
Connecting People to What They Need to Know

M. Kathleen Kern

M. Kathleen Kern is the new editor of RUSQ, 2018–2021.

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The title of this column comes from Dr. Carla Hayden's interview at the RUSA President's Program at ALA Annual 2018. In the words of the Librarian of Congress, "Reference is, of course, facts. But it is also connecting people to what they need to know, when they need to know it." Her statement was not just about reference, but about the core purpose of what we do in our libraries—all types of libraries—every day.

Listening to the conversation between past ALA President Courtney Young and Dr. Hayden, I was inspired by the themes that cut across library types and connected with the mission of RUSQ. RUSQ is focused on the work that we do, rather than where we perform that work. Place and community are immensely important but our fundamental professional value lies in how we connect with those communities. RUSQ's columns, research articles, and reviews focus on our shared goals and work so that we can grow professionally through reading a broad range of perspectives, ideas, and research. This quarter's issue exemplifies this model, presenting content from public and academic librarians on topics ranging from reading to reference to career changes.

Dr. Hayden was prescient of this issue of RUSQ when she said, "You can learn a subject. Don't close yourself off to opportunities. Think about how your experiences can be transferred. The subject matter might change, but the doing reference, giving service, it's the same." She spoke from experience: she started as a children's services librarian and became the Librarian of Congress (making some unusual career moves along the way). This issue introduces a new column called Career Conversations, edited by Elizabeth Leonard. The column's format brings together stories from the field, research, and Elizabeth's own voice to provide practical suggestions for facing career challenges that are common across all libraries. This quarter's column focuses on making changes across types of organizations. Moving forward, Elizabeth welcomes your ideas for future topics, so email her at RUSQCareerConvo@gmail.com.

Marianne Ryan and Sarah Dreyfuss provide twenty tips for aspiring researchers, many of which are applicable to other types of professional writing. As the editor of RUSQ, I endorse their advice! Researchers and authors should also know that I am open discussing articles that are in development. The RUSQ review process is blind, but I can discuss questions you have during your research and writing process to help improve your methods and manuscript.

The From the Committees of RUSA section contains the newly adopted RUSA Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). This statement frames RUSA's values

around EDI and how they apply to library services and to RUSA members.

It is a coincidental quirk of the submission and review process that the two research articles in this issue both focus on issues related to reading. Daniel Tracy's study provides a deep look into e-book and print reading, specifically revealing how often and why readers "format shift," with implications across library environments and vendor platforms. Elizabeth Brookbank, Anne-Marie Davis, and Lydia Harlan surveyed popular reading collections in academic libraries in the Northwest to reveal why and how the collections are built and maintained, the challenges those collections face, and the long and sometimes bumpy history of popular reading in post-secondary libraries.

Everywhere I look in this issue I see connections. Some of them are more personal than others, but I think you will find your own connections as you read. I was excited to receive the Information Literacy column, which connects research consultations with student success outcomes. Esther Grassian accepted this column months before I became editor, but Robin Miller is one of my former graduate assistants, which is the personal connection.

The Alert Collector column in this issue connects a current topic of interest (military capabilities and spending) with international sources of data about nuclear and conventional weapons. Many of these sources are freely available. I was immersed in military topics in my last position (I too have had a nonlinear career) so it felt like closing a circle to see David Lincove present this as a topic of interest to patrons and librarians across the globe. The For Your Enrichment column is sort of an "Editor's Choice" where I can present a topic that might not quite fit another column. Systematic Review Services is probably something only familiar to health science librarians, but Amy Riegelman and Megan Kocher make a good case for why and how academic librarians should consider this innovative service for social science researchers.

It is customary for the new editor to open with a little about herself and to thank the outgoing editors. I was too excited about the content of this issue and Dr. Hayden's inspiration to start in the conventional way, and I'll save talking about myself for another time. I do want to thank the *RUSQ* editors who preceded me for creating such a great journal over the years and the Editorial Board for trusting me with such a large responsibility. Over a decade ago, *RUSQ* editor Diane Zabel invited me to create and edit the Accidental Technologist column and asked me to peer-review manuscripts. I learned a lot from her that will help me over the next three years as editor. As the most recent editor, Barry Trott handed me a process that is well organized and a journal that is well respected and now open access. He has made taking over the helm as easy as it could possibly be. I greatly look forward to working with the new RUSA Executive Director, Jessica Hughes, the other new members of the RUSA office, and Ann Brown, the new RUSA President. We will support each other in our new roles and in making the best possible organization and journal for librarians and staff working in public services.

As the new editor, I have chosen to keep a lot the same, at least for now, because *RUSQ* has a format that I believe works for our readers. *RUSQ* will continue to be a mix of columns, scholarly articles, and book reviews with occasional content from the committees of RUSA. The Career Conversations column is new and fulfills one of the goals that I set out when I applied for the editorship, so I hope you find it as engaging as I do. *RUSQ* will continue to provide quality content authored by a broad range of librarians to support the shared work that is important throughout our libraries. Every article and column in an issue might not speak to you immediately or directly, but I encourage you to peek in to read something that you might see as "outside" of your area. What are you waiting for—jump in! You might make some unexpected connections.