
A Tough Act to Follow

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I count myself lucky to have been involved in *Reference & User Services Quarterly* for the past eight years, beginning with *RUSQ* 44:3. During that time I have had the privilege of editing the readers' advisory column and occasionally reviewing manuscript submissions to the journal. In both capacities I have been able to observe the meticulous work and attention to detail involved in publishing a quarterly peer-reviewed journal. I am awed and excited by the opportunity to take on this larger responsibility for editing the flagship publication of the Reference and User Services Association. *RUSQ* has had long tradition of excellent editors. I am particularly grateful for having had over the past eight years the guidance of three superb editors whose work serves as a model for me as I take up the editor's role. First under Connie Van Fleet and Danny Wallace, and for the past six years under Diane Zabel, *RUSQ* has offered readers the best writing about issues and practices of concern to reference librarians. Their leadership and careful selection of material for the journal has ensured its role as the foremost journal of reference theory and practice for librarians from all types of libraries. Connie, Danny, and Diane demonstrated a commitment to putting out a first rate journal that sets a high standard at which to aim. I thank them for their guidance, and I particularly would like to thank Diane for her patience in walking me through the complexities of the editing and refereeing process over the past several months, smoothing the transition.

I would like also thank the members of the *RUSQ* Board for this past year, Judith M. Arnold, Gwen Arthur, Sian Brannon, Corinne Hill, Jessica E. Moyer, Judith M. Nixon, Lisa O'Connor, Amber A. Prentiss, Michael Stephens, and Molly Strothman. Throughout the year, *RUSQ* Board members review submissions to the journal. Their comments and suggestions allow the authors to focus and refine their arguments, making the end product stronger. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve with them.

One of the strengths of RUSA as an organization is the way it brings together academic, public, and special librarians as well as LIS faculty to work on issues that are of importance in the areas of reference and user services. My time in RUSA has been immeasurably enriched by the opportunities I have had to work with passionate and thoughtful librarians across all types of libraries. I think that *RUSQ* reflects this value in that its articles and columns cover topics of interest regardless of what sort of library you are in. As the areas of reference and user services are changing rapidly, RUSA and *RUSQ* have been at the forefront of that change, offering ideas, new approaches, and analyses that draw on the strength of past practice to inform our current and future practice. My goal for

the journal is to continue to seek out articles that will support and guide the profession as we move forward.

We are faced with a rapidly changing field. Ebooks and other digital materials continue to create concerns and issues that must be addressed across the profession. New modes of reference service are continually being tested and evaluated. Our users may no longer be coming into the library, or doing so only infrequently, and we need to rethink how we interact with them. Technology offers us new opportunities in all areas of the profession—collection development, readers' advisory, citation management, reference service, etc. Librarians continue to face questions relating to user privacy, copyright and intellectual freedom. Articles in *RUSQ* over the past year have addressed these topics and many more. *RUSQ* also remains an important source for reviews of reference resources and other professional materials.

RUSQ has been a solely digital journal for a year now. While there are always going to be issues and concerns with a move like that, I would like to particularly thank Diane and the staffs at RUSA office, at ALA Publications, and at Metapress (our host site) for making the transition as smooth as possible and one that will in the long run best serve the needs of RUSA members. Over the course of the coming year, I will be working with RUSA office staff to continue to look for ways to ensure that RUSA members can get the most out of the journal. We are exploring ideas such as posting the table of contents to the RUSA blog and sending it out to RUSA members as a reminder that the each issue of the journal is now available. Other ideas from RUSA members on how to make access to the journal easier are more than welcome, and you can contact me with thoughts or suggestions.

Beginning with *RUSQ* 52:1, there will be a mix of old and new faces in the column and materials review editor positions. I am delighted to have the following editors staying on with *RUSQ*. Karen Antell and Tammy Voelker will continue to edit the Professional Materials and Reference Book review columns respectively. Additionally, Marianne Ryan will continue editing the Management column and Lisa O'Connor will continue as editor of the Information Literacy column. I am pleased to introduce several new column editors and one new column. Laurie Tarulli will be taking on responsibility for the Readers' Advisory column. Eric Phetteplace will be editing the Accidental Technologist column. Kelly

Polacek will be the editor of the Alert Collector. Karen Antell and Molly Strothmann will be co-editors of a new column "Taking Issues." As they say in the introduction to their first column "'Taking Issues' will provide a space for substantive argument and deliberation about topics of importance to the practice of reference and user services. Contributions to this column will consider topics that have generated professional controversies and debate them from two (or more) opposing viewpoints." I am very much looking forward to working with the column editors to continue the tradition of offering *RUSQ* readers informative and thoughtful pieces that support them in their daily work.

I would also like to welcome the following individuals who have accepted appointments to the *RUSQ* Editorial Advisory Board for the period 2012-2015: Jenny Bossaller, Heidi Jacobs, Kate Kosturski, Scott Seaman, Carol Singer, Nicolette Sosulski, Laurie Tarulli, Dave Tyckoson, Chiang A. Wang, and Neal Wyatt. This group brings a wide range of experience and interests to the board, I am excited about working with them to continue *RUSQ*'s tradition of excellence.

I hope that the articles and columns published in *RUSQ* will continue to serve as a stimulus for conversation. These pieces should not be seen as endpoints, but rather as milestones on the road to strengthening the practice of reference librarianship. They should offer ideas and opinions that cause us to think about what we do, and through that reflection to improve our practice. To that end, I will be continuing to explore ways to make the journal content more interactive and more integrated into RUSA's goal of expanding professional development opportunities for RUSA members. As it becomes increasingly challenging for librarians to attend conferences, *RUSQ* serves an important role in professional development. RUSA is exploring new ways to offer online training, and it is my plan that *RUSQ* will be part of that exploration and that we will be able to find ways to incorporate the journal's strengths into that essential piece of RUSA's strategic directions.

Stepping into the editorship of a long-running and well-respected journal is an awe inspiring task. Previous editors have set the bar high. But that gives us here at *RUSQ* something to aim for, and I am confident that with the help of the Board and the column editors that *RUSQ* will continue to be of value to RUSA members and the broader library world.