to share your experiences and expertise. Papers can build on a presentation or summarize and analyze survey results or other research. Papers from all types of libraries are welcome. If you are not ready to submit a paper, consider writing a book review for *LRTS*. Information for authors and book reviewers is available at [www.ala.org/alcts/resources/lrts](http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/lrts).

In closing, I would like to bring your attention to the contents of this issue:

- Sarah Glasser discusses the results of an online survey about perpetual access for electronic serials that have been canceled, have ceased, or have transferred to different publishers.
- Natalia Tomlin and Irina Kandarasheva provide an assessment of shelf-ready materials management practices in US academic libraries. Their paper analyzes results of a survey on shelf-ready materials management and cataloging practices by libraries with various collection sizes.
- Kathleen A. Lehman reviews collection development literature from 2011 and 2012, and explores how libraries are making difficult choices with decreasing funds, competing needs for space, and a continually developing e-market.
- Cathy Blackman et al. examine the differences between the cataloging utilities OCLC and SkyRiver. They consider hit rates, total number of records found for each title in their sample, the number of non-English language records, and the presence and completeness of several elements in the most-held bibliographic record for each title.
- Catalogers have become fluent in information technology, including web design skills, HyperText Markup Language (HTML), Cascading Stylesheets (CSS), eXensible Markup Language (XML), and programming languages. Violeta Ilik, Jessica Storlien, and Joseph Olivarez explore how knowledge gained from learning information technology can be used to experiment with transforming one metadata schema into another via software solutions.



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