Editorial: Librarians of the Future

Mary Beth Weber

I recently completed a survey administered at my library to obtain feedback regarding what qualifications and personal qualities librarians will need by the year 2023. A summary of the survey revealed that my colleagues identified technology, teaching, scholarly communication, subject expertise, and project management as the top five essential skills that librarians must develop, through training or hiring, by 2023. Collections and discovery, and metadata were ranked as six and seven, respectively. The top five personal qualities that my colleagues felt librarians must possess by 2023 were adaptability, flexibility, intellectual engagement, collegiality, and creativity.

The survey led me to consider how libraries and technical services work have evolved since I became a librarian in the late 1980s. Card catalogs have been replaced by integrated library systems, searching evolved from librarian-mediated searches of databases provided by vendors (such as Dialog and BRS) to end-user searching; reference queries are often fielded via email or chat. We do much of our work electronically, and some services once exclusively provided by librarians, such as collection development, resource description, or acquisitions, are purchased from vendors or have been automated. Newer services we developed to meet emerging needs now compete with traditional services for which there is still a demand. Despite these shifts, our workloads are often heavy.

Vacancies are rarely filled using the position description used by the last person who occupied that position. Positions frequently transfer to other parts of the library because administrators may view technical services work as routine and will eventually become automated, outsourced, or obsolete. Former librarian positions may be switched to staff because a well-trained staff person can do the work. Each vacancy at my institution is reviewed and revised to better meet current and anticipated future needs.

Established institutions change over time. Online courses and college degree programs have grown, and this trend continues with MOOCs (massive open online courses). As a parent, I have seen firsthand how schools have changed. Parents communicate with teachers differently; in-person visits and phone calls have largely been replaced by email exchanges. Promethean boards, tablets, and e-books are now the norm for students, replacing notebooks and print textbooks. Libraries have also adapted and evolved. Many libraries offer streaming media and e-books that may be checked out or downloaded. How libraries are used has also changed. Libraries, once a quiet place reserved for reading, research, or story hour, are now a hub of activity for group study, community activities, meetings, and so on. Along those lines, librarians have also changed. We have new titles that sometimes entail new responsibilities. Metadata librarians provide resource description. One of my Facebook friends reported that her title changed from Assistant Director of Collections and Technical Service to Assistant Director for Discovery and Technology Services. In a few short years, we have integrated social media into our work, especially for

professional networking and publicizing our professional associations. Examples include the RDA Café on Facebook and ALCTS' YouTube channel videos. We use LibGuides for our documentation and for communicating with others in our libraries.
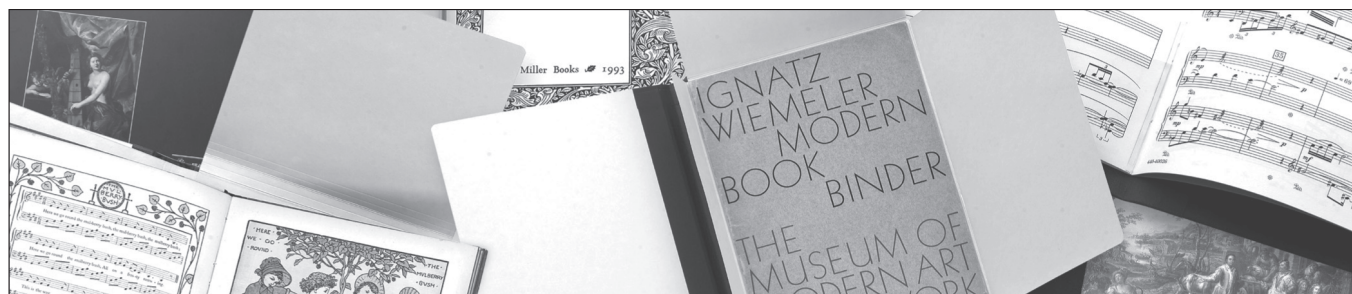
As libraries continue to evolve in light of budget shortfalls and changing user habits, we need to consider the future of our profession and the services we provide. I attended a presentation at the 2013 American Library Association Annual Conference that discussed how one institution devolved its technical services department because of changing organizational priorities. Rather than seeing this as a threat to our profession, we should recognize it as an opportunity to examine realities (funding, staffing, efficiencies), to influence policies and outcomes (vendor supplied services, standards), and to help shape the future of our profession and to mentor our newer members. We have been flexible as changes have occurred, and will adapt to changing user needs and work requirements.

A non-librarian friend told me about an article that he read (he failed to give me the citation) that cited things that will become obsolete in the future, and libraries were included on the list. Libraries and librarians as known to us will surely change, yet the need for information—organizing it, enabling access to it, preserving it, and enriching it— will not change.

On that note, I would like to draw your attention to the contents of this issue of *Library Resources & Technical Services*:

- ALCTS President Carolynne Myall's annual report. ALCTS has had a busy and productive year, and I trust you will find her report to be quite informative.
- Stacie Traill discusses a study undertaken at the University of Minnesota regarding record quality of e-monograph record sets in her paper "Quality Issues in Vendor-Provided E-Monography Records." The goal was to improve and increase the efficiency of pre-load editing processes. An analysis of the study led to identification of future challenges for maintaining quality in batchloaded record sets, and Traill suggests suggests ways to improve record quality.
- In "Shared resources, shared records: letting go of local metadata hosting within a consortium environment," Charles Pennell, Natalie Sommerville, and Derek Rodriguez discuss the Triangle Research Library Network's discovery layer, which supports group and individual library catalog interfaces for its

four member libraries. Their paper discusses how the member institutions build and maintain record sets for commonly held electronic collections for the benefit of the consortium.

Editorial Board Changes

The membership of the *LRTS* editorial board changes at the conclusion of the ALA Annual Conference. I want to take this opportunity to thank outgoing board members Elise Calvi, Birdie MacLennan, and Elaine Westbrooks for their fine work and input. Each of them has served two two-year terms, and they will be missed. Oksana Zavalina concluded a one-year term as an intern, and she will continue as a board member. I appreciate her insightful reviews and perspective. I want to acknowledge the tremendous contributions (both in terms of reviews and discussions) of continuing board members Everett Allgood, David Banush, Sian Brannon, Steven Carrico, Christopher Cronin, Nadine Ellero, Andrew Hart, Steven Knowlton, Philip Schreur, Anne Sleeman, Lori Terrill, and Lynn Wiley. You have helped me to grow into my new role as *LRTS* editor. I also acknowledge the contributions of Book Review Editor Norm Medeiros, ALCTS News Editor Alice Platt, and ALCTS Staff Liaison Christine McConnell. They provide balance and an additional perspective for our work. Lastly, it is with great pleasure that I welcome new board members Karen E. K. Brown, Lisa German, Virginia (Ginger) Williams, and intern Barry Brown. I look forward to working with them.

Errata

Information in v. 57, no. 3 for the author of "Identifying Significant Changes in Serials with Title Changes in the Recognition of New Works" is provided incorrectly on the cover and page 136. The author's name is Mavis B. Molto. We apologize for the error.

Information for one of the authors of "PDA Consortium Style: The CU MyiLibrary Cataloging Experience" is incorrectly provided on the cover and page 164. The correct form of one of the author's name is Wen-ying Lu. We apologize for the error.