- hold "contests," conduct surveys, or compile lists and discussions of (1) reference works based on input from librarians about their "desert island" source, (2) the most valuable things a reference librarian needs to know or "things you have learned on the job about reference services and questions," (3) reference works librarians would like to see published in areas not served well by current publications, and (4) "the most unusual reference work you have ever seen/used."

I have been developing this list for awhile now, and I was thinking about it for a meeting when, in this journal, Denice Adkins and Sanda Erdelez (School of Information Science and Learning Technologies, University of Missouri–Columbia), published "An Exploratory Survey of Reference Source Instruction in LIS Courses."[4] In their article, they sketch desiderata for a tool with which to teach reference sources. From their survey of courses they conclude that they would like to find ways to present to students the sources they should know according to such successful course strategies as, "students' classroom presentation of sources, hands-on assignments, and fieldwork that allows them to work with sources."[5] They describe the need for "an instruction tool" that would offer means for access to and comparison of sources, instruction in how to use specific sources, and video clips of reference interviews for students to use as case studies.[6] I submit that the *Guide* website could become this tool, collaboratively built by *Guide* editors, LIS educators, and library practitioners.

## CONCLUSION

The exponential increase in the amount of information available and the dominance of search in our thinking about finding information place an ever greater premium on getting quickly to information that is reliable and usable. This is where the new *Guide* is ideally situated for twenty-first-century reference.

Online catalogs, wonderful though they are, do not help users readily identify reference works, nor can they identify the most appropriate sources for a given need. Moreover, miraculous as search is for its needle-in-a-haystack retrieval capacity, it does not create the context for learning that a browseable, topically organized, selective, and annotated library of proven reference sources can. Because the *Guide* creates a network of quality sources and teaches the structure of disciplinary knowledge, it gains value in the new world of information by deploying the expertise of its compilers in the online information network, establishing a repertory of

trusted, go-to sources, calling attention to sources that librarians might miss as they search the Web or a library catalog, and offering guidance in the form of introductory essays and annotations. By these means, librarians and LIS students not only can find their way through the maze of possible sources, but they can develop their local collection and learn about topics they are not familiar with as they work with users.

The *Guide* breaks new ground in terms of the sources it lists and the medium in which it is published, but it also very consciously incorporates the traditions established by its predecessors, traditions appropriate to the era of electronic publication. As all editions attest, beginning with Alice Bertha Kroeger's first in 1902 through Robert Balay's eleventh in 1996, the *Guide* has always been a portal to reference literature and has depended on participation by reference librarians and others concerned with reference librarianship education and practice. As a gateway, therefore, and as a communally built resource, the old *Guide* finds itself in its latest incarnation to be as modern as Web 2.0. With its searchable, browseable, internally and externally linked database, its distributed compilation and editing, and its interactive features, the online *Guide* is at once a new portal and communal publication and the same one it has always been.

I hope that advice from members of RUSA, ALISE, and other sectors of the reference community will play an important role in developing the content and organization of the *Guide*. I also hope that, through their online interactions with it, the *Guide* will establish itself as a focal point for the several communities of publishers, practitioners, students, and educators who work together to shape the future of reference service.

### References and Notes

1. Robert H. Kieft, "When Reference Works Are Not Books: The New Edition of the *Guide to Reference Books*," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (Summer 2002): 330–34.
2. I have been asked to contribute this guest editorial at the kind invitation of Diane Zabel, *RUSQ* Editor. Some of this material appears in slightly different form in the *Guide to Reference*.
3. Alice Bertha Kroeger, "Books and Articles on Reference Books and Reference Work," *Guide to the Study and Use of Reference Books: A Manual for Librarians, Teachers and Students* (Chicago: ALA, 1902): 6–8.
4. Denice Adkins and Sanda Erdelez, "An Exploratory Survey of Reference Source Instruction in LIS Courses," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 50–60.
5. Ibid., 58.
6. Ibid.

# ERRATUM

The feature article by Cynthia L. Gregory ("But I Want a Real Book": An Investigation of Undergraduates' Usage and Attitudes toward Electronic Books") in the Spring 2008 issue (Volume 47, No. 3) contains an error on page 272. The title of table 5 should read: "Reasons 66 Percent Preferred a Print Book."

The editor apologizes for the error.