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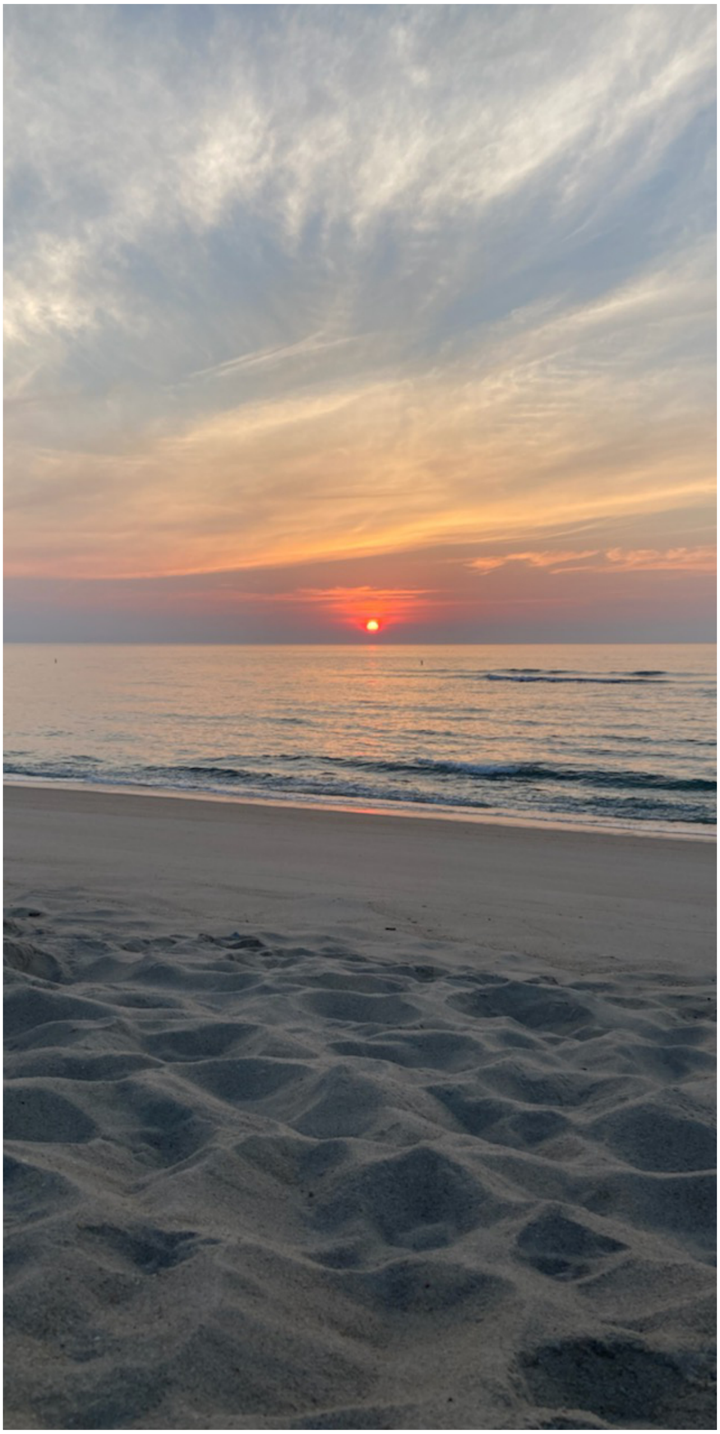

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Library Resources & Technical Services

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Cover image: "Sandy Hook, New Jersey," Christina Weber, June 2020.

Editorial

The past year has been one that I never could have predicted. As I entered what I thought was my final year as *LRTS* Editor, I was diagnosed with a debilitating neurological condition that required me to miss three months of work. I also missed the 2019 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC, since I was hospitalized during the week of the conference. I continued to edit papers and correspond with authors during that time. Fortunately, I had just one author withdraw a paper because I could not promise the turnaround time on her paper for which she had hoped. I am indebted to Brooke Morris-Chott, ALCTS's communications program officer, and Tim Clifford, manager, ALA Productions Services, for their support during a challenging time.

I returned to work mid-September 2019. When things seemed to be calming down, the COVID-19 situation erupted. My colleagues in Central Technical Services at Rutgers University Libraries and I had to mobilize and develop a contingency plan in anticipation that we would be working from home, which, during normal operations, is a rare occurrence. Some of my staff had never been given the chance to work from home and others struggled with technology such as setting up a VPN or editing shared documents. Daily check-ins with my staff differed by employees. One of my staff initially called me daily (sometimes more than once). It was usually when she had questions or needed assistance, but there were also times when she needed that contact with another person. Other employees adapted very quickly and preferred to send me progress reports and questions via email. The managers in my department and I continued to hold our bi-weekly meetings via WebEx. If our administration had doubts that technical services could function effectively and be productive while telecommuting, they were quickly dispelled. I am very proud of my colleagues and what we have accomplished during New Jersey's stay at home order. Much of our cataloging workflow already included e-resources and streaming media. Like many other institutions, we have embarked on major database clean up and enhancement projects, and this is reflected in a quote by my Rutgers colleague Melissa De Fino, "Catalogers everywhere have always had data projects that had to be kept on the back burner since the focus was on making new materials available. Now is the time to work on those back burner projects! Like the canals of Venice, when this is over, our library databases will be cleaner than they've ever been!"

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed so many aspects of our lives and work. While much of the focus related to libraries during the pandemic has been on public facing services such as virtual reference and chat, discovery, checkouts, and the shift to acquiring more electronic formats, technical services has provided the necessary infrastructure support to enable these services. My statement in no way is downplaying the importance of the work provided by those who work directly with the public. They have been tireless advocates for serving the needs of our user communities during this crisis. In terms of technical services, preservation and digitization of materials has made it possible for users to access materials that are available through services such as HathiTrust's Emergency Temporary Access Services or via institutional repositories. Switching to a DDA or PDA enables libraries to acquire resources and make them available to their users, regardless of their location. Cataloging, particularly for e-resources, can be provided without interruption, granted that catalogers have access to the necessary tools and resources.

Other changes have occurred during the pandemic. ALCTS, LITA, and LLAMA members voted to accept Core. If you are unaware of Core, it represents a new division that draws on the collective expertise of the former three divisions. Due to the impending implementation of Core, I was asked to serve an additional year as *LRTS* editor. Elyssa Gould, the *LRTS* book review editor, will also serve an additional year. I look forward to leading *LRTS* into our new organization.

In closing, I would like to highlight the contents of this issue:

- A column from ALCTS President Jennifer Bowen on the transition from ALCTS to Core.
- Keren Dali and Leah K. Brochu approached me about the idea for their paper "The Right to Listen: A Not So Simple Matter of Audiobooks," which they described as being written at the intersection of public and technical services. Their paper is a little different from the types of papers published in *LRTS* and proposes a conceptual and theoretical foundation of advocacy for integrating audiobooks into library collections and programs. They discuss equal status for audiobooks and their wider acceptance through considerations of diversity and privilege.
- In "Redesigning Technical Services for the Twenty-First Century: A Case Study from the University of Alabama Libraries," Michael A. Arthur and Millie L. Jackson detail a workflow analysis that was initiated over a decade ago. Their paper recounts lessons learned and examines how changes that were implemented impacted their library and collection development and management philosophies.
- Todd Quinn's paper "Less is More: A Case Study of Consolidating Two Database A–Z Lists for Better Staff and User Experiences" describes the consolidation and migration of the University of New Mexico's University Libraries' two database A–Z lists.
- And for your professional reading, book reviews courtesy of my colleague Elyssa Gould.

From ALCTS to Core

Something (Actually a Lot!) to Celebrate!

Jennifer Bowen

While attending my first meeting of the ALCTS Executive Committee in April 2018, I learned about an idea being advanced by the executive directors of ALCTS, LITA, and LLAMA, that the three divisions consider joining forces to create a single ALA division. Their rationale was that this action would provide better value for members of all three divisions, enabling collaboration and staffing efficiencies across administrative silos within ALA. Since the three divisions were slowly but continuously losing members, joining would proactively address the looming concern that the separate divisions would become financially unsustainable as their membership declined.

ALCTS, LITA, and LLAMA are similar in that these divisions have focused on the type of work done in libraries. Such divisions have enabled members interested in specific library activities to easily find their "home" within the larger ALA organization, facilitating collaborations with others with similar interests across all types of libraries. Additionally, many ALCTS members have sought a broader ALA experience by joining multiple divisions of this type. This has been my personal experience, as I have been a member of both LITA and LLAMA in addition to ALCTS at different points in my career. As the leadership of all three divisions discussed the possibility of creating a new division, we speculated about whether it was possible to create a division to support both of these models: the needs of members who specializes throughout their career, plus the needs of members who wants to build competencies and professional networks across multiple functional areas. And, could such a new division also anticipate the emerging needs of library professionals?

It has been over two years since that meeting where I first heard about forming a new division—and that new division is now coming to fruition with the creation of **Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures**. It is my hope, and that of many others who worked to create Core, that this new division will empower its members to work seamlessly across functional areas, and that the division's structure will be easily adaptable to address emerging needs and trends.

As the days of ALCTS begin to wind down, we have a lot to celebrate, in terms of what ALCTS has accomplished through its members and staff. As ALCTS members, we built competencies that enabled us to be successful at our home institutions, developed networks of colleagues to consult for advice and support, and formed friendships that have lasted for decades. Together, we accomplished projects and developed standards that have advanced the development of library collections. ALCTS publications have created a scholarly record that underpins the essential work of technical services in libraries. I am proud to have been an ALCTS member throughout its entire existence since it was

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created from the former Resources and Technical Services Division of ALA in 1989. I am now also proud to celebrate becoming a member of Core.

As Core becomes a reality on September 1, 2020, we should also celebrate the work of everyone involved in bringing it into existence. This includes leaders, members, and staff of all three divisions, and especially the division members who voted overwhelmingly to create Core. Our efforts to create Core have been praised for addressing head-on issues with ALA divisions' sustainability, and as a possible model for modernizing other parts of ALA—this is indeed something of which to be proud!

While we do not yet know whether Core will successfully address the emerging needs of our profession, is is not premature for us to celebrate this, too! From a collections perspective at least, Core has positioned us to accomplish exactly what libraries need to do next. We are learning from the COVID pandemic that if we lack physical access to our collections, we must make our collections accessible remotely as quickly and completely as possible. Within Core, we can work collaboratively to develop the competencies we need, adapting our standards, protocols, and practices in support of this goal. We can work with IT experts to develop the digital infrastructure appropriate to our evolving environment, and learn from other colleagues how to develop our leadership skills, especially in regard to change and risk management. In Core, we will soon have pathways to do all this more seamlessly within ALA, supported by a fluid organization that will enable these and other profession-wide priorities.

Finally—and I mean finally not as an afterthought but as something so fundamental that it deserves the final word—we can celebrate that we have created a new division based upon key values of diversity and inclusion. We have the opportunity to use our new ALA home to ensure that we support these values ourselves through our library collections and through our professional activities and collaborations. We should celebrate this transition to Core as a way to ensure our future professional effectiveness in support of libraries, library collections, library staff, and of equitable access to library collections for our communities.

The Right to Listen

A Not So Simple Matter of Audiobooks

Keren Dali and Leah K. Brochu

This paper, situated at the intersection of public and technical services, proposes a conceptual and theoretical foundation of advocacy for integrating audiobooks into library collections and programs. Suggestions are made primarily with librarians in public libraries in mind, although it is hoped that academic and special librarians will also benefit from them; these suggestions build on the analysis of the rising popularity of audiobooks as an accessible medium and a medium of choice for leisure readers with and without disabilities. The authors consider equal status for audiobooks and the wider acceptance of audiobooks through the combined lens of diversity and privilege. In their study, they survey extant literature (research-based, media, and social media publications); examine and synthesize it in a critical and innovative manner; propose new ways to consider the issues of advocacy and practice; and offer specific ideas for librarians to implement. The authors argue that some anxieties and concerns about audiobooks and audio-reading, among others, can derive from different types of privileges held by professionals and social groups, which becomes particularly important when they are endowed with decision-making power. These privileges include the privilege of body ability, the privilege of lifestyle, the Western privilege, the privilege of literacy, privileging format over story, and the privilege of citizenship and language.

The idea for this paper was born out of the request for an interview that came to one of the authors from a journalist; the interview never materialized, but the question sparked the authors' interest in the issue of audiobooks and audio-reading. In this day and age, when our engagement with stories and information is increasingly mediated by something other than traditional reading, how can librarians advocate for hosting and promoting a variety of formats in libraries, without ranking them and privileging one type of engagement with stories and information over another?

The authors' decision to submit their paper to a journal dedicated to library resources and technical services was determined by the fact that the boundaries between public and technical services have blurred. Librarians working in technical services are "backroom staff" no more. They are public figures in the workplace and library community activists who participate in advocacy, policy making, lobbying, and community engagement. Not to mention that in most staffing models in libraries, many librarians carry out both public and technical services responsibilities, for example, collection management and reference or collection management and liaison/outreach. This trend has certainly solidified in the last twenty years, and the authors observed it both through their research and first-hand experience as a former academic librarian/current

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faculty member, teaching in the areas of collections and public services, and as a special librarian actively engaged in producing accessible materials for visually disabled readers and in advocating for this user community.

This paper focuses primarily on public libraries, although the authors acknowledge that academic libraries and special libraries also work with readers in the context of leisure/recreational activities and/or bibliotherapy.[1] They recognize that in the last twenty years, leisure reading has made a comeback in academic libraries, as supported by numerous published sources.[2] Special libraries, primarily those in health care, correctional institutions, and social service agencies, have taken a vested interest in the practice of bibliotherapy.[3] Hence, supporting leisure reading is no longer limited to the domain of public libraries but is integral to professional practice in libraries of various types. As a result, the authors hope that librarians outside of public libraries will also consider this paper to be useful.

This paper is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of audiobooks and audio-reading; it is not an analysis of collection development policies related to audiobooks in different types of libraries; nor is it dedicated to the discussion of accessibility of information or leisure materials through audiobooks, although the authors address accessibility as applicable to the topic. Their intent is not to prove that reading textual material and audio-reading (or listening to audiobooks) have equal value and create comparable reading experiences, although they briefly engage this argument to support their discussion. Their purpose is very specific: to offer librarians language, ideas, and theoretically grounded argumentation to advocate for collecting and marketing audiobooks in libraries, using the notion of privilege and the frame of Diversity by Design.[4] No other conceptual or research paper, to the best of the authors' knowledge, has addressed the issue of diverse formats in library collection through the lens of privilege and the chosen theoretical frame, and this constitutes a unique contribution of their paper.

Although the audience is primarily practicing librarians, the authors believe that the insight, advice, and suggestions presented here will benefit other professionals, including educators, leisure and recreation workers, community workers, social workers, etc.

Literature Review

A Brief Overview of Audiobooks (and Related Materials) in North American Libraries

In North America, community members have borrowed audiobooks from libraries for almost a hundred years. From records, audiocassettes, and CDs to downloadable and streaming audio, libraries have hosted materials in audio-format in their collections for nearly as long as these resources have existed. It started with the idea of providing inclusive services for people with visual disabilities. In the US, the 1931 Pratt-Smoot Act mandated that the Library of Congress (LC) work with other libraries "to serve as local or regional centers for the circulation of such books"; as a result, US libraries began to develop collections of "talking books":

> A Joint Resolution was passed appropriating $100,000 for fiscal 1932 to carry out the provisions of the act to provide books for blind adults. The "Project, Adult Books for the Blind" was established. This program would become the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS).[5]

The Pratt-Smoot Act triggered funding that enabled libraries to enhance their offerings for people with visual disabilities, first with braille books and shortly after, in 1933, with talking books.[6] The American Federation for the Blind had begun to record talking books in 1931, and in 1934 sent its first shipment to LC.[7] In 1952, the "adult" restriction was removed from the Act, so that talking books could also be created for and used by children. In 1966, under Public Law 89-522, it was mandated that talking books be made available to all readers with print disabilities (i.e., other visual disabilities or mobility issues).[8] In 1969, the NLS/BPH began to distribute audiocassettes.

In the same year, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) began to record audiobooks; the service continues to this day, and the books are made available through the CNIB library service, the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA).[9] As the 1970s folded into the 1980s, audiocassettes became increasingly popular because of their portability, not to mention the inclusion of cassette players in vehicles, and the release of the Walkman in 1979.[10] Publishers began to produce audio versions of their own books, which they issued together with the print versions of books. Because publishers were now selling their own audiobooks, they became far more ubiquitous in libraries across North America, and readers with print disabilities were no longer the only or primary audience.[11]

In the 1990s, CDs began to replace cassettes, and the number of users continued to grow. Soon, such devices as the Playaway and Audible players were released, making listening to audiobooks even more convenient.[12] Finally, people were able to play audiobooks on personal devices such as iPods and Zunes, downloaded through their libraries using the OverDrive platform.[13]

Now, in 2020, users can stream audio directly to smartphones and other devices, regardless of whether they were purchased or borrowed from the library. Individuals who do not own smartphones can download books to their computers and read them using a platform offered by the library. At the same time, CDs are still available for borrowing. A variety of programs are used by different libraries, including Recorded Books (which makes reading apps and programs accessible under the name RBdigital) and OverDrive (which has two platforms: Libby and OverDrive). These programs have greatly increased the ease with which many library users can download and read audiobooks. However, they also have many accessibility issues that present barriers for readers with print disabilities.

In July 2019, the National Network of Equitable Library Service (NNELS) in Canada, a digital public library of books for Canadians with print disabilities, and an advocate for an accessible and equitable reading ecosystem, released a set of detailed reports on the accessibility of different library reading apps on multiple platforms, including iOS and Android devices, and Windows and Mac operating systems.[14] The reports, written by NNELS's accessibility testers, a group of employees with a variety of print disabilities, found that many of the apps and programs ranged from confusing to frustrating, and in some cases, rendered the program or app completely inaccessible.[15] The companies have received copies of the reports, and most are actively working to resolve the issues.[16]

Today, the most popular audiobook production companies include Amazon's Audible (https://www.audible.com/), Recorded Books (https://www.recordedbooks.com/), Brilliance Publishing (https://www.brilliancepublishing.com/), and Blackstone Audio (https://www.blackstonewholesale.com/). Additionally, many large publishers have audio divisions and produce their own audiobooks. These include Penguin Random House Audio (https://www.penguinrandomhouseaudio.com/), Hachette Audio (https://www.hachetteaudio.com/), and HarperAudio (http://harperaudio.hc.com/homepage). As noted,

> Using the Netflix model, some audio book producers have even started experimenting with original works written exclusively as audio productions, ranging from full-cast dramatizations in the style of old school radio plays, complete with music and sound effects, to young adult novels, thrillers and multipart science fiction epics. . . . Audio books can be bundled with an e-book for just a few dollars, downloaded as part of a monthly subscription plan or bought individually for as low as $1.99 (for a short story) or as high as $69.99 (for the Bible).[17]

Individual users have choices: they can access many titles for free through their library services, purchase desired titles, or subscribe to a continuous service. Additionally, organizations such as NNELS and CELA (Canada), LC's National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (US), and other services for print-disabled people worldwide work with volunteers and contractors who record books, which are then made available to users of the services. Across readerships, audiobooks are popular for many reasons—they are portable and thus convenient for commuters and readers can take them in while running an errand or exercising.

Audiobooks in Libraries as a Diversity and Privilege Issue: Setting the Stage

The concept of Diversity by Design (DbD), proposed by Dali and Caidi, put the spotlight on "the multiplicity of contexts that give diversity meaning and life in our complex field"; it highlighted that "diversity, broadly conceived, is foundational to LIS" and that "discounting or underappreciating its pivotal function may have a disintegrating effect on our practice, scholarship, and education."[18] The authors also described the diversity mindset that should be part of the professional and pedagogical thinking of everyone engaged with LIS in any capacity. An important part of this mindset is the recognition that diversity is "integral to social structure, daily interactions, learning environments, professional settings, and human relationships," and that we have to master the "ability to see the multiple contexts and expressions of diversity in our professional and academic settings."[19] Specifically, the sufficient and ready availability of formats in libraries (e.g., audiobooks) should be seen as an issue of diversity and inclusion, irrespective of whether we focus on community members with disabilities or those who prefer non-textual formats for a variety of reasons and personal choices.

The concept of privilege is always part of diversity discussions, as various characteristics differing from the mainstream may either disadvantage or give advantage to certain individuals, situations, activities, etc. McIntosh's seminal paper on the meaning and essence of privilege compares it to the "invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks."[20] McIntosh defined and discussed white privilege specifically and, to some extent, male privilege. However, the simile that McIntosh presents is so vivid and elastic that, respectfully acknowledging original usage, we can apply it for an understanding of other types of privilege: status, body ability, religion, national origin, social stratum, lifestyle. Privileges naturally extend to the leisure and recreation domain and to the domain of information access allowed in various formats. Specifically, preferring words recorded as texts to words recorded otherwise and seeing the audiovisual medium as inferior to the textual one could be viewed and analyzed through the lens of privilege or, more specifically, several types of privilege, as shown below.

The preceding theoretical foundation, derived from an overview of historical developments and conceptual foundations of diversity, inclusion, and privilege, sets the stage for answering the research questions that follow.

Method: Research Questions, Terminology, Definitions, and Limitations

While there may be different lines of advocacy and different types of argument—through the benefits of education, personal development, or stress reduction—the authors chose the lens of diversity, inclusion, and privilege to make their case. They hope that this specific vision will add to the arsenal of librarians advocating for diverse collections in their libraries to library boards, library administrations, granting agencies, user communities, and other stakeholders.

The authors used a rigorous method to determine the types of privilege that affect the acceptance or rejection of audiobooks, which is detailed in the section that discusses research questions (RQs), specifically, RQ4, whereby McIntosh's theoretical concept was used as a starting point; they found its practical manifestation in the selected privilege checklist and provided careful operational definitions to each type of privilege discussed.

Research Questions (RQs)

In pursuit of this goal, the authors formulated the following RQs.

RQ1: How have the popularity, use, and reception of audiobooks transformed in the last several decades?
RQ2: Why may audiobooks and audio-reading need advocacy in the context of libraries?
RQ3: How can contemporary approaches to diversity, equity, and inclusion help us interpret and understand resistance to audiobooks and audio-reading?
RQ4: What specific theoretically based arguments can librarians use as a foundation for building advocacy for the inclusion of audiobooks and audio-reading in library collections and professional practices?

To respond to the aforementioned RQs, the authors adopted the following line of research. After briefly reviewing the history of audiobooks and related materials, and surveying opinions that privilege the reading of texts over listening to audiobooks, they provided several specific arguments to support the latter. To do so, they framed their discussion through the concept of Diversity by Design, developed by Dali and Caidi, and McIntosh's seminal analysis of privilege as an "invisible knapsack."[21]

Definitions

The authors surveyed extant literature (research-based, media, and social media publications); examined and synthesized it in a critical and innovative manner (e.g., by combining the social analysis of proliferating and diversified audiobooks with the notions of diversity and privilege); proposed new ways of considering the issues of advocacy and practice; and offered specific ideas for librarians to implement them in practice.

In this paper, the authors use "audiobooks" as

> a general term for a book that you listen to, usually narrated by a real person. Audio books are sometimes also called talking books or spoken word books. Downloadable audiobooks [e-audiobooks] are electronic versions of audio books that can be read on a phone, computer, tablet or MP3 player.[22]

Also included in this category are books in accessible formats such as DAISY. The authors distinguish between audiobooks and text-to-speech technologies. They only address audiobooks that "are professionally narrated by authors, actors, or famous public figures, [which] makes for a more immersive and dynamic listening experience."[23] It should be noted, though, following Rubery, that historically, "no single term has been available to describe all of the different types of spoken word recordings," and what is referred to in this paper as audiobooks can be easily described as talking books in other sources, as it is done, for example, in Rubery's own monograph.[24]

For the purposes of this paper, the authors operationalized reading as leisure reading, that is, free-choice, voluntary reading for pleasure, personal development, growth, spirituality, entertainment, escape, relaxation, and all the other purposes fulfilled by leisure reading. They refer to reading as a process of engagement with the story, not as a process of information consumption or acquisition. While leisure reading can certainly be informational in nature, as in the case of avid readers of information nonfiction or serendipitous information encounters, the primary driver here is not education or support of scholarly and learning activities, but the pleasurable pastime. The authors focus exclusively on the reading practices of adults as they recognize that reading in childhood and adolescence requires a different, specialized, and more nuanced treatment.[25] Given the developmental nature of reading habits, preferences, and practices at these formative stages of life, the authors feel that they could not do justice to this topic by combining it with the discussion of the reading practices of adults. It is in light of these delimiters and limitations that their conclusions and suggestions should be interpreted.

Delimiters, Limitations, and the Authorial Voice

This paper was written in the context of North America and the discussion is limited to North American libraries. The situation with audiovisual materials, including audiobooks, and their history in libraries may be different in other parts of the world. However, the authors' hope is that some of their insights and suggestions will also benefit readers in other countries.

The authors identify as members of the LIS community. They also recognize that while they both belong to underprivileged groups in some ways, they are also privileged in many other ways; as such, they acknowledge that as private individuals and as professionals, they are not always aware of their own privileges and their effect on their professional decision making and choices.

Analysis and Discussion

RQ1 How have the popularity, use, and reception of audiobooks transformed in the last several decades?

Historical developments related to audiobooks in libraries and society at large indicate that readers with print disabilities are no longer the primary or the largest audience for audiobooks, and that the popularity of audiobooks has grown tremendously. Libraries have also taken note. As Susan Caron, the Director of Collection and Membership Services at the Toronto Public Library, Ontario, Canada attests, audiobooks are in high demand. In a recent interview, she commented that "audiobooks have been popular for years and years at the library; now with digital they're our highest area of growth—they grew 40 per cent last year, so over 650,000 downloads . . . and we're projecting a million this year."[26]

This observation brings us closer to the conversation about the meaning of diversity in libraries that goes beyond demographic characteristics of library community members and addresses the diversity of collections and access. This diversity serves as a basis for the inclusion and exclusion of specific groups of individuals or de-prioritization of other groups. This, by extension, invokes the notion of privilege.

The popularity of audiobooks, as noted, has also grown exponentially in the US. There "has been an uptick in the share of Americans who report listening to audiobooks, from 14% to 20%" between 2016 and 2019.[27] The reading landscape has been completely restructured by technological advances, and while the "digital revolution may have dealt a heavy blow to print, . . . it is boosting literacy in other unexpected ways by fueling the explosive growth of audio books."[28] In the words of Brooks, author of *World War Z*, we are now experiencing "one of the few times in history that technology has reinvigorated an art form rather than crushing it."[29] If in the past, literary omnivorism was defined in terms of combining various genres; low-, high-, and middle-brow literatures; and fiction versus non-fiction; the consideration of format has been added to the mix, "creating a new breed of literary omnivores who see narrated books and text as interchangeable."[30] In all fairness, "digital innovation isn't just changing the way audio books are created, packaged, and sold. It's starting to reshape the way readers consume literature," because it "allows book lovers to switch seamlessly between an e-book and a digital audio book, picking up the story at precisely the same sentence."[31] Don Katz, Audible's founder and CEO, notes a new type of reader has emerged: "a media-agnostic consumer who doesn't think of the difference between textual and visual and auditory experience."[32]

RQ2: Why may audiobooks and audio-reading need advocacy in the context of libraries?

The experience of being read to is not considered inferior to reading independently, especially if it occurs during a time of illness or on special occasions, when the reader tries to create a memorable storytelling atmosphere. Reading aloud in groups, book clubs, and at other gatherings is also a very powerful emotional communal engagement and serves as a foundation of bibliotherapy. Then why do we feel that audiobooks and audio-reading may require advocacy?

> Audiobooks are a complicated medium because
>
> Turning a book into something other than print risks forfeiting the very qualities that make it a book. Audiobooks are unique in preserving a book's contents, while at the same time discarding much of its tangible material, from binding to paper and ink. . . . And yet the audiobook is not strictly an adaptation either—at least, not in the sense of a TV show, film, or game—because it reproduces the book's words verbatim. In sum, an audiobook both is and isn't a book. This ambiguity has drawn hostility and defensiveness in equal measures from book lovers. The audiobook presents a compelling test case for literary criticism in particular since it forces us to make explicit and even to rethink our understanding of what it means to read a book.[33]

As a result, "despite the audiobook's prominence, . . . we still lack a vocabulary for discussing its relationship to conventional books, not to mention its uncertain standing in the world of letters."[34] Paradoxically, "listening to books is one of the few forms of reading for which people apologize," which is different "from the usual way of discussing books as a personal achievement and sign of distinction."[35]

The authors could not locate research studies that would prove and gauge the extent and prevalence of the public opinion that audio-reading cannot be equated to textual reading. While there are no hard and conclusive data on how prevalent the second-rating of audiobooks is in relation to textual media, these views are evident in numerous media publications and private online posts. Some individuals holding these views are prominent public figures and have the power to influence cultural choices and the public opinion; by extension, they may affect decisions of library stakeholders (e.g., board members and librarians) with regard to audiobooks. For this very reason, to argue their case, the authors cite both expressions of public opinion (through forums, blog posts, and media) and research papers.

The phenomenon of ubiquitous audiobooks is still relatively new, and nothing is conclusive at this point, but it is clear that the "rapid rise of audio books has prompted some hand-wringing about how we consume literature."[36] There are "print purists [who] doubt that listening to a book while multitasking delivers the same experience as sitting down and silently reading," while "scientific studies have repeatedly shown that for competent readers, there is virtually no difference between listening to a story and reading it" and that the "format has little bearing on a reader's ability to understand and remember a text."[37] There is support to the fact that "listening to a text might even improve understanding, especially for difficult works like Shakespeare, where a narrator's interpretation of the text can help convey the meaning."[38] Yet, not much is known about "how well people absorb stories when they are also driving or lifting weights or chopping vegetables."[39] In the absence of conclusive empirical data, opinions may drive decision making.

For example, Frank McCourt, the Pulitzer Prize winner, is quoted as saying, "I think every writer would rather have people read books, committed as we are to the word. . . . But I'd rather have them listen to it than not at all."[40] Harold Bloom, a prominent literary critic, agrees, "Deep reading really demands the inner ear as well as the outer ear. . . . You need the whole cognitive process, that part of you which is open to wisdom. You need the text in front of you."[41] More radical opinions reflect a concern that

> the practice of silent reading could be threatened, as impatient and busy readers no longer take time to concentrate on a text. 'If we come to think reading is this secondary activity we do while doing other stuff, then we lose that deepest and most important kind of reading,' said Nicholas Carr, author of *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. 'The broader danger is that technology will give us the illusion that everything can be done while multitasking, including reading.'[42]

Similarly, librarians worry about aliteracy, noting that many students get through school by "skimming texts, drawing information and themes from dust jackets, watching television, and listening to audio books."[43] These undesirable learning habits are juxtaposed against real reading, and libraries are called upon to become "creative in encouraging students to cultivate a lifelong reading habit."[44] A clear binary is driven here: a lifelong reading habit is related to textual reading while listening to audiobooks is slotted in the same category as scanning and skimming book jackets. Although this argument is made about reading with a purpose that supports education and learning, it has some relevance to leisure reading, as concerns arise of whether deep meaningful reading associated with text is being replaced with shallow entertainment consumption in any medium, including textual.

While this view is not without merit and multitasking can indeed have negative effects on our intellectual and physical functioning, this criticism is conveyed from the standpoint of privilege: the able-bodied society, which presupposes an equal choice of the medium and an equal ability to utilize textual and audio formats; the highly print-literate and text-oriented Western milieu; and the lifestyle that allows for a comfortable amount of leisure, among others. These points will be addressed in detail below.

The research community has also chimed in. In 2014, the study "The Way We Encounter Reading Material Influences How Frequently We Mind Wander" reported that "listening to the passage led to the most mind wandering" and "was also associated with the poorest memory performance and the least interest in the material," compared to reading texts.[45] However, as some critics noted, "a closer look at the study reveals some troubling methodologies, such as having participants self-report mind wandering."[46] Also, listening to audiobooks requires just as much of a habit and proficiency as reading printed or online texts, and it is not clear if the chosen participants were sufficiently and equally proficient in both modes of reading.[47] It is not clear if their reading habits and preferences were considered when a non-fiction book was offered to them as the only choice. It can be safely assumed that avid fiction readers would let their mind wander irrespective of the reading format, simply on account of the chosen (uninteresting) genre. Also, the study was focused on able-bodied individuals, excluding several groups of the most proficient audio-readers—people with print disabilities.

There is a not-uncommon opinion that listening to audiobooks rather than reading in print or electronically is "cheating." To quote the University of Virginia psychology professor Daniel Willingham, though

> "Listening to an audiobook might be considered cheating if the act of decoding were the point; audiobooks allow you to seem to have decoded without doing so," he writes in his science and education blog. He argues that decoding is not the point for people who want to appreciate the language and the story. "Comparing audiobooks to cheating is like meeting a friend at Disneyland and saying, 'You took a bus here? I drove myself, you big cheater.' The point is getting to and enjoying the destination. The point is not how you traveled."[48]

Referencing other research, Willingham also states that "experiments show very high correlations of scores on listening and reading comprehension tests in adults."[49] He proceeds to argue that "For most books, for most purposes, listening and reading are more or less the same thing," adding that "'Cheating' implies an unfair advantage, as though you are receiving a benefit while skirting some work. Why talk about reading as though it were work?"[50]

Concurring with Willingham are two scholars from the University of Texas, Austin, Markman and Duke.

> I would not say that reading is necessarily better than hearing or worse than hearing. They are different, and what you extract is different." "It appears that because you can't go back and re-read something, you actually do a better job of trying to extract the gist of what someone meant when you're hearing them than when you're reading. And why Shakespeare is so much easier to understand when it's being performed than when you're trying to struggle through reading it."
>
> "And when we are reading and when we are listening, our brains are making predictions all the time"[51]

Another recent study by Rogowski, Calhoun, and Tallal, which investigated a random sample of ninety-five participants working in three groups and reading the same material in different formats (digital audiobook, e-text, dual modality), found

> no statistically significant differences . . . for any analyses pertaining to effects of the three different instructional conditions on comprehension . . . both males and females in each condition recalled an equal amount of information, regardless of whether they listened to an audiobook, read from an electronic tablet, or both listened and read simultaneously (dual modality).[52]

These facts notwithstanding, as Harmon notes "Audio book aficionados face disdain from some book lovers, who tend to rhapsodize about the smell and feel of a book in their hands and the pleasure of being immersed in a story without having to worry about the car in the next lane. [And] a certain stigma lingers."[53]

RQ3: How can contemporary approaches to diversity, equity, and inclusion help us interpret and understand resistance to audiobooks and audio-reading?

Given available empirical evidence and experiential observations about the positive role of audiobooks, it is surprising how much opposition they face. Moreover, this opposition seems to come primarily from within the community of avid readers themselves, be they professionals (librarians, writers, book sellers, literary critics) or simply reading lovers. It causes negative perceptions that may affect considerations of funding agencies, library administrations, and library boards and, by extension, the status and expansion of audiobooks in libraries. As a result, the benefits of audiobooks and their undeniable ability to build a more inclusive and equitable library environment in terms of collections, services, and programs may be underutilized or neglected. Under the circumstances, librarians should be prepared to advocate for the integration and promotion of audiobooks in their daily work and community engagement. While multiple lines of advocacy can be found, one that we offer here relies on the notion of privilege and its multiple manifestations. With libraries of all types trying to foster more equitable, just, inclusive, and fairer services and resource provision, the argument of privilege can be particularly powerful.

Reading is not only an enlightening, educational, transformative, or relaxing activity. It is also a social institution, and this institution can be just as progressive as it can be oppressive and exclusionary. One of the best books that sheds light on the dark side of reading is Pierre Bayard's *How to Talk about Books You Haven't Read*.[54] Extending Bayard's views, it could be argued that, in some ways, reading—and the space whereby we communicate about reading—is an oppressive institution with restrictive, never written but clearly understood rules and exclusive, elitist conventions. These rules and conventions, among others, are related to titles we have read and not read, especially if these titles serve as markers of a cultured person; to types of genres we choose to pursue; and—as relevant to our discussion—types of formats that we choose to engage with a story. In this space, privilege plays a crucial role even if we look within the bounds of a single society or region or within the bounds of a single part of the world (e.g., Western countries), let alone if we take a broader, global view of the reading space. The critical view of the institution of reading and the multiple faces of privilege help us sort out the situation with audiobooks.

RQ4: What specific theoretically based arguments can librarians use as a foundation for building advocacy for the inclusion of audiobooks and audio-reading in library collections and professional practices?

The authors built upon McIntosh's definition of privilege, as described earlier. In determining the types of privilege that may affect the public opinion and professional decisions regarding audiobooks, the authors were guided by the "Privilege Checklist" developed by Boise State University for social justice training.[55] This list divides identifiable privileges by class privilege; white race, ethnicity, and culture privilege; citizenship privilege; cisgender privilege; sexuality privilege; male/masculine privilege; ability privilege; and linguistic privilege. Each category is broken down into discrete questions that help identify the presence or absence of the privilege. Based on these guiding questions and using the foundational definition of privilege as "a right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed only by a person beyond the advantages of most," the authors operationalized the privileges relevant to this discussion, focusing on the following:

- the privilege of body ability;
- the privilege of lifestyle;
- the Western privilege;
- the privilege of literacy;
- privileging format over story; and
- the citizenship and language privilege.[56]

Some of these privileges come directly from the checklist (e.g., body ability, Western, citizenship and language), while others are derivative (e.g., literacy, format, and lifestyle privileges as derivative of social status and Western privileges).

The Privilege of Body Ability

First is the privilege of having good eyesight, being able-bodied, and having no print disability. This amounts to the benefit of choosing any or many mediums for leisure, recreation, and entertainment without limitation. As was highlighted earlier, audiobooks are very popular with readers who cannot easily cope with text, which includes readers with disabilities ranging from blindness and partial sight to learning disabilities and motor skills disabilities. With the current focus on the creation of inclusive practices and the accessibility of reading materials, the number of audio-texts has grown exponentially. Hyder uses the term "audio-reading," which the authors adopted in this paper, and one of the most important questions raised in the context of disability and audio-reading is whether it, in fact, qualifies as "reading." If we concede that the "use of audio is not accepted culturally as a form of reading and if psycho-emotional disablism is about limitations to what a person can do or be, then the answer to this question impacts on whether blind and partially sighted readers are defined by themselves or others as 'readers.'"[57]

Many objections to the use of audiobooks and arguments in favor of text-based reading are done from the position of ableism, which often goes unnoticed by those who voice these objections. The very core of their arguments implies that the reader has an equal opportunity choice—read or listen, whereas many readers do not. Following is a typical statement made from the ableist perspective.

> If your goal is to be exposed to the most information possible, then listening is better. It allows you to consume books at a much faster rate because you can do it much more often, all while being productive in other matters! On the other hand, if your goal is to slow down and have an experience with the information (e.g., tactile experience with the pages, writing notes in the margin, putting a voice to the words we read, or advancing at our own pace) then reading is better.[58]

Privileging sight/text over hearing/audio automatically second-rates readers who rely on other senses for information consumption, learning, entertainment, or socialization. We do not "blame a person with a disability for using a wheelchair instead of 'doing it the hard, good-for-you way' and walking."[59] Then why do we not apply the same logic to audio-reading? In truth, we are so used to disregarding, dismissing, and excluding individuals with disabilities from the design and development of our physical and social environments, and from social awareness, that considerations of privilege in the context of reading and body ability do not even cross our mind.

Rarely do we stop to consider what denying audio-reading the status of legitimate and valuable reading does to readers for whom it is a primary means of engaging with the story. Self-efficacy is one of the most important concepts applied to reading. It is the "belief in one's own ability; this belief affects people's choices and actions because individuals tend to engage in tasks when they feel competent and confident, and avoid those in which they do not."[60] By second-rating audio-reading, we also second-rate audio-readers. Hence construing engagement with audiobooks "as a reading act" is not just semantics; this "is one way, perhaps, of blind and partially sighted adults"—and adults with other print disabilities—to take "control and impos[e] a definition that is enabling for those who engage with text in a format other than print."[61] Positioning audio-reading as reading is empowering to audio-readers. This is important in the situation whereby "the cultural value of listening as a form of reading can make it hard for some audio users . . . to define themselves as readers. Losing this aspect of their identity can be dramatic."[62]

The Privilege of Lifestyle

Second is the privilege of a comfortable lifestyle, or the benefit and advantage of having sufficient leisure time, having greater control over work and leisure activities, and having a generally better work-life balance without risking detrimental consequences to one's well-being, the well-being of one's family and/or livelihood. Reading texts implies the so-called condition of leisure, a quiet time in which one can steal away from busy work, studies, and the hustle and bustle of daily routine.[63] Readers who are less restricted by family chores and responsibilities; who have higher levels of education and more flexible jobs; who do not have to juggle school, work, and/or family; reside in a higher income bracket and have the ability to afford downtime and less necessity to multitask are likely to find more time to read texts in print or electronically. However, many readers are multitaskers, and their dedication to reading often comes at the expense of hours of sleep. They are the ones stirring soup with one hand and holding a book in another, getting hair done and reading, driving kids to school and… reading? The latter would be impossible unless they had audiobooks. For long-haul truck drivers with late working hours, audiobooks are as much an entertainment as they are a safety net, keeping drivers company on the road and keeping them awake and alert. When work "and life in general along with college classes often deprives [people] of the time to read for enjoyment," audiobooks offer a "way to enjoy new books" as they listen to them on the "way to work or while doing yard work and other chores around the house."[64] Hence, there is more than one privilege under the umbrella of "lifestyle." It is the privilege that ties into socio-economic status, family history, income level, level of education, citizenship, and many other types of privilege. Those who reject "audio as a way of engaging with fiction believing it shows a lack of respect for authors to read 'when you're doing 30 minutes on your elliptical trainer'" speak from the standpoint of lifestyle privilege—one that grants them a sufficient condition of leisure.[65]

The Western Privilege

Third is the privilege of Westerners, or the benefit of access to and enjoying the comforts and conveniences associated with Western, literate, technologically advanced, and comparatively democratic life. As Tien notes, "Our cultural anxiety about audiobooks may have deeper roots in media and educational history, dating as far back as the beginning of the Enlightenment period, when the West made a general shift towards the privileging of sight over the other senses."[66]

Although "oral storytelling predates print and writing by thousands of years" in the West, we have lived in a reading culture for a long time, acquiring the habit of privileging the documented written word over oral traditions and ignoring the oral traditions of local Indigenous communities and the developing world.[67] We have reduced the diverse and vast phenomenon of reading to a very functional, specific, and narrow definition, which no longer reflects the richness of the reading experience.

Apropos, in April 2019, *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, and Inclusion* published a pecial issue on diversity and reading guest edited by Vanessa Irvin.[68] In this issue's editorial, the definition of reading was expanded. One of the most representative pieces in this regard is a column about reading in the Philippines, whereby reading refers to the practice of reading tattoo art.[69] This is a good example of how overcoming the often myopic Western gaze and becoming receptive to alternative points of view can also expand our definition and understanding of reading and help us see various types of reading as equally valuable.

The Privilege of Literacy

Fourth, intimately tied to the Western privilege, is the privilege of literacy, or the benefit of and the right to a guaranteed level of public education, which ensures basic literacy, and the advantage of access to an auxiliary system of education (e.g., through public libraries and community centers), which promotes personal growth and provides additional opportunities for self-development and education. The authors note, however, that even in Western societies, this privilege is not equally distributed or may be curtailed for many individuals by disadvantageous socio-economic, personal, and familial circumstances. Globally, many people "across the world . . . are illiterate or not sufficiently literate to read at a high level" one reader wrote in her blog comment. Invoking the precarious notion of audio-reading as "cheating," she continued

> Do you think it helps any of them [low-literate readers] in the slightest to get the message that listening to a book 'isn't as good' because it 'isn't as hard'? If you're a proficient reader, reading won't be "hard," it will be enjoyable. If you're not, there are probably very serious and sad reason[s] why not, ranging from disability to poverty, and you're the last person who needs to be looked down upon for finding another way in.[70]

In 2016, drawing on the data from the US Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy, *The Washington Post* reported that approximately 32 million adult Americans cannot read, and according to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) data, 50 percent of adults in America cannot read books written at an eighth-grade level.[71] That same year, *The Huffington Post Canada*, citing Canadian Literacy and Learning Network reports, stated that "42 per cent of Canadian adults have low literacy skills," despite the optimistic number of close to 97 to 99 percent of general literacy in Canada shown in OECD reports.[72] Whatever the case, it is clear that higher levels of literacy, required for not only decoding the text but also enjoying the story, are not found in a substantial cross-section of the population in both countries.

In a text- and writing-immersed society, it is practically impossible for literate adults to imagine what it feels like to go through the day while being denied most of the crucial information in your surroundings, getting partial, confusing, or unclear information, coping with perpetual shame, and investing much of your energy in hiding illiteracy. Audiobooks serve as opportunity equalizers, in the context of formal and informal learning, entertainment and recreation, and, highly possible, as a means of igniting audioreaders' motivation for acquiring or improving literacy. They bring the joy of story, discovery, and knowledge to a large portion of adults who would have been shut off from these experiences otherwise.

Privileging Format over Story

Fifth, inseparable from both the privilege of literacy and the Western privilege, is the habit of privileging format over story, which derives from the historical connections drawn in Western societies between enlightenment, the level of education, and printed media. The ongoing debate about audiobooks and their role in the process of reading in general "reflects arguments about what it means to be literate in the twenty-first century. It revolves around the privileged status of the printed text and whether it is almost considered to be 'synonymous with literacy.'"[73] Literacy is a serious matter, and uncertainties about whether audio books belong "to the respectable world of books or the more dubious world of entertainment" become paramount.[74]

In our document- and information-saturated environment, we often devalue the story or recognize its value only when it is written and published in print or electronically. We forget that stories can be given shape and life by media other than a book, an article, or an online document; that it can be transmitted by a person, a voice, or a recorded voice in this case. We forget that "Homer, after all, was an oral storyteller, as were all 'literary artists' who came before him, back to when storytelling . . . would have been invented—grounds for the argument that our brains were first (and thus best?) adapted to absorb long, complex fictions by ear, rather than by eye."[75] When we stop to consider that reading a book for "the pleasure of its characters, setting, dialogue, drama, and the Scheherazadean impulse to know what happens next," we realize that the whole audio versus text debate may be somewhat misguided.[76] As Tien astutely put it, "Romanticizing the printed word ignores all of the other benefits storytelling can offer."[77]

Citizenship and Language Privilege

Less frequently discussed is the privilege of citizenship and language, or the benefit of and right to access copious amounts of information in one's native language and one's ability to choose information in this language in different formats, packages, and modes of availability (e.g., print, electronic, audio; same information by different publishers; same information interpreted by different outlets; comparable information from different sources, etc.). Another aspect of this privilege is the benefit of living in one's home country, having learned and being familiar with many things by osmosis and/or by virtue of growing up in the same environment in which said information and knowledge originated. This accounts for greater awareness of and easier access to various sources and options for leisure and entertainment. This privilege is one of the most significant factors in the lives of migrant readers, be they immigrants, refugees, temporary or seasonal workers, international students, internal migrants (from state to state or from province to province) or any other group of individuals who reside in geographic and socio-cultural environments, different from one in which they were born and grew up. One of the recent issues of *The National Geographic* reminds us that "we are all migrants," that "humans are a migratory species," injecting a disquieting reminder later: "Yet, some would divide us into two kinds: the migrant" and the local.[78]

> We move when it is intolerable to stay where we are: . . . we move because of environmental stresses and physical dangers and the small-mindedness of our neighbors—and to be who we wish to be, to seek what we wish to seek.[79]

The new environment may be physically safer and offer shelter, food, schooling for children, and some job prospects. Yet, despite improvement, people lose the privilege to speak their language in most social interactions outside of their immediate family or community, if they happen to be surrounded by one. Entertainment, education, and information in their native language may not be available easily or at all. Some may struggle with illiteracy or low literacy either in both English and their native language or in English specifically. That is to say, even for those who may be fluent readers in their mother tongue, reading comprehension and/or reading enjoyment in English may present a challenge or cause distress.[80] However, listening to a story in the learned language may be easier, more accessible, and more pleasant, and may open a relaxing, entertaining, educational, or informative venue. Audiobooks thus become bridges to the new culture and social milieu, a means of adaptation to the new environment, and an instrument of getting to know people whose mentality, culture, language, and ways of life may seem bewildering at times.

Conclusion

This paper examined the phenomenon of the growing popularity of audiobooks and challenges they face in being accepted as an equal reading medium in comparison to textual reading (print and electronic). The arguments advanced against the recognition of audiobooks were analyzed through the lens of privilege, in an attempt to help librarians (and possibly other professionals, including educators, community workers, leisure and recreation specialists, social workers, and other professionals who utilize audiobooks in their work) build a convincing line of advocacy in support of integrating audiobooks in their professional practices, collections, resource centers, programs, curricula, and outreach activities. This paper does not make universal claims. It is written in the context of North America, based on the situation in North American social milieu and libraries. However, it is hoped that some insights and suggestions will prove valuable and useful for international readers, as some social trends and development can be relevant to different countries around the world.

The argument presented herein is based on the fact that libraries in Canada and the US are increasingly concerned with making their services, programs, and resources more inclusive and equitable for the diverse communities they serve. The discussion is framed theoretically through the combination of two approaches: first, the DbD concept, which encourages us to see diversity as integral and indispensable to every professional activity, including collection development and community engagement; and second, the concept of privilege defined as an "invisible knapsack" of social and professional advantages that work in our favor whether or not we are aware of them.[81] Six different types of privilege, supporting the attitudes that second-rate audio-reading vis-à-vis reading texts, particularly print reading, are reviewed. Specifically, the privilege of body ability, the privilege of lifestyle, the Western privilege, the privilege of literacy, privileging format over story, and the citizenship and language privilege are cited. By so doing, this paper takes the first step to overcoming the perception of audiobook listening (or audio-reading) as an inferior form of reading through introspection, the recognition of privileges, their effects on professional decisions and choices, and the ensuing assumptions, perceptions, and social conventions.

Librarians may need to justify their collection development and service-related choices, budgetary decisions, and programming plans to library boards, library administration, and external stakeholders, be it granting agencies or community members seeking accountability and proof of value. Using the lens of diversity and inclusion in the current climate in North America could provide an effective and successful line of argument. The authors promote a vision whereby ascribing equal weight, importance, respect, and consideration to various formats in libraries becomes a matter of fostering an inclusive environment and whereby considering audiobooks a less preferable reading medium emerges as a detriment of privilege. It is hoped that librarians are able to take these ideas and suggested argumentation and use it in their advocacy efforts and accountability reports.

At the moment, and in the chosen context of leisure reading, audiobooks seem to have made the greatest advances in public libraries rather than academic or special. The authors hope that their analysis and insights will help librarians from other types of libraries engaged in leisure reading promotion to realize not only the recreational value of audiobooks but also their inclusive and equalizing effect on services, programs, and resources offered by libraries to diverse readers who have now become a reality in any library. Referring to diverse readers, the paper implies people with different body abilities, different levels of literacy, cultural and familial backgrounds, native languages, and second-language proficiency. Shifting attention from format to story, to "the sheer pleasure of storytelling," and to one's ability to enjoy the story irrespective of medium can also provide library staff and library administration with a different way of seeing their commitment to non-print resources in libraries.[82]

The argument of this paper is grounded in the concepts of diversity and privilege. Just as diversity should not be a bonus or an option but should comprise the essence and the core of our professional activities and decisions, non-print formats should not be a bonus or an afterthought either. In the context of libraries, accessing information and entertainment through listening—or audio-reading—should be guaranteed as a right. It is hoped that this paper will help librarians to advance a step further toward securing this right.

Notes and References

1. Bibliotherapy, a practice of healing through books and reading, has become increasingly popular in all types of libraries in the last few decades. Keren Dali notes that although librarians often associate it with reader services and leisure reading, it is "a very distinct practice," which may refer to two different engagements: clinical bibliotherapy, "which relies on books to improve a person's mental and physical well-being," and developmental bibliotherapy, which uses "books to help a person solve life dilemmas and problems in non-medical settings." Librarians are more at home with developmental bibliotherapy, whereby they work with populations experiencing life transitions and life changes but not necessarily affected by mental health, physical health, trauma, and disability issues. Clinical bibliotherapy is, mostly, outside of librarians' professional training and expertise, although they may contribute as members of multidisciplinary teams and in collaboration with trained therapists, be it psychologists, doctors, or social workers. See Keren Dali, "On Bibliotherapy," *EBSCO Novelist Newsletter*, https://www.ebscohost.com/novelist/novelist-special/on-bibliotherapy.
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Notes on Operations
Redesigning Technical Services for the Twenty-First Century

A Case Study from the University of Alabama Libraries

Michael A. Arthur and Millie L. Jackson

The University of Alabama Libraries began a workflow analysis over a decade ago. Primarily focused on traditional technical services areas, this process has been iterative and evolved from the need to seek efficiencies to a broader change in the culture and an acceptance of an ongoing process of improvement. This paper discusses lessons learned from workflow analysis regarding acquisitions, electronic resources, and cataloging/metadata, and examines how these changes impacted the broader library and philosophies of collection development and management.

Workflow analysis is a common process in libraries. Determining staffing needs and identifying obstacles and inefficiencies are customary reasons for undertaking this process. The key elements for a successful process are to engage stakeholders, communicate with all department members, and to create a plan with the understanding that it will evolve during the process. What follows is a summary of the extensive workflow analyses that have been in progress at the University of Alabama since 2007. The first phase took place from 2007 to 2010, and the second phase occurred from 2015 to 2017. While the reasons for the process have evolved, the vision of developing an efficient and cost-effective technical services operation and collection philosophy that successfully meets the needs of library users has remained a constant. This study examines workflow analysis in academic libraries, managing change with long-term employees, overseeing a shifting environment in acquisitions and technical services, and aligning priorities and services to meet users' evolving needs.

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Background

The University of Alabama is the flagship institution in the state of Alabama. With a headcount of over thirty-eight thousand students in fall 2018, enrollment has increased by over ten thousand students since the mid-2000s. The number of faculty members has also increased, with a goal of adding three hundred to four hundred new faculty members to the existing ranks since Stuart R. Bell became president of the university in 2015. Physical growth of the campus—plus additional students and faculty—has changed the university's research profile. In

December 2018, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education recognized the university as an R1 institution, meaning that it is a university with very high research activity.

The university libraries have responded to growth and the increased emphasis on research in various ways. During phase two of the workflow analysis, the library initiated a new liaison program that focused on outreach and instruction. Changes to the existing liaison program were a separate initiative; however, the processes implemented in Resource Acquisition and Discovery influenced some of the changes. New services such as an institutional repository and more outreach activities to faculty were implemented during phase two. These include a greater online presence, adding resources in media and technology, and renovating spaces to address the needs of a growing student population.

Restructuring the technical services and acquisitions areas of the university libraries at the University of Alabama began as early as 2004 but was stalled due to personnel and leadership changes. Staff participated in a continuous quality improvement process prior to the new associate dean's arrival in 2007. This process uncovered potential areas of concern, and the results were the basis for discussions in summer 2007. The new associate dean was charged to examine the legacy print-based workflow and initiate electronic workflows that were more efficient to expedite the migration from print to electronic. The associate dean's office was located near the technical services departments, she maintained an open-door policy, and encouraged staff feedback. Simultaneously, discussions began with Blackwell's, the library's primary book vendor at the time, regarding workflow analysis. Blackwell's offered a consulting service to assist with reorganization and integrating technology into their workflows. Initial conversations and analysis were conducted over a three-year period, with change initiated throughout the process. Outdated processes were reviewed and evaluated and underutilized functions in vendor's products were considered. An outside consultant acting as a neutral party facilitated discussions and planning. During the ensuing years, these, along with several other factors, resulted in thorough reviews of both technical services and collection development.

A second round of workflow analysis began in 2015. Between the initial evaluation and 2015, a number of faculty and staff retired or resigned. As a result, phase two reexamined some suggestions from phase one that were not yet implemented and explored new opportunities that were made possible by changes within the institution and the publishing industry. Implementation of the EBSCO Discovery Service and other technological changes resulted in re-evaluation of early decisions from the 2007 phase. Cataloging & Metadata, Acquisitions, and Electronic Resources merged into one department just prior to a new department head's arrival in August 2015 and the second phase of the analysis. Several specific changes have resulted from these reviews, and the authors can now reflect on the planning, execution, and evaluation of the changes. The findings provided useful lessons learned and best practices that may assist other professionals as they initiate similar projects.

Concurrent with the shift to digital materials that has increased over the past decade, there has been an emphasis on providing content at the point of need and data driven selection and retention. Efforts to become more efficient included the use of detailed cost per use analysis and results from pilot projects for various purchase on demand models to help shift from a traditional collection development model to a more modern strategy. The new strategy considers space needs, evolving user expectations, new university and library strategic goals, and budgetary realities while allowing the library to meet user needs in a rapidly changing environment. This paper discusses these stages of evolution, the process for creating lasting change, and producing a more effective and efficient process for acquiring materials. The department has continued to follow the workflow analysis recommendations and is committed to encouraging change and growth that helps meet the strategic goals of the library and university.

Literature Review

Change is an ongoing topic in academic libraries and is reflected in the literature of the past twenty years. Numerous published papers address specific workflow changes, and realignment of staff due to changes that have accompanied the increase in digital formats and automation. Many of these papers reflect on a specific aspect of the acquisitions or cataloging process rather than a higher-level overview of the process. Several studies focus on electronic resources (e-resources) and the impact of shifting from print to electronic. Other papers take a more philosophical approach.

Ideas about how to reorganize technical services date back to the 1980s, with some suggesting an elimination of the department. Eden, Calhoun, Bates, Intner, and others have speculated on aspects of change in technical services, including changing the name. Intner referred to technical services as the "ugly ducklings in the library pond," and noted that most of our colleagues do not know what we do.[1]

Addressing the climate and challenges of change are common themes in the literature. Pearson and Busch outlined changes made at the University of Nebraska that included both physical change to the space and philosophical changes in the organization. While they primarily addressed space issues, they also noted the importance of project management and creating criteria that aligns with the approach taken by the authors of this paper.[2] The impact staff perceptions have on their work and the organization should be considered during the planning and execution of a workflow analysis or reorganization. Ellero, in discussing workflow redesign at Auburn University, noted that she "focused on her people, and the fact that she was simultaneously losing, gaining and growing staff." Seeking staff feedback and building consensus is critical toward success in a workflow analysis. Ellero "is encouraging all staff to assemble frequently and as needed to work through problems together, especially the partnering of staff across similar functional areas."[3]

The impact of workflow analysis and reorganization on staff at all levels is documented in the literature. Ferguson found that reorganization and the need to do more with less has led to dramatic changes in position descriptions and added responsibilities with e-resources. This is particularly true with the increased focus on e-resources where "some institutions are restructuring positions with electronic resources tasks to encompass areas of responsibility that are not traditionally associated with electronic resources and serials." Attention is focused on how reorganization has impacted library support staff. Ferguson notes that "as budgets are cut and responsibilities are shifted from librarian positions to staff/paraprofessional positions, it not only affects workflows and procedures a, it can become a morale issue within the library."[4] Involving staff throughout the process of reorganization is critical to success. A successful technical services reorganization at the University of Tennessee Knoxville was credited among other things to "open communications, guided leadership, and shared collaboration."[5] According to Ellero, to create a healthy environment for project success, managers should focus on "enabling continuous learning and growth" and instill "an attitude of helpfulness." Other strategies include involving small teams, creating project timelines, and taking time to list the concerns of all staff.[6]

Throughout the literature, discussion of workflow analysis and reorganization often centers on communication. There are situations in which staff within the same department know their own work but are unfamiliar with the work that precedes or follows theirs in the workflow. Staff need to work together to document current workflow and to develop new processes and procedures. This allows everyone to become more familiar and comfortable with the changes, and to share their thoughts on the changes that will result from the reorganization or changes to current practices.[7]

Workflow analysis should provide an opportunity to look broadly at all aspects of the area being reviewed. It should be comprehensive, involving processes and people. Mackinder notes that "workflows are and should be bigger-picture" than process and procedure reviews. She correctly states, "Workflows should be system-agnostic and bridge the gap between policy and procedure."[8] Anderson acknowledged the importance of "clarity about the process, clear communication with all library staff, an iterative workflow conversation, and a list of all possible steps within the workflow to make sure all are accounted for and transitions are clear."[9]

The literature reflects the growing need to improve the visibility of technical services and reaching out across the library to improve opportunities for collaboration and communication. This is particularly important for rethinking how e-resources are managed. Schmidt and Korytnyk Dulaney suggest that "it is necessary to create partnerships with public services and other library departments to understand how access to e-collections is similar to and different from access to print collections, in order to build cohesive policies and enhance end-user search and discovery processes."[10]

Research on workflow and reorganization covers specific areas of technical services work, including e-resources, and examines all aspects of wide scale reorganization. Workflow analysis and reorganization can be managed separately or together as part of a comprehensive review. Findings from a large-scale review of processes may be a catalyst for review of staffing to consider new efficiencies. Results of a 2014 survey of the Technical Services Directors of Large Research Libraries Interest Group found two clear and consistent reasons for pursing a workflow analysis within technical services. Davis concluded "the consolidation of technical services functions is being driven by the desire to increase consistency and efficiency and to reduce costs." She also stated that there "seems to have become a routine practice in technical services to assess existing workflows to make minor adjustments or to undertake a wholescale reorganization process."[11]

Lessons learned during early segments of a workflow analysis can result in changes in the project. Hamlett believes that "the process of documenting, diagraming, and analyzing current workflows will also lead to more streamlined workflows." The benefits of this process may include "a better understanding of staff functions which could lead to some staff reorganization in the future."[12]

Libraries seem to focus more on resolving the differences between public and technical services. There is an understanding that technical services and public services each enable the delivery of services Mortimore and Skinner reported on a recent project at Georgia Southern University intended to improve notification and database instruction following the activation of new resources. The process emphasizes collaboration between technical services and public services when new resources become available. They found that public services involvement "increased awareness and understanding of new and updated resources among public services staff and patrons, improved

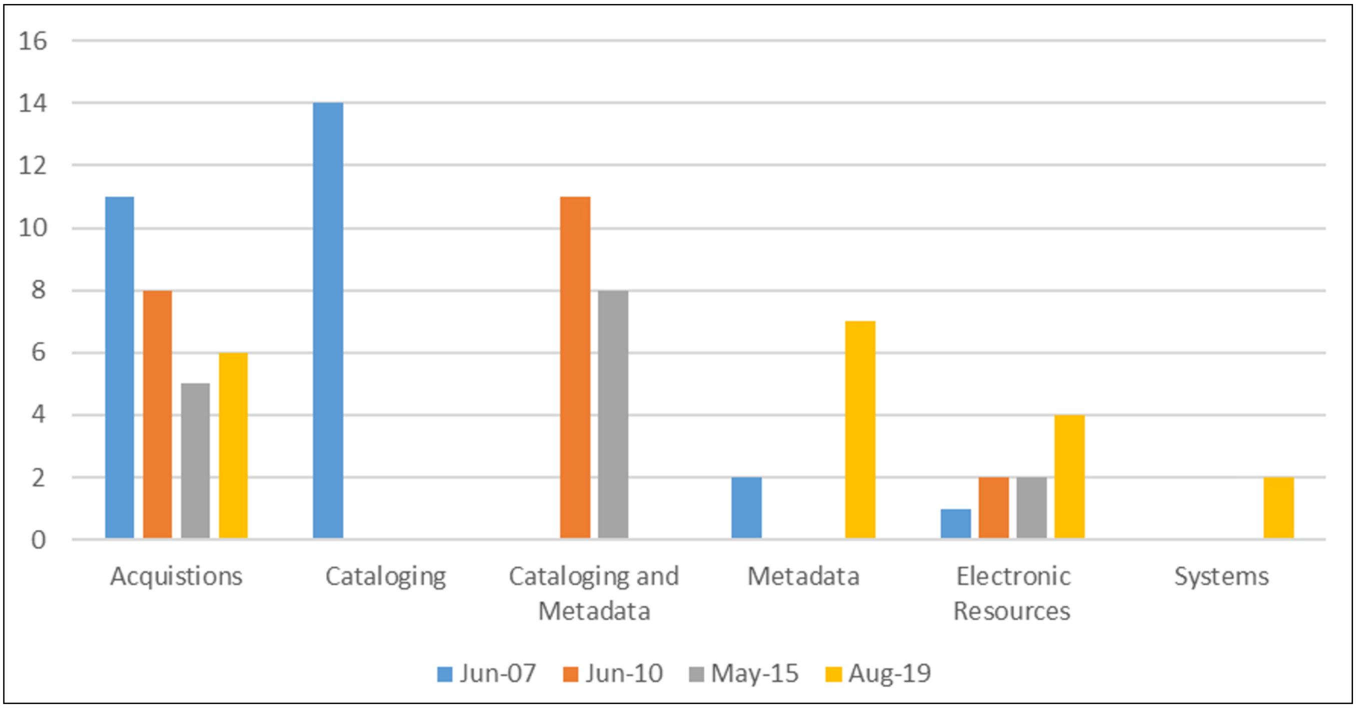

Figure 1. Changes in Personnel 2007–2009

communications between technical and public services staff leading up to and following go-live and improved mediation of resources to patrons."[13]

Staffing Snapshot

The organization of the departments and staffing levels at University of Alabama changed as the reorganization progressed through both phases. In 2007, there were two departments, Acquisitions and Cataloging and an Electronic Resources unit. Systems was part of the Library Technology Division in 2007 and was transferred to Resource Acquisition and Discovery when the systems librarian retired in 2016. Staffing changes began as faculty and staff retired. Changes that impacted staffing included transitioning from print to e-resources and eliminating the duplication of work across units and departments. Some staff were also concerned about ending long standing processes in which they had participated for many years. They often feared that their positions would change dramatically or be eliminated. To help alleviate these concerns, staff were involved in discussions about processes and rethinking how to change or improve them. Their input was solicited, which helped to gain buy in for the changes. Reorganization also impacted the departments when three metadata faculty and staff were transferred to Special Collections to focus on digital projects. This change occurred prior to the start of phase two. Leadership in the departments also impacted the changes. One department head became seriously ill and another long-time department head retired. These factors created both complications and opportunities. The open management positions gave the library the flexibility to pursue new direction with phase two of the reorganization.

Illustrating changes in the numbers of faculty and staff is not straightforward due to the changes in unit and department names. Figure 1 graphically depicts the staffing decreases in cataloging and acquisitions, and the increased emphasis in e-resources that has occurred since 2007. Variances in the chart related to Cataloging and Metadata are indicative of the reporting structures for these areas since 2007. The current structure refers to all cataloging and metadata processes as "Metadata" has been in place since 2017, with the addition of Systems and Technical Processing.

It is necessary to provide details regarding staffing levels and areas of assignment to show the overall transition that has occurred in technical services since 2007. Table 1 shows the breakdown of staff and faculty by reporting area in 2007. These numbers were the starting point for what became a thorough review of technical services and reflect a heavy emphasis on the management of print resources. Staffing was higher in the traditional print areas of acquisitions and cataloging. A major goal of phase one involved determining the proper amount and alignment of staffing.

Table 2 provides evidence of the positive impact from

Table 1. Faculty and staff count by unit in technical services as of June 2007

Department	Faculty	Staff
Acquisitions	1	10
Cataloging	4	10
Electronic Resources	1	0
Metadata	1	1
Total	7	21

Table 2. Faculty and staff count by unit in technical services as of June 2010

Department	Faculty	Staff
Acquisitions	1	7
Cataloging & Metadata	5	6
Electronic Resources	1	1
Total	7	14

Table 3. Faculty and staff count by unit in technical services as of May 2015

Department	Faculty	Staff
Acquisitions	0	5
Cataloging & Metadata	5	3
Electronic Resources	1	1
Total	6	9

Table 4. Faculty and staff count by unit in technical services as of August 2019

Unit	Faculty	Staff
Acquisitions	1*	5
Metadata	5	2
Electronic Resources	2	2
Systems	1	1
Total	9	10

*DH serves over the whole Department

phase one of the reorganization. By June 2010, the total number of staff had been reduced, and most of the changes had been made in the traditional areas. Faculty counts remained steady. Staff positions that were mainly focused on traditional print ordering, receiving, and processing were reduced over time through attrition. The remaining staff started the process of transitioning to more responsibilities related to e-resources management.

Table 3 is a snapshot of technical services personnel as of May 2015. This represents the faculty and staff numbers just prior to the beginning of phase two. Retirements in key positions and other staff reductions resulted in a situation in which staffing had dropped below planned levels. This was a short-term problem but provided the opportunity for long-term realignment of staffing levels. The open positions allowed for the hiring of new management and key staff positions to support the library's long-term vision.

Table 4 shows the current composition of Resource Acquisition and Discovery. There are nineteen librarians and staff in the department. That is an increase of four from 2015, with the increase in e-resources. While staffing levels within acquisitions remained consistent, it is important to note that staff working in acquisitions are now more integrated into e-resources acquisitions and access. Acquisitions' work has transitioned with the development of demand driven (DDA) and evidence-based acquisitions. Blending traditional acquisitions functions with access and delivery of e-resources has resulted in merging formerly separate areas. This change has also provided the opportunity for cross training and envisioning the workflow in a new way that emphasizes function over format. Staff formerly trained in print acquisitions with differentiation between monographs and serials can now transition into new roles that focus on all aspects of acquisitions without regard for formats. Acquisitions staff are also more involved in making resources available to users through their involvement with e-books and streaming video DDA.

Changing the Organization, Phase One (2007–2010)

In 2007, the organizational structure at the University of Alabama Libraries was traditional and siloed. Acquisitions, Electronic Resources, and Cataloging were separate units with little interaction or overlap in workflow and processes. Collections were print focused in 2007, and this was reflected in the workflow. Many of the employees were long-term and had established workflows that they were initially reluctant to change. This reluctance affected the rate of change. The first phase took nearly two years to complete.

The first phase of analysis and change focused on the Acquisitions Department. During fall 2007, faculty and staff documented current workflows and began to meet as a group. The Blackwell's consultants made several onsite visits to assist with the process and served as a neutral party. Mapping the processes and the faculty and staff functions revealed areas that needed review and adjustments. Management developed goals aimed at breaking down barriers within the physical workflow and preparing staff for the migration to an online environment. Initial goals included increased efficiencies, faster order processes, cost savings, providing training opportunities for staff, and moving the library forward.

Table 5. Key Accomplishments from Phase One

September/October 2007	Workflow description and analysis
November 2007	Presentation of recommendations
March 2008	WCP at Time of Order Beta Testing
May 2008	Final Workflow Mapping
Fall 2008	Testing processes, implementing new staff organizations, improved staff training
February 2009	Blackwell visit to review processes
March/April 2009	Implement workflow for Approval, add barcodes to processing
Summer 2009	Review books with no cataloging to determine if OCLC 100% is necessary
Summer 2009	Review books with no cataloging to determine if OCLC 100% is necessary

Although the authors worked with Blackwell's during this phase, the goal was to develop a vendor neutral workflow. Both formats and technology were rapidly changing, and processes that could seamlessly transfer from one vendor to another regardless of what was being ordered and cataloged were needed. When the group began discussing batch processing of records, it was determined that catalogers should be included in the discussion. This promoted communication across departments, rather than only in acquisitions. Additionally, participants took fuller advantage of connections and interfaces between the Voyager system and vendors that previously had not been fully explored. The biggest challenge was accepting good enough for vendor supplied bibliographic records. Traditional reference librarians rejected vendor supplied cataloging records because they felt the quality was inferior and disagreed with the changes being made in cataloging. This matter was eventually resolved, with most librarians and staff realizing the benefits of vendor supplied records during the large influx of new resources.

E-resources began to have an impact on libraries in the 2000s. The larger shift at the University of Alabama began in the late 2000s when e-books were added to the collections and major shifts began for electronic journal (e-journal) content. The existing workflow was reviewed with a focus on reducing the amount of paper needed to manage processes and a corresponding reduction of paper files. Steps were taken to reduce workflow inefficiencies in technical services by eliminating duplication and using vendor provided services to reduce handling during the process and to speed delivery of content to users. Some areas were early adopters of e-resources and served as test cases for what eventually became a library-wide preference in most disciplines. The Science and Engineering Library embraced e-resources earlier because resources in these disciplines were migrating to electronic formats. Additionally, the head of the library wanted to reclaim space in the building for other purposes. The process between 2007 and 2015 moved the library in a new direction and set a tone for the philosophy that resulted in expedited changes that began in 2015. See table 5 for a summary of the key accomplishments from phase one.

Changes continued at a slower pace following the conclusion of phase one. The various technical services units had introduced more technology into the routine workflow associated with purchasing and access. Staffing changes that included moving staff and faculty from Cataloging to Special Collections to concentrate on metadata for their collections, plus retirements and departures, resulted in a slower implementation. During this time, one department head retired, a unit head accepted a new position, and another department head was critically ill, leaving gaps in leadership in the departments. There was also a reluctance among some to accept the necessary changes, and advances were not happening as quickly as originally planned. It was clear during the intervening years that specific and dramatic steps were necessary to implement a management structure to support and pursue the strategic directions that had been established for technical services. Collections and technical services are closely aligned, and many of the policies and procedures that impact one operation will inevitably require changes for both. With this in mind, a plan was devised to usher in a second phase of reorganization with a focus on completing the remaining goals from phase one while setting in motion a new phase to help the library address the needs of a twenty-first-century library.

Changing the Organization, Phase Two (2015–present)

Phase two began with a shift in direction designed to send a clear message about future plans, including building on the positive change realized since 2007. There was a push to expand technical services' scope to better align staffing and service with changes in scholarly publishing and the needs of the university community. In 2015, Acquisitions, Cataloging and Electronic Resources were merged into a single department. The merger resulted in rethinking positions that were needed and returning metadata librarians and staff who had been in Special Collections back to the department.

The merger represented a change in direction for technical services and collection development. Phase two began with renaming the department Resource Acquisition and Discovery. A new philosophy regarding workflow across the departments that had been separate silos was adopted. Following the announcement of the new department, library administration hired a new department head. An early goal for the new department head was to unite the formerly disparate areas of acquisitions, e-resources, and cataloging while conducting a comprehensive workflow analysis and completing the physical reorganization. To improve efficiency, and because there had been other staffing changes and retirements, Systems was also merged into the new department. This brought management of Voyager and EZProxy together in one department.

The decision to hire a new department head was based on the need to broadly examine all processes related to technical services and to address key goals set by library administration. It was important that future changes focused on transforming processes, policies, and staffing to meet the needs of a twenty-first-century library. This included aligning selection, purchasing, processing, discovery, and access to meet the changing needs of a large research university. There was an expectation that the new department head and key managers in the new department would be well connected, understand emerging scholarly publishing models, and be aware of the importance of exploring new purchasing models and new modes of content delivery.

Early in 2015, with a new name in place, Resource Acquisition and Discovery, the search for a new department head began. The new department head was hired in spring 2015 and started in August. The new department head's first assignment was to begin a comprehensive review of policies, procedures, and workflow that impacted technical services and collection development. The goals included integrating the three separate areas that were united to form the new department (Acquisitions, Electronic Resources, and Cataloging) and to seek new ways to manage processes within the department and across the library system. The process involved consolidating the workflow between staff in various areas, removing barriers, relocating staff from multiple locations together in one physical location, and describing the functional areas as one team. Collaboration within the department and the library was a key element of potential change as managers sought to reduce siloed workflows, eliminate duplication, consolidate processing, and explore ways to more effectively select, procure, and provide access to content.

The new department head and staff were supported by library administration and its goal to develop policies, procedures, and workflow that would establish a new vision for research libraries in an electronic environment. The library faced space constraints, budgetary pressure, and changing user expectations. The libraries were now supporting an academic environment that provided online and mixed mode classes while the purchasing decisions and workflow were still based on legacy collections and print-based services. The developing vision needed to integrate collection development into the new department and build a flexible structure that could change as purchasing and content delivery models, user demands, and strategic goals of the university and library evolved. There were clear directives to encourage a thorough review of the existing operation and honest recommendations following the lengthy analysis.

The Workflow Analysis Continues

During the early planning stages of the workflow analysis, goals were established, including the development of a new fund management system to align with expected purchasing patterns as the focus of selection turned toward reliance on e-resources. The workflow analysis continued in fall 2015. That fall ushered in a complete change in how funds were assigned and monitored, with overall management of the fund structure and budget assigned to the new department. There was also a move to help ensure that financial information, usage data and other vital statistics generated by the new department would flow seamlessly to library administration in a timely manner. The workflow analysis needed to focus on how to provide fast and efficient delivery of library content on demand while improving discovery and access to materials. Increasing the discoverability of content and improving discovery performance was necessary to increase usage. The department was charged with exploring how to better use commercial products to assist with discovery and linking to e-resources. Similarly, the analysis provided an opportunity to explore how purchasing decisions were being made and to evaluate newer purchasing models for e-books and streaming video. While some progress was made in fall 2015, the workflow analysis process was expedited early in 2016.

A new Dean of Libraries was hired in fall 2015 and joined the Libraries in January 2016. The new dean supported the workflow analysis and expressed interest in moving to DDA. Prior to 2016, DDA was not a priority. The new dean's support of DDA initiated a complete transition of the collection development model. Coinciding with implementation of key recommendations from the workflow analysis, the library implemented a new liaison model. The new budget structure, the move toward DDA, and the management of collections from the new department were catalysts for the change. Liaisons shifted from a traditional bibliographer selector model to the current model that focuses on instruction and outreach. While some liaisons are more involved with collections than others, particularly in subject areas not well supported by DDA, the shift toward purchasing based on demonstrated need and centralization of collection management into the new department has clearly changed the selection and purchasing strategy.

The workflow analysis produced numerous recommendations, and many changes were made to policies, procedures, and staffing. The positive impact of these changes

Table 6. Key accomplishments from Phase Two

Spring 2015	Decision made to merge technical services and rename Resource Acquisition & Discovery
Summer 2015	New department head hired to manage Resource Acquisition & Discovery
Fall 2015	Comprehensive review of the GOBI approval plan profile & physical reorganization
Spring 2016	Workflow analysis completed and recommendations submitted
Spring/Summer 2016	SpringShare A–Z and EBSCO Usage Consolidation implemented, DDA on EBSCO
Spring 2017	New Coordinator for Metadata & Metadata Librarians + Technical and Systems Librarian join department
Summer 2017	Coordinator for Acquisitions & Electronic Resources hired, Full Text Finder implemented
Fall 2018	Electronic Resources Librarian hired

increased efficiency throughout various aspects of both collection development and technical services operations. Following the success of the workflow analysis and reorganization, there was time to evaluate the entire process of planning the workflow analysis, prioritizing recommendations, implementing new ideas, and evaluating the results.

The workflow analysis and review of processes resulted in a complete review and update to the GOBI approval plan profile. The profile change was initially designed to reduce the need for high amounts of firm ordering by allowing more titles to be automatically selected. However, as noted, it also served as the foundation for a robust DDA model that has continued to evolve since its inception in March 2016.

Information gleaned from the review resulted in full implementation of shelf ready processes, expedited review and disposition of gift materials, and a streamlined review of damaged materials. These issues are examples of impediments, and reviewing the policies and procedures resulted in more efficient processing. Steps were taken in Acquisitions to expedite ordering, receiving, and processing with an emphasis on improving delivery time to Circulation. Working collaboratively with Circulation and Interlibrary Loan (ILL), efforts were made to improve physical processing and use ILL data for purchasing decisions.

New products were implemented in 2016 to help with resource management and to improve discovery. SpringShare A–Z, an alphabetical list of databases, was fully implemented and is managed in Resource Acquisition & Discovery. Liaisons were included in the planning and continue to make recommendations for improvements. EBSCO Usage Consolidation was added to the growing list of EBSCO products used to manage e-resources. Using EBSCONet for cost and usage data has proven to be helpful to make retention decisions, and the data is used during negotiations, particularly for Big Deals. Phase two ended in the successful alignment of new responsibilities, processes and organizational structure to address the current needs of the library. See table 6 for a summary of the key accomplishments from phase one.

Discussion

Workflow analysis and reorganization is a catalyst for change. The process allows an organization to review and evaluate legacy operations, including outdated collection development strategies and technical services processes. Often these dated processes continue long after the need for them diminishes. This can be due to a lack of focus on ensuring routine and consistent review, or because of reluctance by some library staff to discontinue a workflow that has been part of their routine for many years. Legacy operations frequently include unnecessary steps to process materials. Reviewing workflows can highlight these outdated procedures and initiate changes that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. A good example is how the authors' library ended liaison review of approval plan shipments. Since libraries often do not return print materials received on approval, the delays in processing created by liaison review increased the time it took to send materials to circulation while the cost of accepting a few books that would have been returned has far less impact than holding up workflow.

Completing a detailed workflow analysis will likely identify inefficient operations. During the process, all staff involved should review existing procedures and answer two important questions. First, are there steps that should be taken that are not currently being taken? Does the process include steps that are no longer necessary? Experienced staff are often able to find new efficiencies, particularly when they understand that changes to procedures will result in faster ways to move processes through the department and better ways to complete the work in an efficient manner. This evolution in thinking results in an increased sense of responsibility and buy-in from staff who have had a larger role in the success of the project.

If a department has not updated procedures and policies in many years, a workflow analysis can serve to identify where changes are needed, and who should be involved in the process. Frequently, during a thorough review of workflow, inefficiencies are discovered, and the failure can sometimes be attributed to outdated procedures and policies. The analysis can lay the groundwork for making positive changes in desired outcomes and the steps necessary to best serve local needs. Being willing to consider new outcomes and to reduce unnecessary processes is critical when efficiency is the goal. Reviewing workflows with a goal of achieving maximum results with the least amount of staff involvement is critical to success and can result in innovative new ways to accomplish organizational goals.

Two key results of a detailed workflow are important for the future of any department within a large library system. Identifying training needs and single points of failure during a workflow analysis project assist in planning for ongoing improvements in the department. A good workflow review can identify the need for cross training. It is important to identify areas where key decisions are made or processes are completed by a single person. Having this information provides opportunities for training, may result in possible employee promotions, and helps with continuity when an employee leaves.

Determining When to Conduct a Workflow Analysis

Organizations need to consider when it is appropriate to undertake a detailed workflow analysis project. These projects frequently coincide with the hiring of new librarians into key leadership positions. New leaders typically bring expectations or strengths, and to execute them, they must first determine what is works well and where improvement is needed. New leaders may receive directives from their superiors, which require the manager to gain an understanding of existing practices before instituting changes.

An organization may need to review workflow to address the loss of key positions or new strategic directives. It is important that large-scale changes not be implemented without a thorough understanding of the complete workflow within the department or units that will be impacted. Libraries are undergoing physical changes resulting from the need to find more space for users, which can affect staff. Any time there could be a physical move of staff, or when individuals from different areas within a library are brought together to report to one leader, it is an ideal opportunity to review operations. Finally, when a department or library expects to implement a major new initiative, there is also an opportunity to review workflow, even if it is limited to those aspects of the work that will be impacted by the pending change. When the decision is made to begin a workflow process, and particularly when reorganization is an expected outcome, it is important to take steps early to mitigate problems that can slow the project or negatively impact the results.

Managing the Process

Whether an individual or a team is leading a workflow analysis, it is important to manage the process from the early planning stages through to completion. There is potential for staff to be impacted or affected by changes in processes or altered workspaces at any point in the process. Perhaps the most important step to be taken early in the process is to gain the support of the library administration, faculty, and staff. This is critical since individuals will have the opportunity to participate and share in success. Otherwise, there is the risk that they may be neutral, or even worse, negative toward the entire process. It may not be possible to get complete buy in, but having engaged staff who feel they have a voice is critical to help reach the desired outcomes.

It is necessary to promote an environment that supports active engagement and encourages everyone to participate. Seek out and use feedback with the goal of getting input from those closest to the workflow that is being reviewed. It is important to empower staff because leadership can be situational and may emerge from various areas of the department. It is vital that staff feel that they are part of the process and are heard. This provides buy-in and ownership for the processes being developed and the reorganization of the department.

The purpose of a workflow analysis is to review all aspects of library, department, unit, or functional areas with the goal of implementing effective changes. To be successful, leaders need to create a change environment that is focused on inclusiveness and includes open dialogue. While the process should include involvement at all levels, it is important that the senior leadership for the project lead by example. This includes setting the tone for productive workflow review sessions and encouraging others to suggest new ideas, comments, and questions.

Workflow analysis is difficult and time consuming. Often much time passes before the desired changes become reality. Staff may lose interest because there seems to be little progress, which makes it important to highlight successes. Even small victories will motivate the team. While successes are the expectation, there will also be failures, and these will help guide future discussions. Throughout the analysis, the focus should remain on identifying areas that need improvement, including inefficient operations.

Considerations

Since the authors were leading an analysis of technical services and collection development, their focus was on the movement of physical materials or processes required to acquire e-resources and make them discoverable. What they learned during the project led to the development of a list of key areas of discovery that affected the workflow analysis and outcomes. These factors were considered in various aspects of operations and human resource management following the project. Some of these factors are now common practice within the department. First, identify obstacles to determine if the root cause is inefficient operations, lack of staffing, lack of training, or all of these things. Use them as an opportunity to explore training needs. Training and cross training will help to improve staff members' comfort levels, prevent single points of failure, and result in the department establishing succession planning for key areas. It is important that more than one person manages all key functionality. Finally, use the workflow analysis process and the detailed review to help staff at all levels become more aware of the impact of their work. Everyone will be more motivated if they understand how they are connected to others within their department and the larger organization.

Planning for Success

Workflow analysis and reorganization are two different processes but are often managed together given that a workflow analysis, even in the early planning stages, can identify the need for reorganization. The latter can be as simple as relocating individuals on the same floor or department to improve interaction or to bring staff with similar responsibilities in closer proximity. Or, it may be complex and involve relocation to new work areas with supervisory changes and new responsibilities for staff. The authors managed a planned workflow analysis and reorganization that was designed to radically change the environment and lead to a new vision for technical services and collection management. Managing both simultaneously contributed to positive results and key findings that may help other librarians who are planning for an extensive review of workflow processes.

It is important to stress that a project of this magnitude requires a lot of effort, planning, and willingness to make changes. Both planning and analysis are critical to success and it is important that the analysis be carried out during the workflow review process. While the results are what will be measured, it is important to consider that steps taken before and after the actual changes will contribute to overall success.

It is critical to set reasonable goals and objectives, to establish and follow reasonable timelines, and provide regular reports to managers and staff to keep everyone engaged. Start by gaining support from the staff, help them to envision changes, and explain how they are related to the strategic vision for the library and the larger organization.

The review process will help to identify inefficiencies and strengths. Individuals should be given an opportunity to provide input and, when appropriate, given an opportunity to provide leadership based on their specific strengths. Use regular department meetings to keep the staff updated on changes and to maintain communication going throughout the process. Since good ideas can come from all levels of an organization, it is important to foster an open environment where opinions are welcome and considered. When staff are involved from the outset and given a chance to actively participate, it will increase the chances of success.

Conclusion

This paper provided an overview of the workflow analysis and reorganization of technical services at the University of Alabama starting in 2007. In addition to covering planning and execution of the project, this paper highlights the key successes and challenges encountered over the two phases that focused on all aspects of workflow, staffing, physical location of operations, and the migration from a heavily print-based collection to one that emphasizes e-resources with a focus on providing access at the point of need. The project was iterative, and planning was set in motion to develop a process of continuous improvement. The study examined workflow analysis in a large academic library and focused on providing best practices for managing change and shifting priorities and practices within technical services to align with current user expectations, evolving industry standards, and university priorities.

An overview of changes in staffing and highlights of the organization of technical services were provided and covered in detail to emphasize how changes brought on by several factors resulted in a shift of positions toward e-resources management. Throughout the two phased process, mapping was used to identify barriers to workflow and to institute changes that would increase efficiency and result in more effective results. The analyses identified the need for better communication between the various areas within technical services, the importance of using existing and newly acquired technology, and a focus on change management.

The two phases of workflow analysis and reorganization saw major changes to e-resources management but also a steady reduction in print-based operations and associated workflows. While the workflow was changing, there were opportunities to change priorities and policies, and to introduce new philosophies related to collection development and technical services. A new focus on uniting formerly disparate units into one cohesive department to manage both technical services and collection development served to accelerate the rate of positive change.

This project identified the need for more collaboration within the department and to selectively reach out to other library departments as priorities shifted toward a collection model that emphasized purchase on demand and more outreach to academic departments. There was a recognition that the process needed to result in a flexible management structure and a focus on modern purchasing and delivery models.

The results of this two-phased review were positive and resulted in specific new initiatives, including a robust DDA plan for academic monographs, staffing changes, physical relocation of staff and elimination of redundant processes. The analysis identified areas in need of cross training, identified single points of failure in the workflow, and highlighted the need for consistent review of processes and alignment to library and university strategic plans. During the years of this ongoing analysis, several new products were implemented, including SpringShare, EBSCO Usage Consolidation, and Full Text Finder.

Some clear best practices developed, including the importance of timing for initiation of comprehensive workflow projects and detailed planning prior to execution of changes. It is important to include staff at all levels, to seek their input, and to build support before changes are made. Including staff opinions and considering their concerns as much as possible throughout the process can help garner support and buy in from those most impacted by the changes. It is critical that libraries undertake workflow analysis periodically to review current practice and take the opportunity to evaluate priorities and processes. Change is inevitable and it is important to have clearly articulated goals, to celebrate small victories, to include staff at all levels, and keep communication lines open. Doing so will help mitigate the natural tendency to avoid change and will result in more efficient and effective services that align to the needs of a modern academic library.

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Notes on Operations
Less is More

A Case Study of Consolidating Two Database A–Z Lists for Better Staff and User Experiences

Todd Quinn

This case study describes the consolidation and migration of the University of New Mexico's University Libraries' two database A–Z lists. A subject librarian led the nine-month project that included most subject librarians, the electronic resources team, the Director of Collections, and the Web & Discovery Librarian. The project also provided the University Libraries with the opportunity to review the resources on the lists, update descriptions, and create new workflows for adding and managing a single list.

The University of New Mexico's University (UNM) Libraries' (UL) first robust database A–Z list was developed by a library IT staff member who also worked shifts at the reference desk. This experience of working with users and other public services librarians provided him with insights as he developed the A–Z database tool to meet users' and staff needs. Many libraries have developed homegrown A–Z tools using different methods.[1] The UL's list was created around 2005, and enabled the electronic resources (e-resources) team to track and maintain subscription databases and push the resources to the public via the library's website. The tool allowed the e-resources team to add internal notes, descriptions, and create persistent URLs (PURLs) for each resource. The PURLs allowed the e-resources team to maintain consistent URLs to the public even as database vendors changed the resources' URLs. These PURLs also saved librarians time since they did not have to update library pages and guides when the vendors changed these URLs.

The official list's content, which lacked consistency, was determined by the Director of Collections, the e-resources teams, and subject librarians. Brisbin, Parlette-Stewart, and Oldham explain, "one of the challenges that arose over time was a lack of coordination. This led to inconsistent tagging, lack of naming conventions, outdated descriptions, dead links, and a lack of a shared understanding around the intentions of the list. It was clear that the database list was suffering from a lack of care and attention," which was the UL's exact situation.[2] Unfortunately, as noted, there are few papers in the professional literature on managing A–Z lists.[3] These two lists coexisted for a few reasons: each was managed by two different UL employees, the LibGuides A–Z tool made it easier for librarians to add databases to guides, and there was a lack of time by the author to fully investigate the LibGuides A–Z tool. Additionally, the individual who had served as the UL's web librarian departed to accept a position at another institution. She worked with the author on LibGuides tools, including the A–Z list, and her departure created a gap in knowledge and skills. The parallel management

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of the two A–Z lists arose when the UL subscribed to LibGuides V2. The LibGuides A–Z list was initially populated via its import process and grew as subject librarians added free resources to the list to enable them to easily add these databases to their guides. This secondary A–Z list was public, but diverged from the official A–Z list, managed by e-resources, with these additions.

The UL used Springshare's LibGuides for many years, mostly to provide subject and course guides for students and faculty. In 2014, Springshare released LibGuides V2, and the author led the UL's migration from V1 to V2. He got consensus from colleagues to delete all the UL's guides in V1 and to start fresh for V2 since many guides were outdated or obsolete. This allowed the UL to incorporate best practices for all guides in V2. As part of the migration, the author started the secondary A–Z list in LibGuides in collaboration with the creator of the homegrown A–Z list. The LibGuides A–Z list allowed the librarians to easily add/reuse databases with consistent descriptions to course and subject guides. Librarians could also change a database description from the general description to something more specific for a particular guide or audience. For example, EBSCO's Business Source Complete contains articles/journals useful for many disciplines, so most guides contained the general description of the databases, but a librarian may change the general description to focus on its management content and yet another librarian may change the general description to focus on its legal content. Even though librarians are using the same database in their guides, the descriptions differ because the audiences for the guides are different. This flexibility is useful for subject librarians, but unimportant for e-resources management.

After the subject librarian, who managed the LibGuides, investigated LibGuides' A–Z tool, he discovered it had several features that were available in the UL's homegrown tool, plus other advantageous features for both internal and public use. Internally, the LibGuides A–Z list would allow the e-resources team to track resources, add notes, export the list, add the proxy URL, and to highlight trials. On the public facing side, the LibGuides tool allows patrons to browse the list alphabetically, sort the list via the three drop-down menus (subject, type, and vendor), see "best bets" by subject, and use the search box. The homegrown application had few of these features, and was no longer being developed, only maintained. Switching to the LibGuides A–Z tool saved the Library IT department time for other projects since they would no longer need to maintain the application or server for this purpose.

Most libraries have a database A–Z list to help patrons find specific resources, but there are unfortunately few papers in the professional literature on managing A–Z lists. As Hoeppner explains, there are "no articles primarily offering practical advice to librarians about database list management" and electronic resource management articles only gave cursory mention to "A–Z database list functionality."[4] Through a literature review, the author found that five papers were found that specifically discuss database A–Z lists.

Hoeppner, at the University of Central Florida Libraries, conducted a survey of libraries on Database List Systems (her term).[5] She discovered that over 72 percent (47/65) of respondents used LibGuides as a database management system, and half used LibGuides as the public facing database A–Z list tool. She found that other respondents used eleven tools other than LibGuides for managing and displaying their A–Z list to users. The second part of her paper provides many useful tips for creating and managing a functional database list.

Brisbin, Parlette-Stewart, and Oldham discussed the approach taken by the University of Guelph's McLaughlin Library to migrate their database A–Z list from a homegrown ColdFusion system to LibGuides.[6] They discuss the many challenges faced in creating the list, including an in-depth discussion on how their list is managed.

Tobias discussed Michigan State University Libraries' approach to making their database A–Z list more user-centric.[7] They conducted many usability testing sessions and physical card sorting with users to receive feedback so that they could create a more user-friendly interface. Furthermore, they researched best practices to develop their new A–Z list using LibGuides as a management tool and public facing site. They developed a process for reviewing and editing database descriptions and determining which titles to include in their list.

A brief paper by Arnold covers the process of migrating from a homegrown system to LibGuides at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Libraries.[8] They conducted interviews and usability testing with their undergraduate students, researchers, and faculty to understand their usage of the UNC-Chapel Hill Libraries site. The few findings provided do not specifically discuss the use of the A–Z list by their patrons.

Ramshaw, Lecat, and Hodge at the American University of Sharjah provide a coding solution by connecting OCLC's WorldShare Management Services (WMS) to LibGuides A–Z list for their patrons.[9] Initially, they populated their A–Z public facing list using an XML file, then migrated to the WMS library services platform, which necessitated a change in their process. Their A–Z list project was guided by four goals: be automated, be clean, be consistent, and maintain continuity. Since they met these goals, they suggest that other WMS libraries with LibGuides use their solution for internal workflow and populating an A–Z list for their patrons.

It seems that these libraries, among others, want similar things: a tool to manage the technical aspects of database lists with a good workflow, and a public facing A–Z database list that is understandable and useful to patrons.

The UL at the author's institution had two lists (official and secondary) from 2014 to 2018, which is not uncommon.[10] The official list, created in 2005, was on a library server and used a homegrown application to manage the e-resources and push content to a library web page. The secondary list was created in 2014 when the UL migrated from Springshare's LibGuides V1 to V2. These two lists never included identical content because the lists were maintained by two different people in separate departments and for different purposes: one to manage e-resources and the other to support subject librarians' work. A subject librarian who maintained the LibGuides list saw the need for a change and led a project in late 2017 to create a single consolidated A–Z database list for both purposes, and to complete the project by August 2018.

Project

The consolidation project began in fall 2017, with the project lead, the author, gaining consensus from subject librarians, the e-resources team, the Web & Discovery librarian, and the Director of Collections. The project lead submitted an official project request to the UL's administration for review. This project form incorporates project management concepts, which is similar to the University of Guelph McLaughlin Library's A–Z project.[11] The document named all the employees who were involved, their roles, time commitment, timeline, outcomes, budget, and assumptions. After the administration approved the project, work began in November 2017 and concluded in August 2018. The project outline was communicated to the entire UL via email and in various meetings, which allowed people to provide email and in-person feedback and ask questions. The project's ultimate goal was to create one database A–Z list that provided a better user experience (internally and publicly). Secondary goals included: reviewing and updating database titles and descriptions, updating the subject and type categories, removing outdated free resources, and assigning a champion to each resource who would apply keywords, subjects, and types as appropriate.

The project consisted of four phases: (1) create documentation and guidelines; (2) subject librarian review and update of the 500 databases in the lists; (3) create a workflow for the e-resources team; and (4) provide a clean searchable/browsable A–Z list to the public, which were similar to the goals of the University of Guelph McLaughlin Library.[12]

Phase 1: Documentation and Guidelines

To make the project successful, workflows, timelines, and documentation were needed. First, the project lead consolidated the two lists into one master spreadsheet in a workbook. The master spreadsheet listed all titles in both lists, eliminating most duplicates. In addition to a locked master spreadsheet in the workbook, the databases were divided among spreadsheets for general databases, and one for each subject cluster: Arts and Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences. The twenty-two columns for each spreadsheet were color-coded to signify who should edit the various columns: gold for subject librarians, pastel blue for the e-resources team, green for the web librarians, and no color meant that they were not to be touched. The columns included title, description, subjects, PURLs, Reviewers, among others (see table 1).

Second, documentation on the process for reviewing each database was drafted by the project lead and edited by subject librarians. The documentation provided explained how to review the resources in the A–Z list (see table 2) and provided guidelines/format for editing and rewriting current database descriptions (see table 3). Brislin, Parlette-Stewart, and Oldham, along with Tobias, created similar guidelines for their projects.[13]

Finally, all project participants were provided read/write access to a folder via Office 365 that included the workbook and the documentation files. Arnold describes a more complicated review for the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Libraries.[14] The group chose Office 365 since all participants had access to it via their UNM account, and it allowed them to see the project's progress. Original copies of all files were also stored on the project lead's desktop.

Phase 2: Review and Updating A–Z Content

In 2016, the UL's subject librarians were grouped into three subject/outreach/liaison clusters: Social Sciences, Sciences, and Arts and Humanities. Each group has a lead who convenes meetings and sets agendas. Of course, not all disciplines easily fit into one of these clusters, and many colleges, departments, and programs are interdisciplinary in nature. Two examples that illustrate this point are the Water Resources program, which is in the Economics Department, and the program covers sciences and social sciences; and the Urban Planning program in the School of Architecture + Planning, includes all three discipline areas. Although the UL has these three clusters, individuals and the groups must work across disciplines. For this project, the sciences cluster eventually included librarians from the Health Sciences and Informatics Library Center, which is a separate entity at UNM and not part of the UL.

With these clusters in place, the project lead divided the five hundred databases among the three clusters, plus a fourth group for "general" databases, led by the Director

Table 1. Fields with a brief description and which team manages it. The term "database" includes subscription and free resources.

Columns/Fields	Description	Managed/Decided by
Name	Name of database	E-Resources & Subject Librarians
Description	Overview of database	Subject Librarians
Vendor	Vendor or site of database	E-Resources
Types	Format	Web Librarian
Alt. Names / Keywords	Addition descriptive terms	Subject Librarians
Subjects	Subject terms for all databases	Web Librarian
Best Bets	Highlight top databases for a particular subject	Subject Librarians
More Info	Info about a databases that is not part of description	E-Resources
New	Highlights new databases	E-Resources
Trial	Highlights trial subscription databases	E-Resources
Popular	Highlights popular databases	Subject Librarians
Hidden	Databases hidden from public view	E-Resources
Internal Notes	Notes about the database	E-Resources
Owner	Champion of database	Subject Librarians
Completed	Review completed	Subject Librarians

Table 2. Subject Librarians' Tasks

Resource/Database descriptions: The review and update of a database description was important since often the description for databases were directly from the vendor or web site. These descriptions could be useful for marketing, but not necessarily for librarians, students, and faculty.
Resource/Database titles: This review allowed the UL to incorporate a naming convention and shorten titles where appropriate.
Assigning keywords: This allowed subject librarians to add keywords not in the database title or description. These keywords included important topics, common misspellings (PsycINFO v. PsychINFO), alternative spellings (archeology v. archaeology), suffixes (organizations, organizational), etc., to makes resources findable via the search box
Assigning a champion: This provides a contact person for the cluster and e-resources team when a database needs attention (e.g., renewal, updates).
Assigning subjects and "best bets:" This allows for users to browse by subject and also see the top resources (up to five) for each subject.
Assigning types: This allows users to browse by type. The UL type list included specific formats (e.g., music, ebook), and topic areas (e.g., grants, biography) that are not subject disciplines.
Consolidation: This declutters the list and lessens confusion. For example, we had the three main Web of Science indexes listed separately, along with Web of Science. We decided to only list Web of Science since it included the three indexes. Other Web of Science titles (e.g., Biosis, Zoological Record) were listed separately since they have distinct audiences and are not part of the core.
Separation: It is useful to pull certain sub-databases out from the main title, especially when popular. For example, Global Newsstream includes specific news sources specific sought by names: New York Times (current), Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, among others. We decided to list these individual instead of just in Global Newsstream.
Deletion: The review allowed us to delete certain outdated and dead free resources. One of these resources no longer existed and its URL lead to an "adult" site.

Table 3. Guidelines for Writing Database Descriptions

Concise description followed by the database's overall coverage date range.*
Exclude the vendor's marketing and flowery language (e.g., biggest, best).
Exclude the size (e.g., 10, 000 items) of the database.
Exclude the name of the resource from the description.
Exclude specific terms/phrases: database, "This database provides,"

* For certain databases the basic format did not work, especially for archival resources. The database champion had the option to adjust the description as necessary. Also, a librarian has the option to change the general description for a specific guide.

Table 4. Workflow for Adding Free resources to the A–Z list

Librarian finds a resource to add to the A–Z list
Librarian* uses a request form and includes Title of the resource, Description based on guidelines, URL, keywords, and reason to add resource.
Most appropriate subject cluster reviews and decides
If approved, the cluster lead forwards the information to e-resources to add to the A–Z list.

* Any UL employee may make a request and the form is sent to the most appropriate subject cluster.

Table 5. Two Examples of Database Description Changes

Old description	New description
JSTOR: The complete back files of more than a thousand core scholarly journals in a variety of humanities, business, science, and social science disciplines available in PDF format. As of January 2011 JSTOR has made available current content of a number of journals that we may not have subscribed.	**JSTOR:** A comprehensive archive of multidisciplinary scholarly journals and books. Coverage: 1800s to three to five years ago.
Environment Complete: Abstracts, citations, and extensive full text access to books and articles on a wide range of topics related to the environment, including agriculture, renewable energy sources, pollution and waste management, and more.	**Environment Complete:** Books and articles on a wide range of topics related to the environment, including agriculture, renewable energy, pollution, waste management, and more. Coverage: 1880-Present.

of Collections. Many databases could fall into multiple clusters, but each database had to be placed somewhere in the workbook. Each group was assigned between 120 and 180 databases to review and edit. The project lead met with each cluster to discuss the project and documentation, and the workflow. After these meetings, each cluster devised their own internal workflow. Librarians in all the clusters worked independently, and the sciences and social sciences clusters also held working lunches. The Arts and Humanities cluster was more challenging because liaison duties are secondary to most librarians in the cluster, thus most of their work was solo. Additionally, to encourage progress, the project lead held a few editing/writing meetings that were open to all participants.

The "general" group had the most databases (approximately 180) to review. General databases are those that are applicable to multiple disciplines, and included titles such as Academic Search Complete, JSTOR, Web of Science, and WorldCat. This was led by the Director of Collections and included volunteers from all clusters.

Each librarian reviewed the assigned databases, wrote a concise description, provided a coverage date range, and reviewed/assigned subjects and types. This basic description format worked for most titles. Following a librarian's review/rewrite, it was reviewed by a second librarian or their cluster. Columns were provided in the spreadsheet for each title's review status. This review/rewrite process took seven months.

Issues arose during the review. Some database vendors provide a parent URL for all indexes, and secondary URLs for individual titles or small groupings. This is a nice option but can lead to confusion for patrons. The librarians needed to decide whether to collapse the titles or to keep them separated. For example, the three main Web of Science indexes were listed as individual databases, along with a listing for Web of Science Core (the three main indexes and some other indexes). After discussion, it was decided that only the Web of Science Core would be listed since most users knew the title Web of Science, not necessarily the individual index titles. Other Web of Science titles (e.g., Biosis, Zoological Record) continued to be listed separately since they have distinct audiences and are not part of the core. Another example is ProQuest's Global Newsstream, which has over two thousand sources and includes prominent news sources specifically sought by name, such as *New York Times* (current), *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. A decision was made to list these individual titles separately, along with a Global Newsstream listing, to help users find specific content or search the entire database.

Since the UL adds free resources to the A–Z list, these needed to be reviewed as well. The same guidelines were followed for this part of the project. The review led to a number of deletions of outdated and "dead" resources. A new workflow was developed (see below) for adding free resources to the A–Z list.

Phase 3: Workflow for the E-Resources Team

The e-resources team includes two staff members who handle much of the technical communication with vendors and maintain the database A–Z list. Once the project was initiated, it was decided that they would maintain both lists. This meant that any changes to the A–Z list were made in both the homegrown system and the LibGuides system. Although this was a duplicate effort for several months, it allowed the two staff members to learn the LibGuides system and to create a workflow with support from the project lead and their supervisor for the LibGuides system.

As part of this workflow, the e-resources team conveyed two concerns to the project lead: (1) the team never knew specifically who to contact when a database needed attention (e.g., renewal, updates), and (2) there were no guidelines for adding free resources. When a database needed attention, they would contact the subject librarian who they assumed was responsible for the topic, which was not always the correct person. This was not their fault since no list of subject specialists existed. This was resolved by assigning each current database title to a specific individual. These assignments, which were recorded as a column in the spreadsheets, were determined by the clusters and the Director of Collections. Any new subscription databases or free resources would also be assigned to a specific individual after the migration. Adding free resources to the A–Z list was another issue. Typically, the e-resources team would add titles suggested by any library employee, which were usually subject librarians. This was the practice for more than ten years, which led to bloat in the list, among other issues. The project lead devised a process (see table 4) for these types of resources. After the migration, all free resource suggestions were reviewed by the most appropriate cluster (similar to a database review) before they were added to the A–Z list by the e-resources team.

Phase 4: Web Design

The web design phase was led by the Web and Discovery Librarian. His responsibilities entailed managing the display of the A–Z list and reviewing/revising the current database subject and type terms. Since the UL had two A–Z lists, each A–Z list had its own subjects and types, which again did not correspond with each other. The review of subjects and types was more complicated. This was difficult since each specialist had a different interpretation of the information. The Web and Discovery Librarian led the discussion, and a decision was made to eliminate some narrow subjects and to limit the number of types.

The LibGuides A–Z tool provides the option to include a description of each database, keywords, and alternative names. This was an opportunity to assign keywords not in the description and to add keywords for common misspellings of database names. A few sub-database titles were removed from the A–Z list and were added in the description or as keywords to the "parent" database. For example, the Web of Science's three main indices were removed, and these index titles were added to the Web of Science Core description. It was found that these keywords displayed on the LibGuides A–Z public page under the database title and description, which cluttered the display and could be confusing. Following discussion, the Web and Discovery Librarian added programming that suppressed keywords and alternative names from the public view. These keywords were still indexed and searchable, and the suppression provided patrons a cleaner view of the A–Z list.

The e-resources team notified the project team that there was an issue regarding UNM's four branch campuses' libraries as it related to the Database A–Z list. These branches are separate from the main campus, are located outside of the Albuquerque metropolitan area, and have access to most, but not all, UL subscription resources. Before the project, the UL provided a web page to list the databases specifically available to the branches, and this page would not work after the project. To resolve the issue, a keyword was created specifically for the branches. This keyword was added to all the databases available to the branch campuses. By adding this keyword, a user could find these databases with the keyword via the LibGuides A–Z search feature. More importantly, the search created a persistent URL listing for these databases, which allowed the branches to display this list on their library sites. Changes are automatically displayed without any additional work required from the branch campuses.

Issues with Springshare

The LibGuides A–Z tool is a Springshare product and has provided the UL with a better tool to use internally and to serve the public. They provide quality support and are responsive to their customers. However, the tool has presented some issues for the UL: (1) it would be ideal to provide a toggle switch that lets libraries decide to show or hide keywords and alternative titles from the public review; (2) most public users will never use the vendor's drop-down menu, and an option to hide this menu would be useful; and (3) when one selects from any of the drop-down menus, it not only updates the A–Z list for this selection, but it also updates all the drop-down menus. For example, when one selects Business from the subject menu, and then wants to select Art from the subject menu, the user sees only Art databases that include Business as a subject. This may confuse patrons who want to see all the Art databases. A patron must select the "clear filters" button to see the full list again for each subject, type, and vendor in each menu. Potentially, Springshare could provide an option to update the display based on a patron menu selection, but not update the menus. This would allow libraries to choose which option they prefer.

The LibGuides A–Z tool's search function is a useful addition to A–Z lists. Patrons may now use the A–Z search box in addition to browsing alphabetically or by subject or type. The search may be faster for patrons who know the database title or those seeking to find a list of databases by keyword. The addition of common misspelled database names as keywords has proven useful. For example, PsycINFO is often misspelled with an added "h" as in PsychINFO. This misspelling was added as a keyword and the A–Z search data has shown that the misspelling is the more common search term than the correct spelling. As part of an annual review, the UL can discover potential other keywords (and common misspellings) by reviewing all the A–Z searches, which are collected in the system.

Although the search function is useful, it has a glaring problem as it relates to subject assignments (selected by librarians). According to the UL's Web and Discovery Librarian, David Hurley (personal communication, April 22, 2020), the search algorithm assumes a database with only one subject assignment is more relevant than a database with more subjects assigned. In theory this may seem appropriate but does not work in practice. Some databases are the best database for multiple disciplines and are assigned multiple subjects. For example, Web of Science Core is a top research literature database for multiple sciences, but when a patron searches "biology," Web of Science Core is listed last, thirty-second, in the search results. Springshare is aware of the issue but has not provided a solution.

Springshare resolved one issue during the project. When the e-resources team added a trial database, they used the trial checkbox provided on the form, which included an expiration date. This highlighted to the public which titles were under review. Unfortunately, the LibGuides default for expired trials was to remove the trial icon and leave the title in the A–Z list. After the UL raised concerns, Springshare changed the default to suppress trial databases on the expiration date.

Discussion

Overall, the project was a success. The UL now has one A–Z list with more concise and consistent descriptions (see table 5) for the public with some extra features (drop-down menus and a search box). At the end of the project, the number of resources in the A–Z list dropped from 504 to 420. The drop is attributed to the deletion of outdated and "dead" free resources, and the consolidation of some subscription database titles. Unfortunately, there was no statistical method to track the impact of these changes on usage for a few reasons: (1) the homegrown application did not provide usage statistics; (2) database titles were consolidated and separated; (3) LibGuides consolidates all database usage statistics from the A–Z list, guides, direct friendly URLs, and more; and (4) user satisfaction surveys were not conducted due to lack of time.

There were other positive outcomes. The e-resources team now has one A–Z list (LibGuides A–Z) to maintain, has a better workflow, and there is improved communication between the subject librarians and the e-resources team concerning additions and edits to the list. The library IT department no longer needs to maintain the homegrown application and server, which saves them time for other projects. Plus, during the review, the subject librarians learned more about individual resources. Librarians were able to convey their knowledge about specific resources to their colleagues as titles were discussed. This positive, unforeseen outcome has provided opportunities for librarians to expand their resource toolboxes. The project has not resolved all issues (e.g., subject and type lists), nor fixed all database descriptions or titles. An annual review of the list and guidelines is probably necessary since the list is dynamic and there is always personnel flux.

As Brisbin, Parlette-Stewart, and Oldham state, "When library staff use the term 'database,' they are referring to something very specific, yet this nebulous term is often quite meaningless to our users."[15] It would be easy enough to use the term "resources" instead of "databases," but the profession has chosen "databases," and it is the term we have taught to our users over the decades. These "databases" include subscription databases, e-reference titles, and free resources (e.g., US Census, Hispanic American Periodicals Index (HAPI)) selected by librarians. When the profession uses the term "databases," it also means various types of content (e-books, journal articles, news articles, indexes, datasets, maps, finding aids, catalogs, etc.), which adds to the confusion. Initially, many libraries used a homegrown A–Z database tool to feed their subscription databases on a public-facing web page. But the list changed once many quality free/open access resources became available. Additionally, many databases index multiple formats, and provide full text. These additions are quite valuable to patrons, if they can locate the resource, but cause technical and workflow issues for libraries.

Conclusion

In a larger sense, A–Z database lists will never be able to convey the content of all the library's subscription and free resources to users. One general description developed by subject librarians is better than vendor marketing language, but rarely conveys all the valuable content of any one resource. Some libraries have provided detailed records for databases to users, but it is doubtful that the majority of users read this content. Also, many of these descriptions and listings appear to be more for the library staff than users. Furthermore, the web or user experience librarian must weigh content depth, layout, and discoverability to produce a valuable list to users. Even a more technical solution, such as Ramshaw, Lecat, and Hodge suggested does not resolve these underlining issues.[16] The lack of literature on database A–Z list potential is because the list falls into many areas (e.g,. public services, web, user experience, e-resources) and each library handles it differently.

Thus, a well-designed and maintained A–Z database list, along with a quality public-facing A–Z list/tool, can alleviate part of the issue with the term "database" and the variety of types of database, formats, among other issues. Any A–Z tool will not resolve all the confusion, especially for new students, but an A–Z tool that allows users to browse and search provides users a chance to discover the most appropriate database(s) for their information needs. The A–Z database list is an ever-evolving resource that needs more attention and the hope is that vendors and librarians continue to investigate and communicate on this issue and continue to develop tools (commercial or homegrown) that best serve our users.

The UL's project started simply to consolidate the current two database A–Z lists into one, and then migrate the new list into the LibGuides A–Z tool. This provided the UL with the opportunity to create new e-resources and subject librarian workflows, update the listed databases, update each database description, and create guidelines for any new additions to the list. The list and workflows will need constant tending by all members. Ultimately, over the nine months all members of the project met the goal of providing a tool that better supports patrons and staff so they may be more efficient and effective in their research and work endeavors.

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Book Reviews

Elyssa M. Gould

Blockchain. Ed. by Sandra Hirsch and Susan Alman. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2020. 87 p. $24.99 softcover (ISBN 978-0-839-1743-5).

This small book is a concise guide to understanding something that may not be a profound part of libraries in the future. This book explains the basics of blockchain that library personnel will need to know in the event something like it replaces the current data structures of information management. As stated in the introduction, it is "not a guide or manual, but a conversation starter," and the grant-subsidized research by the co-editors spearheads the complimentary chapters in an orderly manner (xi). Blockchain, with its time-stamped transactions residing in "safe" locations, is a concept that seems the be here to stay.

With all authors being of librarian ilk, the light and dark sides of Blockchain are balanced fairly, and all chapters provide timely subtitles and memorable taglines. The chapter about legal considerations is perhaps the most sobering, as administrators and reference librarians alike will need to be extremely well-versed in this area. Other chapters may also force one to rethink the middle-man and middle-ware that are currently a mainstay of most library management systems, with the idea of "smart contracts" that can devour the feast of library standards and protocols that already exist. Another major issue raised is user privacy, which will require more detail than this conversation starter covers, due to the dizzying concept of decentralized servers.

It would have been helpful to address the financial components of Blockchain in the library (i.e., acquisitions and library fines). There is also very little mention of interconnectivity data shared through different protocols (i.e., legacy software, consortia, interlibrary loan, etc.), and although BIBFRAME is mentioned, it is not able to delve into the intricacies of possible future mappings that would trickle into other fields. Often reading like a panel discussion without the questions and answers, there is much overlap—albeit consistent—but without any contradictions being challenged in depth. On the surface, this can appear like a high-end administrative primer full of buzzwords, but disappointingly does not provide an index or glossary.

This is a good book to which to refer when the occasion calls for it. If Blockchain becomes the norm for governments and medicine, the global disruption will undoubtedly force itself into the realm of education, libraries, and systems of all types. But in an era where "cans" refer to a possible future, this book is essential in providing insights into Blockchain's potential problems and benefits, so that librarians can continue to be on their toes.—*Daniel Lincoln Nolting (dnolting@chatham.edu), Chatham University*

Library Licensing: A Manual for Busy Librarians. By Corey Halaychik and Blake Reagan Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2020. 170 pages. $65.00 softcover (ISBN: 9781440870767).

One of the many challenges librarians face is reviewing and negotiating licensing agreements. Halaychik and Reagan discuss these challenges in *Library Licensing: A Manual for Busy Librarians.* The scope of this book is much broader than the title seems to indicate, covering not only license-related topics regarding electronic resources in its six chapters, but also information on contract management software, Integrated Library Systems (ILS) and maintenance, and services agreements. For this reason, the book can feel unfocused at times. Chapter 1 briefly introduces basic information about contracts, while chapters 2 through 6 give a broad overview of the mechanics of a contract (including common clauses within contracts) and information concerning organizing, managing, and administering contracts, with examples of checklists and contracts in chapter 5 and subsequent appendixes.

This book has two stated objectives for its readers: one, that they will be able to "strengthen your understanding of common contract clauses and issues" and two, "provide you with a starting point to create internal guidelines for your organizations—a 'contract manual', so to speak" (1). Both of these objectives are valuable and worthwhile for librarians trying to navigate contracts and licensing. While the book's organization may prove to be slightly challenging, in part due to its broad scope, both objectives are met within the book.

Chapters 4, 5, and appendix A are the most valuable portions of the text, especially to librarians who are new to licensing. These chapters give a descriptive analysis of the processes associated with administering and managing contracts, along with examples of language that can be used in contract negotiations. Appendix A offers a sample checklist of what should be included in the licensing agreements. The appendixes also include examples of master agreements and standard licensing agreements, though not all the examples given appear pertinent to library-related services. For example, it is hard to see how a license for "Appendix E: Sample Master Lease for Students" (151) relates to services offered by or for the library and for licensing librarians. The quality of advice among the different steps is also uneven at times.

A key problem to note is that the editor for Libraries Unlimited did not do their due diligence in editing the book. For example, in chapter 2, "Contract Language," the focus of the chapter is "to provide information and recommendations for numerous types of contract clauses" (10). The first four pages after the chapter introduction, however, go into great detail about contract maintenance software and ILS, which is what the authors said they would not treat in great detail. That content is not unimportant, but it is difficult to see how it fits organizationally into a chapter on contract language. Another example is how the text abruptly moves from service and maintenance agreements in the first two chapters, to electronic resource contracts, in the third chapter, "Organizing Contracts," the latter entailing a plethora of terms and conditions and contract clauses quite different from the previously discussed contracts. The interweaving of contractual language in chapter 3 is confusing to understand. It seems that the information could have been collated differently into chapters regarding service and maintenance agreement clauses and another chapter on electronic resource license agreement clauses. Having both types of agreements discussed together creates confusion, especially for those new to the process, which is the intended audience of the book.

One of the book's strengths is that the co-authors are from diverse backgrounds: Halaychik, a librarian who manages the licensing process at his library, has collaborated with a legal and procurement expert, Reagan. Both authors have dealt with contracts and licensing in their respective positions. Having a procurement officer's perspective offers a unique perspective to the literature that librarians may not have considered. Another strength is the examples of wording one could use in the license negotiations with vendors in chapters 3 and 5. Despite this strength, the authors often refer to other books and resources because the scope of the book is so much larger than can be addressed in one volume. This makes it difficult for the reader to decide to continue to read this book or to refer to the other sources, a puzzling decision since this book is purportedly intended for busy librarians.

The intended audience for this book is those beginning or new to the licensing process or those struggling to understand common issues in contract language. It is also intended for those who are too busy to read standard licensing materials. Despite its organizational flaws, this book provides valuable content for its intended audience. —*Kristy White (whitek9@duq.edu), Duquesne University*

Metadata for Transmedia Resources. By Ana Vukadin. Cambridge, MA: Elsevier, Chandos, 2019. 186 pages. $78.95 softcover (ISBN 978-0-08-101293-2).

From the moment that author Ana Vukadin invokes the memory of small-town murder victim Laura Palmer on page one of *Metadata for Transmedia Resources*, the reader is transported into a world of intertextuality, transfictionality, and various fictional worlds that seem stranger and yet just as familiar as Twin Peaks. Using liberal amounts of examples from popular culture and literary canons—from J. K. Rowling's Wizarding World of Harry Potter to the Wachowskis' Matrix—Vukadin goes down the veritable rabbit hole of transmedia resources, explains why transmedia resources matter increasingly to libraries, and outlines best practices in describing and organizing the metadata for transmedia resources. Resplendent with modeling examples and illustrations from fictional worlds, the subtle differences in and complexity of transmedia resources becomes clear.

Vukadin writes, "Transmedia is relatively easily identified, but not so easily defined" (21). Transmedia resources use various communication platforms such as graphic novels, board games, television, film, and literary works, to deliver parts of a single conceptual whole in innumerable ways. Skipping from historical examples predating the digital realm (e.g., Richard Wagner) to the most recent alternate, augmented, and/or virtual realities, transmedia combines delivery forms with various types of bibliographic relationships, making complex networks and graphs of metadata. Although the scope, structure, and content in fictional worlds might vary across delivery method, focusing on transmedia resources and storytelling commonly encountered in library collections allows for an intimate portrait. Chapter 2 describes the compositional structure (intercompositional versus intracompositional) of transmedia, defines transfictionality, and what transmedia is not. So often, we inhabit these fictional worlds as readers and media consumers without fully appreciating their underpinnings. Vukadin discusses the topos (specific time and place), mythos (lore of a fictional world), and ethos (set of ideas, beliefs and behaviors) that surround the developing narrative.

Chapter 3, titled "Why organize information about transmedia?," reminds us gently that an era of ever more complex and richly diverse media coexists in a time where library resources and finances are limited. However, Vukadin draws media literacy, information literacy, and transmedia literacy together with the library catalog and bibliographic metadata's tasks of helping teachers effectively choose instructional resources and developing children's narrative skills and how to navigate and analyze information. Ongoing cataloging trends in automation, crowdsourcing, and reusing information from knowledge domains are all partial solutions to this resource intensive transmedia description.

After readers are introduced to transmedia resources and another chapter justifies why the organization of transmedia resources is important for libraries, the following is addressed: How DO we organize information about transmedia? Vukadin used the International Federation of Library Associations Library Reference Model (IFLA LRM) to great effect by using the Work, Expression, Manifestation, and Item (WEMI) stack.[1] Beginning with the development of the FR-Family (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, Authority Data, and Subject Authority Data, respectively), FRBRoo (the FR-Family expressed in object-oriented framework),[2] and the eventual harmonization with CIDOC CRM,[3] the author discusses recent developments in current cataloging and metadata thought. Transmedia resources use the eleven bibliographic entities defined in IFLA LRM, noting that "transmedia resources are not the main reason behind this paradigm shift, but might greatly benefit from it" (113) as this "analytical structure is essential for machine-reasoning applications that are envisaged to increasingly provide services for end-users" (117). Finally, Vukadin ends with a series of recommendations for bibliographic modeling of transmedia: (1) a recommendation for fully adopting the WEMI structure as a way of establishing transfictional relationships; (2) a recommendation for paying more attention to work and expressional-level information with emphasis on work-to-work relationships and subject relationships; (3) a recommendation for organizing intercompositional transmedia without over-structuring with super works; (4) a recommendation to include metadata for "ofness" as well as "aboutness," especially for increased discoverability of fictional library resources; (5) a recommendation for how to model ephemeral media forms; and concludes with a recommendation to implement the IFLA LRM re-scoping of agents to real-life beings.

Catalogers, metadata wranglers, librarians, and/or library data workers interested in clear and practical examples of IFLA LRM concepts such as bibliographic families, advice on modeling super works, understanding diachronic works, representative expressions, meta-works, and complex works, should read this book. This book gives invaluable IFLA LRM modeling advice for complex situations. Vukadin has written an engrossing, thoughtful, and engaging read. This reviewer found herself particularly enjoying the sections on the authoritative cannon versus fan fiction. In reviewing this work, this reviewer had to stop and remind herself to enjoy it a little less while spending a bit more time contemplating the large potential that our current paradigm shift in description practices holds for us, our users, and our immediate metadata futures. In particular, the sections on modeling events and ephemeral media forms are thought provoking and fill an ontological gap. Although the modeling examples therein focus exclusively on transmedia resources, one can see how general cataloging can also benefit from the recommendations. With a firm footing in a wide swath of bibliographic practice and theory often quoting industry heavy-hitters, such as Cutter, Svenonius, Lubetzky, Coyle, Tillet, Dunsire, and Gorman, this work lays out a canvas of our bibliographic history and builds up a picture of the future. The book *Metadata for Transmedia Resources* closes on a substantial list of recommendations and strategies for libraries to implement.—*Kalan Knudson Davis (kkdavis@umn.edu), University of Minnesota*

References

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