

Under Siege

Michael Fernandez and Rachel E. Scott

There isn't any other way to put it: libraries are being attacked by the current US presidential administration. The latest salvo is part of a broader culture war strategy to dismantle institutions supporting education, research, and knowledge sharing, all of which are core principles of the library's mission. As we prepare this issue for publication in the spring of 2025, daily executive orders, directives, and announcements have led to unprecedented levels of uncertainty. Given the rapid deluge of attacks, the outlook could be markedly worse by the time you're reading this in July.

Federally funded grants have been terminated—taking personal and professional tolls on the information landscape.¹ The widespread termination of National Institutes of Health grants will have direct impacts on research at universities that are likely to be absorbed institution-wide, including library budgets. Even closer to home is the executive order that largely eliminates the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).² The IMLS, through its grants to state library associations and other programs, provides support to libraries of all sizes and types, including academic, public, school, and special libraries. The effective shuttering of the IMLS is a direct attack on libraries with dubious legal grounding; it's been noted that most IMLS grant funding is nondiscretionary, mandated by Congress, and therefore outside the purview of any executive order.³ Up to this point, the Republican-controlled “non-player Congress” has exerted no agency of its own to challenge any executive orders, and that shows no sign of changing before the midterm elections.⁴

Information professionals are facing chaos and disruption at every turn, with long-held assumptions and constants upended. The upheaval has also been evident in the commercial realm; for example, Clarivate announced an abrupt end to perpetual e-book licenses.⁵ Librarians, archivists, and information professionals working for the federal government have been dismissed. Our hearts are with those facing uncertainty, hardship, and loss.

In October 2024—chronologically less than a year ago, but what now feels like an alternate timeline—*Library Resources & Technical Services* published a thematic issue on the impacts of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) on library work. The current administration has appropriated the concept of DEIA/DEI and made it a pejorative for anything they deem problematic, centering DEI at the heart of their attacks on science and research. The problematizing of DEI goes beyond the administration's perennial targeting of marginalized groups to go after any federally funded research on gender, biodiversity, or vaccines, to name but a few. Reports from the National Science Foundation have detailed grants coming under review due to containing keywords such as “disability,” “ethnicity,” “female,” “minority,” and “women.”⁶ In a particularly insidious weaponization of metadata, this

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“Ctrl+F” style of autocracy could also empower would be book banners to use subject headings in order to more easily identify books supporting DEI that they deem “objectionable.”

Our parent organization is pushing back on this censorship, and *LRTS* applauds the efforts being made by ALA.⁷ We encourage our readers to consult the resources compiled by ALA to support library advocacy in this moment of existential threat.⁸ Now is the time for our community to stand up for the necessity of libraries.

In the face of so much adversity, we are committed to do our small part in bringing excellent scholarship to library workers. *LRTS* brings practitioner- and scholar-led work to the community and provides stability and continuity in times of disruption. In this issue, readers will find insight into managing streaming media, confounding variables in the open access citation advantage, the theory and implications of known item searches, inclusive cataloging practices in public libraries, and workflow considerations for the implementation of a campus procurement software.

Communication on Practice

Amauri Serrano speaks with *LRTS* Assistant Editor Michael Fernandez on their recently co-authored monograph, *Streaming Video Collection Development and Management*. In this Communication on Practice, Serrano explains the needs for a guidebook to assist library workers managing streaming collections, as well as the challenges of writing a timely and relevant how-to for a consistently shifting format.

Features

Ben Rawlins and Mitchell Scott leverage article and citation data to investigate the open access citation advantage for University of Kentucky-affiliated authors, exploring college, department, publisher, open access modality, funding, and funding source as confounding variables. They argue that this work will allow their institution to “have nuanced conversations with its authors about the ROI of OA and discuss future interventions and strategies to help authors maximize the impact of their research, with or without an APC.”

In “Known item search (KIS): Theoretical and Practical Considerations,” Birger Hjørland offers a critical examination of the research on KIS to argue for the importance of the concept due to its difference from subject searching and its assumption in processes including bibliographic verification and descriptive cataloging.

Yan Quan Liu and Jessica Anderson report on a survey of public librarians in Connecticut in “Adopting Critical Cataloging Practices Post Diversity Audit: Connecting the Community to Your Collection.” They identify factors that promote or impede inclusive cataloging practices, such as

“(1) appreciating the benefits of audit methods that are focused on bibliographic records, (2) recognizing the need for buy-in and participation from the entire organization, and (3) stressing

the useful integration of institutional and community feedback to improve the collection's accessibility and representation."

Notes on Operations

In "Migrating Collections Materials Purchasing from a Legacy Payments Workflow to the Campus E-Procurement Platform," Gregory Ferguson describes all aspects of this project, providing context for the legacy workflow, describing challenges encountered along the way, and outlining ongoing efforts to optimize workflows in alignment with the requirements of the campus procurement platform and finding "adoption of an outsourced system entails an extended process of filling gaps between the new system and the organization's past practices."

Book Reviews

Books reviewed include *E-Resource Licensing Explained: An A-Z Guidebook for Libraries* by Rachael Samberg, Kaie Zimmerman, Samantha Teremi, Erik Limpitlaw, and Sandra Enimil; and *RDA and Serials Cataloging*, Second Edition, by Ed Jones.

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