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news

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Features

Departments

This month's cover features an etching titled "Porch Scene" by printmaker Paul Kucharyson. The image is held in the Case Western Reserve University Works Progress Administration: Prints of the Federal Arts Project collection. This project was part of the 1935 United States Work Progress Administration effort to help the unemployed by hiring them for public works projects. The Federal Arts Project employed 350 Cleveland artists. This digitized collection from the digital library, Digital Case, contains 261 digital objects, and is available at http://hdl.handle.net/2186/ksl:wpaPrints.

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Editorial offices: (312) 280-2513

Email: dfree@ala.org

Website: crln.acrl.org

Product advertising: Contact Pam Marino, ACRL Advertising, c/o Choice, 575 Main Street, Suite 300, Middletown, CT 06457; (860) 347-1387.

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Teresa Anderson Named ACRL Executive Director

Teresa Anderson became the executive director of ACRL in May 2025. A Certified Association Executive (CAE), Anderson has spent more than three decades at ASIS International, a professional organization for security management professionals. Within ASIS, Anderson held several positions, most recently as vice president of innovation and outreach. Anderson created cross-functional teams to develop and execute product strategies that align with market needs and company goals, resulting in an annual revenue increase. She also cultivated strategic partnerships in alignment with business objectives and growth strategies and oversaw content strategy, guiding the editorial team in curating content around products and services. Anderson holds a Master of Arts in International Studies from the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom, and a Bachelor of Arts in English and Communications from Eureka College in Illinois.

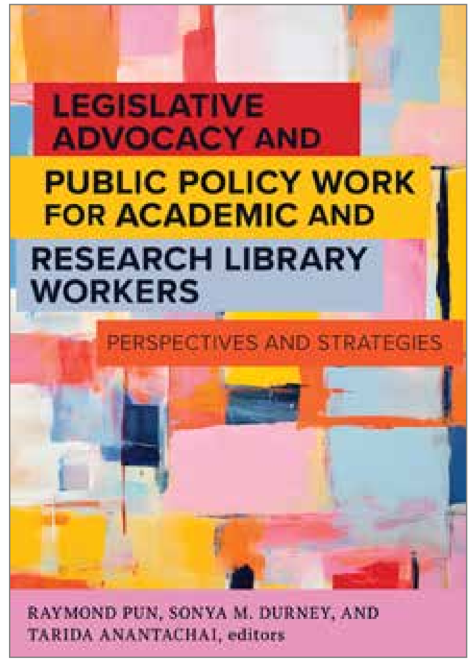
Allison Payne, who became the ACRL interim executive director in 2023, will continue her work in ACRL with a promotion to associate director of operations and strategic initiatives. In this role, she will manage and implement special programs and projects, including those pertaining to ACRL's equity, diversity, and inclusion goal area; review, develop, and update policy; and serve as a leader for ACRL operations and efficiency. Payne will also continue to manage ACRL's governance functions by supporting the work of the ACRL Board of Directors and ACRL Budget and Finance Committee.

UNC Charlotte Names 2025 Atkins Fellows

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte J. Murrey Atkins Library has named three fellows in the ninth year of the Atkins Fellows summer program. This program offers paid, full-time work experience for MLIS students at the midpoint in their library, archives, or information science degree programs, and graduates who completed their programs in the last year. Participation in the program includes an additional stipend to help fellows with housing and transportation costs. Each Atkins Fellow works on a project throughout the summer, participates in workshops, tours and panel discussions, and engages in department and library committee meetings. The purpose of the program is to prepare MLIS students and recent graduates to work in academic libraries, archives, and other institutions, while supporting the mission, goals, and initiatives of Atkins Library. The 2025 Atkins Fellows are Bryant Taylor of San Jose State University, Isabel Braico of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Sherese Card of the University of Washington. Projects include work with the health sciences collection, student wellness, community archives, and AI research and instruction. To learn more about the current Fellows and alumni, along with the program and projects, please visit https://library.charlotte.edu/atkinsfellows/.

New from ACRL—Legislative Advocacy and Public Policy Work for Academic and Research Library Workers: Perspectives and Strategies

ACRL recently announced the publication of L*egislative Advocacy and Public Policy Work for Academic and Research Library Workers: Perspectives and Strategies*, edited by Raymond Pun, Sonya M. Durney, and Tarida Anantachai. This new book addresses academic library workers' roles in influencing legislative and public policies and how to make meaningful impacts.



Library advocacy is a deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to develop understanding and support for libraries and the communities they serve. Advocacy is not optional—it is a vital responsibility to protect the integrity and impact of libraries in society. *Legislative Advocacy and Public Policy Work for Academic and Research Library Workers* is a comprehensive resource addressing our specific roles in influencing the various legislative and public policies that directly impact academic libraries, our academic communities, and the library community at large. It explores the ways academic and research library workers are engaging in advocacy, from testifying at governmental levels to collaborating with diverse constituents and legislators to bringing our academic advocacy efforts to discussions within state and regional library associations.

As educators and researchers, library workers bring invaluable expertise to the legislative table. We can help ensure that decisions affecting academic and research libraries and their communities are informed, equitable, and aligned with the values of intellectual freedom and lifelong learning. *Legislative Advocacy and Public Policy Work for Academic and Research Library Workers* offers ways to make meaningful legislative and policy impacts.

Legislative Advocacy and Public Policy Work for Academic and Research Library Workers: Perspectives and Strategies is available for purchase in print and as an ebook through the ALA Online Store; in print through Amazon.com; and by telephone order at (866) 746-7252 in the US or (770) 442-8633 for international customers.

Gale Launches Online Digital Humanities Course for Undergraduate Students, Digital Scholar Lab Enhancements

To teach undergraduate students critical digital and data literacy skills through engagement with primary source archives and text and data mining (TDM) tools, Gale, part of Cengage Group, has launched Introduction to Digital Humanities. This new online course allows instructors to integrate complete or individual modules into their teaching or select specific activities for use in their curriculum. This free course is currently in beta and available in the Gale Digital Scholar Lab Learning Center at no additional cost to Gale Primary Sources and Lab customers. Additional information is available at https://review.gale.com/2025/04/01/introduction-to-digital-humanities/.

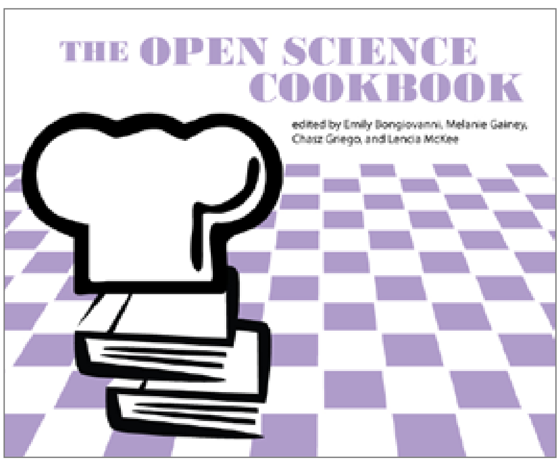
Gale is also enhancing Gale Digital Scholar Lab with seven major tool updates that expand TDM research possibilities for students, faculty, and librarians. Developed based on feedback from Lab users, these updates give researchers the ability to personalize their approach to TDM with more customization, expanding the possibilities of research and creating new ways of exploring primary sources. Gale Digital Scholar Lab is a cloud-based research environment designed to transform how scholars and students access and analyze Gale primary source materials—and their local collections—by offering solutions to some of the most common challenges facing researchers in the humanities and social sciences. Learn more about the Lab and the new enhancements at https://www.gale.com/primary-sources/digital-scholar-lab.

Research Gate, AccScience Launch Journal Home

ResearchGate and AccScience Publishing (ASP) have announced a new Journal Home partnership to broaden the international reach, readership, and authorship of ASP journals. The Journal Home partnership will initially cover 5 fully open access journals covering engineering and medicine disciplines. The partnership will enable ASP to increase brand reach and visibility for its journals with ResearchGate's community of more than 5 million researcher members, in particular across Europe and North America. The journals will benefit from the seamless integration of all version-of-record into the ResearchGate platform, increasing discoverability for all ASP's content and growing readership worldwide; an increased journal brand profile, with dedicated profile pages that showcase key information and content, along with prominent journal branding on all associated article pages; continuous engagement with authors throughout their researcher cycle and with unique audience insights; and advanced experience for authors, with automatic upload of new content to author profiles, metrics showing who is engaging with their work, and a new way to directly engage with readers. Complete details are available at https://www.researchgate.net/journal-home.

ACRL Releases The Open Science Cookbook

ACRL recently released *The Open Science Cookbook*, edited by Emily Bongiovanni, Melanie Gainey, Chasz Griego, and Lencia McKee, a collection of lesson plans and learning activities for supporting collaborative, openly accessible, reproducible research.



Open science promotes more transparent, accessible, and reproducible research and extends beyond the sciences, fostering this inclusivity across all disciplines. There are many benefits to practicing open science, including opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, increased visibility and impact, and enhanced reusability of research.

The Open Science Cookbook provides a wide variety of lesson plans and learning activities for supporting collaborative, transparent, openly accessible, and reproducible research. In five sections, it has something for beginners to more advanced practitioners and for different audience sizes:

- Program Development
- Instruction
- Outreach
- Events
- Collaborations and Partnerships

Just as freely sharing data and workflows enables key breakthroughs in major fields, sharing open science practices and resources creates an even stronger foundation for this necessary growth at institutions around the world. *The Open Science Cookbook* offers innovative ways for academic libraries to promote open science through advocacy and education.

The Open Science Cookbook is available for purchase in print through the ALA Online Store and Amazon.com; by telephone order at (800) 621-2736 or (773) 702-7010; and as an open access edition.

JSTOR Digital Stewardship Services

JSTOR recently announced a new digital collection stewardship solution designed to help libraries and archives describe, preserve, manage, and share their unique collections at scale—reducing backlogs and increasing discovery. JSTOR Digital Stewardship Services integrates digital asset management, long-term preservation (powered by Portico), increased discovery through JSTOR, and a first-of-its-kind, AI-assisted metadata generation tool that accelerates collection processing while maintaining expert oversight. Libraries can join the JSTOR Digital Stewardship Services Charter Program—a two-year, fee-based initiative that invites institutions to join JSTOR in shaping the future of AI-assisted digital stewardship. Charter participants will gain early access to the platform, contribute feedback, and play a leading role in ensuring that AI serves the values and needs of the profession. Learn more at https://about.jstor.org/blog/preserving-the-past-building-the-future-together-introducing-jstor-digital-stewardship-services/.

Clarivate Expands Academic AI Platform

Clarivate recently announced the expansion of its Academic AI Platform, helping institutions harness agentic AI to accelerate productivity; save time for researchers, students, and staff; and engage users in the digital environments they already use. Beginning in April 2025, Clarivate introduced AI Agents to support key academic workflows. Part of this expansion initiates the development of an Agent Builder and community-driven AI tools, supported by a Development Partner Program set to launch in 2025. As the Academic AI Platform evolves, it continues to focus on academic needs and be guided by the Clarivate AI principles, keeping integrity and human oversight at the center of decision-making. Learn more at https://clarivate.com/news/clarivate-expands-its-academic-ai-platform-introducing-agentic-ai-for-research-and-learning/.

Tech Bits . . .

Brought to you by the ACRL ULS Technology in University Libraries Committee

Want to take advantage of the power of artificial intelligence when conducting literature searches? Semantic Scholar is an AI-powered tool specifically designed to find and evaluate scientific literature—providing literature recommendations and summaries based on a collection of more than 200 million research papers in a wide variety of academic fields. Use Semantic Scholar to facilitate discovery, explore research topics and save time by reviewing the AI-created, quick-glance summaries of papers. After creating an account, users can save and manage an online library, create notifications, and receive personalized research feeds and updates based on their research interests. Semantic Scholar is a free tool provided by Ai2, a nonprofit AI research institute founded in 2014 by Paul Allen.

—Samuel Dyal
Roseman University of Health Sciences Library

Semantic Scholar
https://www.semanticscholar.org

Glenda Alvin, Erica A. Bruchko, and Michelle Cronquist

The African American Subject Funnel Project

Definitions, History, and Processes

In 2021, Jean L. Cooper, the principal cataloger at the University of Virginia, sat down to catalog the book *Slavery at Sea* by Sowande' M. Mustakeem.[1] Published in 2009, the text examines the history of the Middle Passage—the forced voyage of enslaved Africans from West and Central Africa to the Americas beginning in the sixteenth century until the abolition of slavery—and the suffering experienced during the journey.[2] In preparing to describe the book, Cooper began to search for the best Library of Congress (LC) subject terms to assign—including the book's central subject, the Middle Passage, and the broader concept of the transatlantic slave trade. She soon discovered, however, that these concepts did not exist in the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). *How could there be no official subject heading for the Middle Passage?* she wondered.[3]

Cooper's experience reflects the frustrations of librarians and library staff across the profession who have long lamented inaccurate terms and omissions within LCSH. But while librarians across the field have identified these problems, Cooper's experience differed from most of her colleagues in one important way. As a longtime member of the African American Subject Funnel Project, she knew a pathway to officially add these terms. By enlisting the help of her Funnel colleagues, Cooper created new heading proposals and submitted them to the LC. In March 2022, LC officially added "Middle Passage" and "Transatlantic slave trade" to LCSH.

This article describes the process of adding new and updating existing LCSH subject headings through the lens of the African American Subject Funnel Project. It argues that by understanding the process through which subject headings are added and changed, librarians and library staff can contribute to a more inclusive catalog that better facilitates research on African American life and culture.[4]

The African American Subject Funnel Project Defined

The African American Subject Funnel Project is a group of librarians who work to improve LC subject headings related to African American history and culture. Working collectively, they propose new and updated terms to LC for inclusion in the Subject Authorities database. These standardized subjects, which are used widely by libraries, provide catalogers with a fixed and consistent way of describing various concepts. In turn, they also provide a pathway for users to discover research materials about similar topics. According to one recent work on controlled vocabularies, they are "a foundational concept in library science" and "provide valuable access points to library resources during search and discovery for patrons."[5]

Glenda Alvin is dean of libraries and media center at Tennessee State University, email: galvin@tnstate.edu. Erica A. Bruchko is African American studies and United States history librarian at Emory University, email: berica@emory.edu. Michelle Cronquist is special collections cataloger at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, email: cronquim@email.unc.edu.

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Since 2019, the African American Subject Funnel Project has submitted more than seventy proposals to LCSH and other LC controlled vocabularies, such as Genre/Form Terms, Demographic Group Terms, and Children's Subject Headings. Some proposals—including the change from "Slaves" to "Enslaved persons"—have required extensive research and work over several months. Other proposed terms, including "Anti-lynching movements" and "African American barbershops," have been comparatively straightforward but have nonetheless allowed for resources to be described more accurately and with greater specificity.

History

In a 1994 ERIC report titled, *Are the Standards Adequate for Organizing African American Studies Resources?*, Dorothy Ann Washington pointed out the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the available LCSH for addressing the descriptive needs of African American studies collections.[6] Washington, who was then the head of cataloging at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, cited other issues such as lack of relevancy and specificity and the need for subject headings that recognized African American identity within the content. She suggested the authorization of ethnic qualifiers and recommended that LC revise and expand the applications for cross-references and explanatory notes for African American studies publications. For example, the Schomburg required the cataloging of many items dealing with free Black people, but LC only offered the descriptor "Afro Americans." The term "freedmen" was allowed as a heading but needed "Afro-American" as an ethnic qualifier or an explanatory note about its relationship to the Black American experience.

Four years later, LC's Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) reached out to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) for assistance with properly identifying African American resources. Subsequently, two LC librarians, Gracie Gilliam and Cornelia Goode, contacted Washington on behalf of the PCC and suggested that she lead the initiative to establish the new funnel. Washington had changed jobs and was serving as the head of the Purdue University Black Cultural Center. Along with Anthony Franks, a cooperative cataloger for LC, Washington presented the idea to the ACRL African American Studies Librarians Section (AFAS) at the 1999 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.[7]

AFAS held workshops on subject heading cataloging at its meetings during 2000–2001. At ALA's Midwinter Meeting in 2001, members voted to establish a funnel with the following objectives: a) to create new subject headings relevant to the African American experience, culture, and history; b) to suggest revisions to subject headings; and c) to provide advisement from subject experts, catalogers, archivists, and others who worked with the discipline for improving access to content. After AFAS transitioned to the African American Studies Librarians Interest Group (AASLIG), the African American Subject Funnel Project continued as a working committee that proposes significant changes to LC's application of terms for the African American experience in the United States.

In 2017, Gemmicka Piper (Indiana University Indianapolis) revitalized the Funnel after a period of inactivity. Through the efforts of other past chairs, including Deborah Tomaras (Marist College) and Staci Ross (formerly of the University of Pittsburgh), and the current chairs, Erica Bruchko (Emory University) and Michelle Cronquist (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), the group has grown to include some 30 active members.

The SACO Process

Funnels, including the African American Funnel, function as part of the Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO), which is part of the PCC, a membership-maintained group originally developed by the LC.[8] The SACO program allows member libraries to submit proposals for new and changed subject headings.[9]

The subject proposal process requires substantial planning, research, and understanding of LCSH's structure. The first step in a subject heading proposal is to identify a work that requires a new subject heading in order to be described accurately. Generally, the proposal will also cite reference works that help to define the concept, demonstrate usage in written works, and give any variant terms. These variant terms will be "see from" references that will allow searchers to find the authorized term. The proposal should also include one or more broader terms that will allow the new heading to fit into the hierarchical structure of LCSH.[10]

After the cataloger prepares a proposal, they enter it in the Classification Web proposal system.[11] On a monthly basis, LC staff compile these proposed headings into a tentative list that is made public so that library staff and others can write to LC with comments.[12] Taking those comments into consideration, LC staff assess the proposal according to their policies as documented in the Subject Headings Manual and make a decision about whether to accept it as is, make changes, or not accept it.[13] LC also holds public editorial meetings where some proposals are discussed and attendees can share their opinions.[14] If a proposal is not accepted, it appears in the Summary of Decisions, which explains why it was not accepted or requires further revisions, which may be because of specific policies or may be a judgment call on LC's part.[15] LC maintains final control over what will or will not be included in LCSH. If the heading is accepted, it will be added to LCSH and available for use in catalog records.

Preparing Subject Proposals

An example of a new heading that the African American Subject Funnel proposed is one for the Great Migration, which was a surprising omission from LCSH, in 2021. More general headings like "African Americans–Migrations–History–20th century" and "Migration, Internal–United States–History–20th century" were used for works on this topic instead. In the proposal, Funnel members cited a book about the Great Migration that would require this subject heading in order to be fully and accurately described. The group also cited several reference sources that defined the term and gave some idea of the dates when the migration took place. Unlike most other events, the migration did not have a clear beginning and ending, so the final approved subject heading of "Great Migration, ca. 1914–ca. 1970" reflected the approximate dates of the era found in reference sources.

Figure 1: This updated section of the authority record for the "Great Migration, ca. 1914–ca. 1970" is available via the Library of Congress Authorities Database.

The African American Subject Funnel has also worked to update the language of existing LCSH headings that have become out of date or offensive. The Funnel's first project of this sort was to change "Blacks" to "Black people," as well as "Whites" to "White people" for the sake of consistency with other terms describing ethnic groups. This change came about because of a discussion in a Funnel meeting in which African American members discussed feeling offended and not represented by the outdated heading "Blacks." In order to change an existing LCSH term such as this one, the burden is on the proposer to show why the existing term is problematic and an updated term would be better. The LC does not want to change LCSH terms without a good reason, because thousands of libraries that use LCSH will have to update their catalogs, which is known as bibliographic file maintenance. In this case, the Funnel was able to find dictionaries and style guides that consistently recommended "Black people" in place of "Blacks." After we presented this evidence, LC agreed that a change was warranted. However, the change was not as straightforward as just changing two headings; there were many other LCSH terms that needed to be updated as well, such as "Blacks in art" and "Working class whites." In all, well over 100 records were individually updated by Funnel members.[16]

Challenges

Trying to improve LCSH to make it more inclusive can be challenging. This was clear in 2024 when the Funnel proposed a subject heading for "White flight," which was needed to accurately describe works describing the exodus of white people from neighborhoods that were becoming racially integrated. In the proposal, the group cited a book about white flight and several reference sources defining the term. However, the Library of Congress rejected the proposal in May 2024 on the grounds that "LCSH does not currently have an established pattern that combines the topic of migration with the social reasoning for that migration. The meeting was concerned that introducing such a pattern, particularly in this case, would contradict the practice in LCSH of preferring neutral, unbiased terminology."[17] This rejection led to a discussion on the SACOLIST listserv where commenters pointed out that this established pattern does in fact exist in terms like "Amenity migration" and even "Great Migration, ca. 1914–ca. 1970."[18] Funnel members were frustrated by this setback. However, trying to improve LCSH is a long-term project that will not happen overnight. A more than 100-year-old controlled vocabulary has many embedded biases that will take many years to undo.

Conclusion

The pathways to change described above represent one way to improve our systems by working within them. Even as we explore new and promising ways of describing information, LCSH remains the most widely used controlled vocabulary in the world.[19] Libraries continue to rely on LCSH to find materials. This ubiquity is, in part, a major source of librarians' frustration with the system. Librarians who regularly use their libraries' catalogs can't help but feel the vocabulary's inescapable reach and yet feel powerless to make changes to it. We are not, however, beholden to the status quo. Through collective effort and advocacy, we can work to rectify the omissions and inaccurate language present in LCSH. The African American Subject Funnel Project is one clear example of this approach to library description and cataloging practices. From its early years to the present, the group has improved LCSH "one subject at a time."[20]

To participate in the African American Subject Funnel Project, please visit the group's website at https://acrl.libguides.com/c.php?g=761433&p=7312552.s.

Notes

1. This article was developed, in part, from a 2023 ACRL presentation titled, "There's No Library of Congress Subject Heading for the Middle Passage or the Great Migration? African American Subject Headings and the Remediation of LCSH." Special thanks to those who attended the panel and offered feedback, as well as to co-presenters Jean Cooper and Deidre Thompson. The authors would also like to thank the following members of the African American Subject Funnel Project who provided comments on this article: Kaylin Blount, Jean Cooper, Edna Foxhall, Staci Ross, Kathy Shields, and Lizzy Walker.

2. Sowande' M. Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

3. Interview with Jean L. Cooper, July 12, 2024.

4. The authors recognize that this slow and steady approach to update LC Authorities is just one part of a much larger, distributed effort to make our library systems more equitable.

5. Catherine Smith, "Controlled Vocabularies: Past, Present, and Future" in *Cataloging and Classification*, eds. Gretchen L. Hoffman and Karen Snow (New York, NY: Routledge, 2021).

6. Dorothy Ann Washington, *Are the Standards Adequate for Organizing African American Studies Resources?* (Washington, DC: Education Resources Documentation Center, 1994), https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED413923.

7. This information was gathered from documents published by the LC in the early 2000s and from the recollections of former Funnel members, and it was collected by former Funnel Coordinator Gemmicka Piper and Glenda Alvin. See also Library of Congress, "AFAS and AASLIG Funnel Project History," https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/documents/AFAS%20and%20AASLIG%20Funnel%20Project%20History.docx; Library of Congress, "African American Subject Headings," https://www.loc.gov/cds/notices/notafro.html; Library of Congress, "Subject Headings for Ethnic Groups," https://www.loc.gov/aba/cyac/ethnic.html; Library of Congress, "African American Subject Funnel Project Background Papers," https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/aframerfun.html.

8. Library of Congress, "SACO – Subject Authority Cooperative Program," https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/index.html; Library of Congress, "Program for Cooperative Cataloging," https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/.

9. As stated on the SACO website, "The Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO) enables member institutions to submit proposals for additions to Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), Library of Congress Children's Subject Headings (CYAC), Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms (LCGFT), Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms (LCDGT), Library of Congress Medium of Performance Thesaurus for Music (LCMPT), and Library of Congress Classification (LCC) schedules." Library of Congress, "SACO."

10. For definitions of commonly used LCSH terms, see Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science, s.v., "Library of Congress Subject Headings," https://odlis.abc-clio.

com/odlis_l.html#lcshlist.
11. ClassWeb Plus, “Main Menu,” https://classweb.org/Proposal/.
12. ClassWeb, “Library of Congress Subject Headings Tentative Monthly Lists,” https://classweb.org/tentative-subjects/.
13. Library of Congress, “About the Subject Headings Manual PDF Files,” https://www.loc.gov/aba/publications/FreeSHM/freeshmabout.html.
14. Library of Congress, “SACO Calendar,” https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/saco-calendar.html.
15. Library of Congress, “Summaries of Decisions from Subject Editorial Meetings,” https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/cpsoed/cpsoeditorial.html.
16. For a complete list of subject headings changed, see ClassWeb, “Library of Congress Subject Headings Approved Monthly List,” https://classweb.org/approved-subjects/2112a.html.
17. Library of Congress, “Library of Congress Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division Summary of Decisions,” https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/cpsoed/ptcp-2402.pdf.
18. Library of Congress, “SACOList Archives,” May 29–30, 2024, https://listserv.loc.gov/cgi-bin/wa?A1=ind2405&L=SACOLIST.
19. Library of Congress, “Subject and Genre/Form Headings,” https://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/subject/#:~:text=The%20Library%20of%20Congress%20Subject,by%20libraries%20large%20and%20small.
20. Staci Ross and Michelle Cronquist, “The African American Subject Funnel Project,” in “Decolonizing the Catalog: Anti-Racist Description Practices from Authority Records to Discovery Layers” webinar, ALA Reference and User Services Association, July 7, 2021.

Brett Oppegaard, Talea Anderson, and Suzanne James-Bacon

From Sights to Sounds

A New Model for Integrating Audio Description into Library Digital Image Collections

Libraries and other cultural heritage institutions have grown their image collections through large-scale digitization projects, including, for example, the US Library of Congress, which just in the past five years has added 21 petabytes of data. These digital materials are a boon to historians, educators, and the general public, but they raise concerns about exacerbating an accessibility gap.

Not everyone, in other words, has been able to equivalently celebrate, access, and appreciate the increasing availability of these new resources. This is not a trivial concern for heritage institutions when considering that a sizable part of their audiences—about 50 million Americans—report difficulty using visual media.[1] Audio Description (AD) is the preferred remediation process for sight-related organizations throughout the country, such as the American Council of the Blind (ACB), because it offers more details and depth in its descriptions than typical alt text.[2] However, because millions of images circulate without proper AD, blind and low-vision people cannot access library collections in full.

Concerns about the accessibility of common library platforms, tools, and interfaces are not new,[3] but a recent Department of Justice final ruling established that the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.1, Level AA will be the technical standard for all state and local governments by 2026 or 2027, depending on the size of the jurisdiction. Combined with the well-established guidelines of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, government agencies will be required to go beyond simple alt-text descriptions in the suddenly near future and to provide instead what the spirit of the law always has recommended, which was equivalent or comparable access to information.[4]

To proactively respond to this upcoming reckoning, we have documented one library's process for incorporating AD into a sample image collection. We share this process not only to encourage more institutions to add AD to their collections, and to become legally compliant, but also to demonstrate how CONTENTdm and similar software could be improved with a few simple changes that create outsized benefits for community accessibility. In practice, AD does not typically get incorporated into library collections for a variety of reasons. Limited staffing, funding, and other resources, such as a lack of AD training, present significant challenges for many institutions because the work of describing images requires expertise and attention, which can be labor intensive. Even a straightforward AD involves countless creative choices and interpretations by the describer. In describing people

Brett Oppegaard is a professor in the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa School of Communication and Information, email: brett.oppegaard@hawaii.edu, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5778-1464. Talea Anderson is the digital collections librarian at Washington State University Libraries, email: talea.anderson@wsu.edu, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0760-0426. Suzanne James-Bacon is the electronic resources and MASC technical coordinator at the Washington State University Libraries, email: sbacon@wsu.edu, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1329-5601.

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in a photo, for example, the describer has to choose how to represent social identity concepts such as age, gender, race, and ethnicity about each person, plus describe the setting, the actions, the visual context, and so on. Multiply all of those choices by each cut in a video, and the situation seems dire.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has helped to address similar issues with captioning for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, but AI tools for automating AD haven't yet reached an adequate level of sophistication and might never be fully up to the task.[5] Limitations in content management systems (CMSes) also can present additional challenges. In our case, CONTENTdm—a CMS that serves thousands of libraries and cultural heritage institutions—has no out-of-the-box options for incorporating AD. For our project, we wanted to do more than provide minimal alt-text for our images, but our CMS did little to support AD.

Sacking clean hops at Yakima Golding farms photograph.

While libraries didn't design or create access issues online, they are now dealing with them regularly without much staffing, scholarly or technical support, or funds to address these issues. By default, libraries have become responsible for deciding who can or cannot directly use their materials based on the media's form, the patron's sensory abilities, and institutional remediation priorities. In two years, will we be talking about an enormous accessibility evolution in public resources or a shrinking landscape, where accessibility for all means access for the few or none at all, despite the legal ramifications? Cue the lawyers, who probably will need to be called in as a way to sort everything out. Read on if you would like to get ahead of such a legal morass.

A Sample Project: The Haas Collection

Like many other academic institutions, the Washington State University (WSU) Libraries provides direct or guided access to tens of thousands of photographs, maps, charts, illustrations, and other types of static visual media. As the focus for this project, we selected a set of 41 photographs showing the harvesting of hops—a plant used to make beer—during the 1940s. Pictured in the Haas, Inc., collection were laborers who had most likely immigrated to Washington state as part of the *braceros* program, a federal initiative that brought Mexican farm workers to the United States to support farms during World War II. Images came from a company scrapbook that had minimal accompanying descriptions.

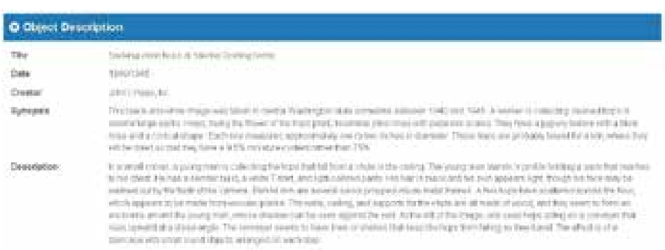
Screenshot of the metadata for the sack cleaning hops image, including link to the audio description. View the image and metadata at https://content.libraries.wsu.edu/digital/collection/hops/id/71/rec/1.

Over the course of about a month, a librarian at WSU Libraries wrote AD for these Haas images using open access software provided by The UniDescription Project (UniD), based at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. During the past decade, the UniD research team has developed software and various other online support systems, such as best practice guidelines, that have been used by more than 200 cultural heritage organizations globally to produce AD of visitor guides and maps, mostly in service of US National Park Service sites.

Photograph of laborers cutting hop vines at Yakima Golding farms in 1946.

After the descriptions were written, WSU Libraries used the UniD project's built-in system to allow members of ACB to review each of the descriptions and to provide direct feedback based on guided questions. After all the reviews were gathered, representatives of UniD and WSU Libraries hosted a focus group for ACB reviewers, which revealed a showstopping problem in the delivery and contextualization of the descriptions in the CONTENTdm system. In other words, there was not a straightforward technical approach to this task, and without the involvement of representatives of the target audience, a major issue in the approach would have gone undetected. Instead, we were able to address this issue directly with our next steps.

At the beginning of this project, we had planned to directly port our newly created descriptions from UniD to the CONTENTdm CMS via a custom API. However, we soon learned that CONTENTdm does not provide both read and write API access to collections, so we shifted tactics and created a custom export option that delivered AD metadata in a CSV format. In the absence of an API, our plan was to update the Haas collection using a bulk revision process.



Screenshot of the metadata for the laborers cutting hop vines image, including link to the audio description. View the image and metadata at https://content.libraries.wsu.edu/digital/collection/hops/id/70/rec/33.

We encountered a second obstacle when we considered the setup of the Haas collection in CONTENTdm. Images had been imported as standalone files, but we wanted to provide both the text of each AD and an accompanying recording in which each AD had been synthetically voiced by the UniD software. As a result, we ultimately had to delete the existing collection and re-upload it with images and audio packaged together as "compound objects." In the future, we will set up all new image collections and accompanying ADs using the compound-object formulation.

Our next consideration was the placement of the AD in the existing metadata framework. We decided to map the parts of the AD to multiple fields in CONTENTdm, including a short "Synopsis" description, a more in-depth "Description," and a link to the MP3 file in a field called "Audio Description." This approach was aligned in spirit with UniD's research findings about the recommended layout of a description, beginning with an overview and followed by a richer description.

Once the descriptions were posted to CONTENTdm, we hired four reviewers who were blind to listen to five of the first 20 descriptions and answer nine questions about each. Questions included "What was the most interesting part of the description?," "What is missing from this description?," and "In what ways could this description be clearer?" The tenth question of our IRB-approved set was used as the opening prompt of the focus group that followed.

Although our sample size was too small to use for broad generalization, the feedback did provide a snapshot of responses by representative audience members, which we used for minor edits to the descriptions. As a usability test, though, the feedback alerted us to a key showstopping issue with the descriptions as presented in CONTENTdm, which we were able to further understand through focus group discussions and to address through alterations to the interface.

Even with the custom fields and what we thought were relatively clear labels of "Synopsis," "Description," and "Audio Description," our screenreader users had difficulty identifying the context for specific images within the larger collection. As one male participant—older than 65 and adventitiously blind—said, "I had no idea what I was really looking at, and it was frustrating, because they weren't in any kind of logical order." Based on such feedback, we added a new custom field to the collection, called "About This Collection," which linked to contextualizing information. Responding to this adjustment, the same reviewer reported, "All of a sudden, when I looked back at it for the second time, they were in a logical order that I could understand, and each picture built on the one before it. It was much better and much easier for me to work with. I could follow what was going on. … It was always the same kind of information. It was consistent. I knew where I was going to find everything."

Accessibility for people who are DeafBlind, blind, or low vision thereby was shown not only to be about having AD available somewhere on the screen. AD also needs to be prioritized in the interface hierarchy, in consistent ways, to allow screenreader users to easily find it and use it. There needs to be readily available context clues that situate the media in ways that help to make sense of the material as a part of a collection, rather than in a vacuum, and if a sighted user of the material can determine how the image fits into the larger whole at a glance, a user without strong sight should also be able to use audible means to make the same grounding of the information.

After our changes were made based on feedback, including the addition of the "About This Collection" field, all our reviewers reported satisfaction with the delivery methods in CONTENTdm. For example, a woman, older than 65, and adventitiously blind, said during the focus group that interface design to her is just as important as the content because, if she can't find it, then it might as well not exist. In the first version of the CONTENTdm project, she acknowledged troubles using it and understanding the collection, but after the changes were made, she said, "I didn't have to figure that one out. It was very easy." Another reviewer, a 55-64-year-old male, who is adventitiously blind, added, "If it's a chore for (blind people), then they're just not going to put the time and effort into learning the interface."

Conclusion

We would have liked to pursue a more elegant solution to the problem of integrating UniD with CONTENTdm through an API. Having access to a read-write API would have greatly simplified our process. However, difficulty in execution is not the excuse that history accepts. Our test users reported that the AD greatly increased their understanding of the collection and its contents. That was the ultimate goal. We hope, by sharing our example, you can do this, too, with your institution's collections and make the world a more accessible place.

Notes

1. Determining the number of people who are DeafBlind, blind, or low vision in the United States depends on how you count these people; most related organizations have different ways that sometimes create radically different numbers. We are using the number stated by the National Federation of the Blind (https://nfb.org/resources/blindness-statistics), but for comparison, the American Foundation for the Blind determined the number to be 50.18 million adult Americans in 2022 (https://www.afb.org/research-and-initiatives/statistics).

2. Audio Description research in this area includes B. Oppegaard and M. Rabby, "Inclusive Measures: Establishing Audio Description Tactics That Impact Social Inclusion," in A. Lancaster and C. King (eds.), *Amplifying Voices in UX: Balancing Design and User Needs in Technical Communication* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2024); T. Peters and L. Bell, "Audio Description Adds Value to Digital Images," *Computers in Libraries* 26, no. 4 (2006): 26–28; C. Lyons and T. Peters, "Audio Description Illinois," Workshop outline (Springfield, IL: Audio Description Illinois, 2008), https://web.archive.org/web/20160403094702/http://www.alsaudioillinois.net/workshops.cfm; and K. Lonbom, "Listening to Images: Exploring Alternate Access to a Digital Collection," in C. Cool and K. B. Ng (eds.), *Recent Developments in the Design, Construction, and Evaluation of Digital Libraries: Case Studies* (New York, NY: Information Science Reference, 2013).

3. Gayle Schechter noted in 2019 that cultural heritage collections often lack consistent metadata such that—for a busy professional—some description is better than none at all. Perhaps acknowledging the lack of time and resources in libraries/archives, the Society of American Archivists has called for the use of alt text for images but makes little reference to longform or audio description.

4. A separate column could be written just about the upcoming legal reckoning, based on the Department of Justice ruling (https://www.ada.gov/resources/2024-03-08-web-rule/), which calls out as source material WCAG 2.1 (https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/) and Section 508 (https://www.access-board.gov/about/law/ra.html#section-508-federal-electronic-and-information-technology).

5. Audio Description research in this area includes D. Bergin and B. Oppegaard, "Automating Media Accessibility: An Approach for Analyzing Audio Description Across Generative Artificial Intelligence Algorithms," *Technical Communication Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2025), https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2024.2372771.

Cori Biddle

Library Assessment

Taking a More Active Role in Telling Our Story

"I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."

—Blanche DuBois, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Tennessee Williams

I am not sure why this line now lives, rent free, in my head. I am not a theater fan; I read the play once in a college English class and probably have seen clips of the classic film. Maybe it's because with the increased importance given to library assessment, I have a growing empathy for Blanche and the inherent helplessness in this line.

Academic libraries are by nature support entities on campus. As such, we often determine our value based on others: supporting faculty research, assisting student success, or partnering with other institutional departments. There is nothing inherently detrimental with this model, except when we are asked to provide evidence of our value to administrative stakeholders. Often they require libraries to gather specific quantitative assessment metrics like gate counts, circulation statistics, or program attendance. While these numbers are easy to gather, and easy to present in a table, they lack the nuance to tell our complete story. In this structure libraries are often dependent on others, both because the assessment process is less than favorable, but also because what they are measuring is out of our control. Though these limitations are obvious to us, libraries are often not given the opportunity to provide context and explanation of these numbers. Major administrative decisions are being made based on this incomplete data, but is there any way that libraries can take a more active role in justifying our existence?

One of the first places we have experienced this scenario is in reference and instruction. Impact was easily captured with tally marks, adding up the total number of one-shot instruction sessions or number of reference questions at the service desk. In years past these sorts of quantifiable metrics, easily plugged into an Excel sheet, were enough to fill an annual report and satisfy any curious administrator. However, in the post-COVID years, the cracks in this assessment model are coming to light. Numbers in isolation are no longer enough, but it is unclear how we can paint a more nuanced picture and still maintain the digestibility of a table, graph, or chart. How do we add context to temper the concern of lowering instruction numbers? How do we explain the increasing quality of reference support, even if the quantity of interactions is dwindling?

Now I see a similar situation occurring with library programming and outreach. Students

Cori Biddle is student engagement and outreach librarian at the Penn State University Altoona Eiche Library, email: clb64@psu.edu.

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do not attend workshops or in-person events because of… reasons. They may feel overworked, uncomfortable with face-to-face interactions, or embarrassed by needing help or remediation. Once we have a successful program, such as coffee bars/study breaks, student study spaces, or sensory/relaxation rooms, others on campus tend to duplicate our efforts, leading to a drop in our numbers because of oversaturation.

It's not that the value of our services has decreased; it's just that the need for those services has been affected by external forces. The "kindness" of strangers has reached its limits with changing student demographics, and faculty and other campus departments experience their own pressure to show results. How does the library then take control of this narrative and mitigate any negative effects on the administration's view of the library? It can be tempting to pad our numbers: Schedule any instruction requests even if they do not involve a research project or count any interaction (even just a "hello") as a reference interaction. But that is only a temporary solution and does nothing to solve the problem. Perhaps there are other paths that we can take, though I doubt that any of them will be easy.

We can push back on the quick and easy quantifiable data and put effort into identifying other ways that can measure the library's impact in a more comprehensive way. We are all surveyed to death: participation in comprehensive surveys, quick exit tickets, and other feedback mechanisms has become inconsistent at best. We need to explore other ways to tell our stories, like through student impact statements or focus groups. We may even attempt to tie library usage to the holy grail of student retention or graduation rates (though many examples of this so far are more correlation than causation). Once we decide to look beyond the overused and unsatisfying, we will likely identify even more novel assessment strategies. Any alternative we offer to administration, though, will require a strong and prolonged advocacy campaign to gain acceptance from both the library profession and higher education in general.

Libraries tend to want to be "all things to all people," but is that sustainable? We strive to demonstrate high impact in a variety of areas: academic success, student belonging, and faculty research support. While this is laudable, we no longer have the capacity to do this. We need to think critically about where we are spending our time and resources. We can reach out to faculty and try to make connections by offering department programming on a trending topic (artificial intelligence, anyone?), but what do we do when no one shows up to the program? Do we continue to offer it because all the other libraries are doing it? Or do we instead transfer that effort into our leisure reading program because that is where we had the most engagement last semester? This process requires a continual shifting of our library paradigm and rescaling of our goals and visions.

In any case, we need to stop being so reliant on existing expectations and instead rediscover the fundamental role we want to play at our institutions. We need to build a more active view of ourselves and our work. While it might be a harder route, it will hopefully be more sustainable. To quote another movie (and mix even more metaphors), "If you build it, they will come," but what happens when they don't? Our impact and value need to extend beyond that measure.

Lori Birrell

Not Just a Copy/Paste

Writing Impactful Performance Reviews

The email drops, alerting me that my boss has uploaded my performance review. I anxiously wait for the system to load, and my heart plummets as I see familiar phrases appear on the screen. My boss has copied and pasted sentences from my self-assessment as their review of my performance. Their review is four sentences long and leaves me feeling uncertain about how this supervisor has evaluated my work.

Even if you have not had this exact experience, chances are that since most supervisors are not taught how to write performance reviews, you have experienced some disappointment or confusion when reading a review of your performance at some point during your career. This article aims to give voice to this leadership skill gap in academic librarianship and to offer guidance on how to think about and then write and conduct a meaningful performance review in four key parts:

Gathering data
Assessing key considerations
Writing the first draft
Preparing for the performance review conversation

Though performance evaluation systems likely differ between institutions, and these examples are based on my own experience, the concepts can apply to any performance evaluation process.

Gathering Data

I rely on two main sources of data when drafting performance reviews for direct reports. Rather than stare at a blank page on my computer screen as I struggle to remember their myriad accomplishments, I keep a list that I add to throughout the year with examples of notable projects and impacts that I want to highlight. The second data source is the document outlining the employee's goals for the year and any contributions they have made to department, division, or library-wide goals. I refer back to those documents and choose a handful of goals to comment on in my review.

I gather this data and write an outline for each performance review during the time of year when my own work pace is a bit slower. Many academic libraries do performance reviews in late spring or early summer to coincide with the end of a fiscal year. I have also worked at institutions where these reviews aligned with the calendar year instead. I find that, as an

Lori Birrell is the associate university librarian for special collections and director of museums at the University of Delaware, email: lori@birrell.us.

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administrator, I have more available time between the end of November and mid-January than during other times of the year. Similarly, I have more time beginning in May through much of the summer for this work. I encourage each manager to think about where their pockets of available time may be and to allocate some of that time to drafting the reviews. Even if the formal review period is in the spring or early summer, it can be helpful to document the first half of the year in December, if that is when the manager has available time.

Keeping a running list of topics to include as well as starting to write weeks or even months before the deadline helps me to avoid the "recency effect," which results in devoting more space in the review to recent work examples than considering the employee's impact and accomplishments over the full year.[1]

Assessing Key Considerations

Depending on the number of direct reports a supervisor has, they may consider drafting the review of an employee who is a strong performer first. This strategy helps me as I find that writing a performance review is different from other kinds of writing I do. I am cognizant that each word I write will be heavily interpreted by the employee, and I take great care in choosing specific words. I gain confidence when writing performance reviews by starting with that strong performer, and then I am better prepared to write reviews that may include more constructive criticism or draw attention to a performance gap.

As I begin to write, I consider what feedback would be helpful to this employee, what aspects of their work will be important to have documented in my voice, and how best to convey such insights. As a supervisor it is my responsibility to be able to speak to areas of work or specific projects that showcase the employee's skills and have a positive impact on our faculty, students, and broader community. It is also my responsibility to point to areas where the employee could improve upon their current skills or performance in the future. The old adage that nothing in the review should be a surprise is certainly true—both for the exemplary and unsatisfactory—however, reading words of praise or criticism can be challenging for many employees, depending on how feedback has been given to them in the past. When writing reviews, managers must also be cognizant that these documents become part of the employee's official personnel record and serve as important sources of information when new leadership comes in or when there is a reporting change or change of job duties.

The employee's career trajectory and position in the organization are two additional factors managers should consider when writing performance reviews. If an employee has shared a desire to assume a management position in the future and in the past year that employee has led a project, the manager should comment on such performance with this career goal in mind. If the employee is in a tenure track position, the manager should be sure that their review and the employee's accomplishments can be easily understood by those reading the evaluation, as practitioners conducting third year or tenure review may work outside of the employee's area of expertise.

Finally, for any shared work, I like to consider how to best evaluate each individual employee's participation. For example, at my previous institution two employees co-led the exploration of a digital exhibition tool and co-wrote a report with recommendations that we then implemented. In a case like this, I try to use similar language in each review to make sure I am consistently documenting their work. On the other hand, if I become aware that a group member has not honored their commitment to a shared project, I may explain the goals of the project the same way in multiple reviews, but I then comment on the specific deficits in that one employee's review.

Writing the First Draft

When writing a performance review, the first draft generally should not be the final draft sent to the employee. Writing this first draft can take up to an hour, provided I have my list of accomplishments and other documentation in hand. For reasons of equity and the reality that people talk and may compare reviews, when possible, I write about the same amount of text for each review. In a given year, my evaluations are each about 500 words. There is no right or wrong number of words (unless your library has guidelines for managers). That length gives me enough time to share key highlights from the previous year as well as space to offer a few concluding thoughts meant to guide the employee's work in the coming year. Looking ahead to the future might mean referencing a significant upcoming project, like a catalog migration, that the employee has a key role in implementing; or perhaps the employee is going up for promotion, or assuming supervisory duties for the first time. The review is a great place to document your support and encouragement as these changes come about.

After finishing the first draft, I set it aside for a few days, which gives me time to think about any other details I would like to include in the review. I also use this time to read the employee's self-assessment and make a list of anything I have not included that maybe I should, given the employee's emphasis in the self-assessment. I prefer to draft my review before reading the self-assessment to give myself the opportunity to consider the employee's performance based on the evidence that I have gathered. By then reading what the employee has chosen to reflect on, I have a good indication of what they think about their own performance and their achievements. The self-assessment also alerts me to potential areas of growth or pain points that I may need to prioritize discussing in the performance review conversation. Once I have finished incorporating any other details, I print the review and proofread it. I do this two or three times as I am prone to typos.

As I proofread each draft, I consider how the words I use align with the institution's rating scale. It would be a disservice to the employee to document a number of performance issues in the review and then give that same employee a 5/5 rating, reflecting exemplary performance. It has been my practice to send a draft of any performance review that is a departure from previous reviews to HR staff for their perspective before finalizing the review or the rating. HR staff can help managers point out places in the review that may be misaligned with the intended rating. This feedback is especially important when a manager is new or when there has been a reporting change and the manager is writing a review for a particular employee for the first time. Consulting with HR staff also gives the manager the opportunity to alert that office to potential issues, depending on how the employee reacts to the review and rating.

Preparing for the Performance Review Conversation

The timing of the performance review conversation may differ from institution to institution. Ideally, this conversation occurs soon after the employee receives the review. I never want an employee to be surprised like I was when receiving their review, and so at the beginning of each review cycle, I share a timeline with my staff outlining key dates and deadlines. This outline helps them to know when they can expect to hear from me and when our review conversation is likely to be scheduled. It has been my practice to send an employee their review 24 hours in advance of the meeting (or on Friday morning if the meeting is scheduled for Monday). I find that this window of time gives the employee enough time to read and perhaps reread the review but not too much time to worry. I send an email to each employee either attaching the review or linking to the evaluation system where I have uploaded the review.

In my email I thank each employee for their work over the past year and I identify something specific that they have achieved. I verify the time and mode (in person or virtual) of the review meeting and specify that I want to start by hearing from them about any factual errors I made in the review, followed by any questions they have about the content. I have found that asking for my errors first can make the rest of the meeting go more smoothly because it demonstrates that no one is perfect. I have found that these meetings can be relatively brief, less than 30 minutes. However, I always make these conversations a session distinct from our recurring one-on-one meeting. That structure helps to provide a clear beginning and end to the conversation and helps to avoid letting that discussion impact any other business that the employee or I need to discuss.

I start these meetings by thanking the employee for their work and highlighting one or two significant contributions they have made. After addressing any factual errors, I then invite the employee to ask questions about the content, which provides an opportunity to make sure I have been clear in my feedback and to reiterate constructive feedback that I want the employee to focus on in the coming year. The rest of the meeting is spent discussing the next year. I articulate my expectations about their role, work, and goals as appropriate.

Conclusion

Though often thought of as an annual bother, writing performance reviews is a critical part of management and a skill worth developing. Considering how to gather data and what to include, spending time drafting the review, and planning how to share that review and discuss it with the employee can make an often-fraught time for both employees and managers a more meaningful experience.

Notes

1. "Why Do We Better Remember Items at the End of a List? The Recency Effect Explained," Decision Lab, https://thedecisionlab.com/biases/recency-effect.

Grace Liu, Bobray J. Bordelon, and Rashelle Nagar

Data Quality Literacy

Empowering Academic Librarians to Teach Data Quality Evaluation

Data quality literacy lies at the intersection of information evaluation and data literacy. It focuses on developing literacy skills in evaluating data quality and developing critical thinking about data. Although the ACRL guidelines for teaching information literacy shifted from the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (2000) to the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (2016), the expectation for students to develop information evaluation skills has remained consistent. The Standards emphasized the importance of students learning to evaluate information and its sources critically.[1] Similarly, the Framework asks students to demonstrate the ability to evaluate a wide range of information sources, as in the frame Searching as Strategic Exploration. It also expects students to recognize that information reflects its creators' expertise and credibility and should be evaluated based on the information needed and the context in which the information will be used, as in the frame Authority Is Constructed and Contextual.[2]

In recent years, data literacy has gained significant attention from academic librarians, with growing research exploring academic librarians' role in teaching data literacy skills. Efforts have been made to develop data literacy competencies and align them with the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.[3,]) Many of the data literacy competency frameworks developed in recent decades highlight "quality assurance," "evaluating data," or "evaluating and ensuring quality of data sources," as one of the core data literacy competencies.[3] However, these frameworks often address data quality evaluation only at a surface level. In this article, we share our collaborative efforts in expanding academic librarians' understanding of data quality issues and providing resources to empower academic librarians in teaching the evaluation of data quality.

IMLS Grant Project

In 2020, West Chester University, in collaboration with Stanford University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, received grant funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for the project "Building Capacity of Academic Librarians in Understanding Quantitative Data, Data Quality Problems, and Evaluating Data Quality."[5] As a National Forum Project, it engaged data experts from diverse backgrounds and industries to share their perspectives on data quality issues and data evaluation. The project aimed to raise academic librarians' awareness of data quality problems, fill our knowledge gaps, and build our capacity and confidence in teaching data evaluation, critical thinking about data, and data literacy.

Grace Liu is the business librarian and associate professor at the West Chester University FHG Library, email: yliu@wcupa.edu. Bobray J. Bordelon is the economics and finance librarian at Princeton University, email: bordelon@princeton.edu. Rashelle Nagar is the business research and collections librarian at the Stanford Graduate School of Business Library, email: rmnagar@stanford.edu.

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Between January and July 2023, the project organized seven online national Forum webinar sessions:

1. "Evaluating Data Quality: Challenges and Competencies"
2. "Quality Assurance in Data Creation"
3. "Understanding Commercial Data Quality Issues"
4. "Evaluating Governmental Data (U.S. and International)"
5. "Data Quality: Reproducibility and Preservation"
6. "Data Quality: Evolving Employer Expectations"
7. "Librarians' Role in Cultivating Data-Literate Citizens"

The sessions featured a motley group of speakers, including data librarians from Princeton, Stanford, Yale, and the University of California, Berkeley; the chief scientist of the US Census Bureau; former chief statistician of the United States; experts from the US Department of Agriculture, Catholic Charities USA, Federal Reserve Banks of Cleveland and Kansas City, Center for Health & Wellbeing at Princeton University, Labor Dynamics Institute at Cornell University, Meta Platforms, and Microsoft Research; as well as leaders from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, the Roper Center, Ithaka S+R, and the American Statistical Association.

The project team edited the National Forum transcriptions into an open access ebook and developed knowledge briefs outlining a synthesized data evaluation strategy (see details on the project website).[6] In the long term, the project aims to demonstrate the library's role in fostering data-literate citizens, enhancing the quality and integrity of scholarly output, reducing the social and economic costs of data quality issues, and improving data-driven decision-making.

Resources for Teaching Data Quality Literacy

The ebook and knowledge brief lay some groundwork for supporting academic librarians in teaching data quality literacy and engaging researchers for deeper conversations on data quality issues.

The knowledge briefs cover 13 topics:

1. Data Reference Interview
2. Evaluating Data Documentation
3. Evaluating Dataset for Research Needs
4. Using and Evaluating U.S. Federal Statistics
5. Understanding Administrative Data
6. Evaluating Administrative Data Quality
7. Understanding Commercial Data
8. Evaluating Commercial Data Quality
9. Commercial Data Quality: Conversation with the Vendors
10. Commercial Data Quality: Conversation with Researchers
11. Evaluating International Government Data Quality
12. Understanding Survey Data and Public Poll
13. Evaluating Survey Data Quality

These knowledge briefs focus on the quality aspect of data literacy competencies and aim to help academic librarians gain a deeper understanding of different types of data products to help researchers develop critical thinking skills to evaluate data quality. Some examples from the knowledge brief include the following.

Evaluating Data Documentation

Data documentation provides the contextual information needed to discover, understand, access, and reuse data. The knowledge brief covers the quality indicators and the characteristics of good data documentation. It also includes ideas to fill the data documentation gaps.

Administrative Data Evaluation

Administrative data refers to data collected for operational, programmatic, or regulatory purposes rather than statistical or research purposes. The evaluating administrative data knowledge brief follows a series of data quality dimensions to guide researchers in assessing the relevance, accessibility, interpretability, coherence, accuracy, and institutional environment to evaluate the fitness for use of the administrative data product.

International Government Data

International government data presents some unique data quality challenges, which require some specific evaluation strategies. Researchers need to pay attention to missing geographies and values, temporal limitations, adjustments, changes in methodologies, changes in historical data, discrepancies, data manipulation, and concept-measurement gaps.

Commercial Data Evaluation

The knowledge brief covers a list of common data quality issues that need researchers' attention. The issues include missing values, data errors, biases, inconsistencies, discrepancies, header data, standardization, superseded data, actual versus estimated data, reporting time issues, misuse of data, and lack of transparency. It also provides guidance for academic librarians to engage in conversations with data providers and researchers to identify potential data quality issues.

Survey Data Evaluation

Survey data evaluation follows the Total Survey Error (TSE) paradigm, which is a framework widely used to assess and enhance the quality of survey data. It guides researchers to evaluate the measurement aspect of a survey to assess the survey data's potential specification error (validity), measurement error, processing error, and analytical error and to evaluate the survey's representation aspect to evaluate potential coverage, sampling error, nonresponse error, and adjustment error. Further, total survey quality is also dependent on other nonstatistical quality dimensions such as credibility, comparability, usability/interpretability, relevance, accessibility, timeliness and punctuality, completeness, and coherence.

Conclusion

Unlike evaluating information quality based on currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose, evaluating data quality is a more complex and challenging process. The evaluation framework can vary depending on the specific type of data product, such as data documentation, federal statistics, administrative data, commercial data, or survey data. The project provides foundational resources to help academic librarians enhance their awareness and competencies in evaluating data quality, develop critical thinking skills around library data products and sources, and build their ability to teach these skills in the classroom or through research consultations.

Notes

1. ACRL, *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (Chicago, IL: ACRL, 2000), http://hdl.handle.net/11213/7668.

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3. Wendy Girven Pothier and Patricia B. Condon, "Towards Data Literacy Competencies: Business Students, Workforce Needs, and the Role of the Librarian," *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship* 25, nos. 3–4 (2020): 123–46, https://doi.org/10.1080/08963568.2019.1680189.

4. P. B. Condon and W. G. Pothier, "Advancing Data Literacy: Mapping Business Data Literacy Competencies to the ACRL Framework," *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship* 27, no. 2 (2022): 104–26, https://doi.org/10.1080/08963568.2022.2048168.

5. Institute of Museum and Library Services, "RE-252357-OLS-22: West Chester University (FHG Library)," Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program Grant, 2022, https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/re-252357-ols-22.

6. All session videos, transcripts, the ebook, and knowledge briefs are freely available on the project website (https://www.dataqualityliteracy.org).

Margie Ruppel

Learn It, Use It, Teach It

Teaching Journal Evaluation When You Are Not a Scholarly Communications Expert

As a subject and liaison librarian, I have learned about scholarly communication the same way I have learned about many things related to my position: in a casual, as-it-comes-up fashion. I think of this method as the Learn It, Use It, Teach It approach. I "Learn It" by researching, attending a webinar, or talking to a colleague. I "Use It" when I apply the new information to answering reference questions or during individual research consultations. "Teach It" is the phase where I integrate my newfound knowledge into an information literacy workshop or a research guide. In this article, I will describe how I used this approach to teach social work doctoral students how to select journals for publication, including how to recognize predatory and questionable publishers.

Subject librarians are knowledgeable of the scholarship practices of specific disciplines due to the relationship-building process with academic departments. Combined with a deep knowledge of student and faculty research needs and personal experience with publishing, subject librarians are abundantly able to apply scholarly communication concepts to questions around scholarly publishing. My Learn It, Use It, Teach It approach is an example of the scholarly communication coach model, where subject librarians assist with common scholarly communication issues.[1] My approach also dovetails with one of my library's new liaison model core competencies: "Promote and advise on the process of creating, sharing, and evaluating academic research and knowledge."[2]

In my role at the University of Kentucky, a land-grant research institution, I am the liaison to the College of Social Work and regularly consult with students in the Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) and PhD programs. I recently applied my Learn It, Use It, Teach It approach for a new type of workshop with DSW students. A social work professor requested that I teach a session on helping students identify journals in which to publish. My first thought was "That is easy! I can have students search for articles on their topic and take note of the publication titles as a starting place for evaluating journals."

From previous conversations with social work faculty, I was aware that open access (OA) is essential to social workers in the field. Joanne Yaffe, as editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Social Work Education*, stated in 2019, "open-access publication, by which publications are freely available to the public, holds considerable promise for making peer-reviewed, high quality research available to assist social workers in the evidence-based practice process."[3] I had a baseline knowledge of open access and journal publishing, but since I was going to lead a workshop on it, I needed more information. I gathered information about article processing fees (APCs), impact factors, author rights, and editorial decisions on manuscripts (which I

Margie Ruppel is social sciences librarian at the University of Kentucky Libraries, email: margie.ruppel@uky.edu.

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called "recovering from rejection" in my presentation) and worked it into an overall explanation of the journal publishing process. But there was a surprise question from a student waiting for me at the workshop: "How can I tell if the journal is a real journal? I thought any journal that charges a fee is a 'fake journal.'"

Many students agreed with her assessment of journals that charge fees. This was a question I had not prepared for. Honestly, I did not know much about predatory journals beyond Beall's list,[4] which I knew was problematic for many reasons. I explained that predatory journals exploit the publishing process for profit and that the author does not receive the full complement of services, such as peer review and rigorous editing. I also told the students I have received solicitations from journal editors, and I know my work is not so special as to receive such attention. The social work professor agreed and added that other people in the field will recognize predatory journal titles on a curriculum vitae, such as when applying for a job.

Even while I said these words, I knew it was not a satisfactory answer and that students needed a more dynamic toolbox to separate the flowers from the weeds. How could someone brand new to the academic publishing world even begin to distinguish between ethical publishers and the not-so-ethical? Monica Berger, professor and instruction and scholarly communication librarian at the New York City College of Technology, effectively described the graduate student dilemma: "At a base minimum, a scholarly writer considering where to publish should be able to judge if they will receive meaningful and useful peer review as well [as] excellent copyediting, if their work will reach their desired readership, and if evaluators, as well as peers external to their institution, will respect the journal or publisher. This discernment process is one of determining publication quality: the significance and value of publishers, journals, and publications."[5] I knew I had work to do!

I consulted our scholarly communication librarian and brainstormed ideas with my fellow ACRL Education and Behavioral Science Section's Scholarly Communication Committee members, as we had recently started a new service called the Scholarly Communication Help Desk. Their sources gave me a foundation on which to build (see "Recommended Reading" at the end of this article). One question remained: how would I teach this concept to graduate students in the future? I did some more digging.

I located several great ideas for teaching students how to identify journal publishers that are predatory, questionable, ethical, and all the gray areas in between (see the "Teaching Ideas" section). Teaching the concept of selecting a journal to publish in is rich in connections to the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, particularly the Scholarship as Conversation frame.[6] Part of becoming a new scholar (and entering the conversation) is keeping up with the literature in one's area, as well as avoiding predatory publishing and finding a good fit for a manuscript. The journal publishing process can easily be applied to the Information Creation as a Process frame, including tying publisher business models to the Information Has Value frame, and judging the credibility of publishers as an aspect of the Authority Is Constructed and Contextual frame.

The teaching ideas below can be combined with any of the resources in the "Directories and Rankings" and "Tools, Checklists, and Rubrics" sections—choose your own adventure. (There is literally a Choose Your Own Adventure–based lesson plan for journal publishing.[7]) Berger advises that it is best not to use a journal evaluation checklist alone, as they can be misleading, time consuming, and "cannot substitute for deeper thought and analysis related to journal choice."[8] For maximum impact, consider partnering with another subject librarian, the scholarly communications librarian, or other units on campus (e.g., the graduate college) to teach journal evaluation.

Please keep in mind that some sources such as Ulrichsweb include all journals, regardless of quality, and that the Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association (OASPA) list and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) may not include small publishers or their journals. Most of the teaching ideas can be customized for use with any discipline, focusing on the journal titles and most relevant tools.

Teaching Ideas

Inviting Discussion Among Students

Whole-class discussions are a great way to gain students' attention at the beginning of the workshop and build on their existing knowledge about scholarly practices. Toni Carter, director of the Kares Library at Athens State University, suggests discussion questions such as "Why do predatory journals exist?" and "What damage can predatory journals cause?"[9] Another discussion you can have with students is about their journal publishing goals (e.g., who do they hope to reach? Does the journal need to be well known?). Alternatively, use the discussion questions at other points in the workshop, even spacing them out between other workshop elements. Students' answers can be added to a physical whiteboard, on adhesive paper sheets hung in the classroom, an online shared document, or in an application such as JamBoard and referred to throughout the workshop.

Providing Context and Background Information

Providing context around journal publishing is an important part of a workshop on predatory journals because librarians are uniquely knowledgeable of the process. I had difficulty deciding *how much* context to provide, but luckily many other librarians have provided such guidance (uncited ideas are my own):

- A general overview of the publishing process, including submission, peer review, editor decisions, author rights, and making requested revisions. Consider using a graphic or flowchart to illustrate the process.
- Include examples of high-quality OA journals and subscription-based journals, including new OA titles and long-established publishers that utilize APCs.
- Explain various publisher business models: subscription-based, OA, and hybrid.
- Describe the OA publishing process, including benefits, drawbacks, what APCs cover, and why journal publishers use them. Situate predatory publishing as one aspect of finding quality publishers,[10] and note that there is a "continuum from deliberate and devious to low-quality, amateur publishing practices."[11]
- Provide information about journal publishing in countries outside of the United States: "In some countries researchers do not have access to a wide range of titles but face the same pressure to publish, so have few other options but to accept offers from predatory publishers if they want to share their work."[12]

Active Engagement with the Content

No matter what form it takes, active engagement with various aspects of journal publishing is key to developing lasting skills and knowledge. The following ideas draw on deductive and inductive reasoning and evaluation skills. Where a specific directory (e.g., DOAJ) or tool (e.g., Think.Check.Submit) is mentioned, feel free to substitute a resource you prefer.

- Engagement with pre-chosen journal titles. I really like this "cold open" idea of choosing a scholarly journal. Create a scenario topic based on the discipline you are working with and two possible journals to which to submit. In teams of two, ask students to evaluate which journal would be the best publication venue and why.[13] This can be kept to overall impressions, or explore the websites of journals that are considered to be predatory. Ask students to brainstorm the characteristics of these journals and apply these characteristics to traditional journals and determine which characteristics can truly be used to determine whether a journal is predatory.[14]
- Engagement with directories. Flip the concept on its head: ask students to explore the DOAJ and OASPA websites. What does inclusion on these lists mean? What journals or publishers might be missing?
- Engagement with rubrics/checklists. Invite students to practice skills with quality checklists, such as Think.Check.Submit or Open Access Journal Quality Indicators, or preselect a series of journals, a mix of ethical and not-so-ethical titles. Use Think-Pair-Share to analyze the journals using the "Is It Predatory" checklist.[15]
- Engagement with email solicitations. Show students email solicitations you or discipline faculty have received from predatory journals. Ask students to identify clues that indicate the journal is not legitimate,[16] or use the Email Evaluation Tool.
- Engagement with the publishing process. Choose from four gamified instruction ideas from Clemson University Libraries: Publishing Family Feud, Perfect Match Game Show, Guess Who DIY Publisher Quiz, and Treasure Quest.[17]

Conclusion

Learning more about teaching students how to evaluate journal quality has been energizing and informative. I have been able to take scholarly communication topics about which I had previously only scratched the surface and organize them into a cohesive workshop plan. What I have learned has enriched my work as a subject librarian, and I am excited to apply these ideas to my other liaison departments, especially sociology and psychology. Please consider sharing your ideas about teaching journal evaluation with me; I would love to hear them.

Notes

1. Todd Bruns, John Stephen Brantley, and Kirstin Duffin, "Scholarly Communication Coaching: Liaison Librarians' Shifting Roles," in *Partnerships and New Roles in the 21st-Century Academic Library: Collaborating, Embedding, and Cross-Training for the Future*, (ed.) Bradford Lee Eden (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 9–29. Author's accepted version at http://thekeep.eiu.edu/lib_fac/99.
2. University of Kentucky Libraries, "Liaison Model Core Competencies," in *Library Liaison Professional Development Toolkit* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Libraries), last updated January 23, 2025, https://libguides.uky.edu/liaisontoolkit.

3. Joanne Yaffe, "From the Editor—Predatory Journals in Social Work," *Journal of Social Work Education* 55, no. 2 (2019): 211, https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2019.1622312.

4. Beall's List, "Beall's List of Potential Predatory Journals and Publishers," last updated December 8, 2021, https://beallslist.net/.

5. Monica Berger, *Predatory Publishing and Global Scholarly Communications* (Chicago, IL: ALA, 2024), 261.

6. ACRL, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Chicago, IL: ACRL, 2015), https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework.

7. Christie Hurrell, "A 'Choose Your Own Adventure' Recipe for Teaching Scholarly Communications Concepts," in *The Scholarly Communications Cookboo*k, (eds.) Brianna Buljung and Emily Bongiovanni (Chicago, IL: ACRL, 2021), 229–32, https://dx.doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/39359.

8. Berger, *Predatory Publishing and Global Scholarly Communications*, 273.

9. Toni M. Carter, *Introducing Scholarly Research: Ready-to-Use Lesson Plans and Activities for Undergraduates* (Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2022), 127.

10. Monica Berger, "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Predatory Publishing but Were Afraid to Ask" (New York, NY: New York City College of Technology, 2017), 213, https://academicworks.cuny.edu/ny_pubs/141/.

11. Claudia Alvarado-de la Barrera, Santiago Ávila-Ríos, and Gustavo Reyes-Terán, "The Gray Zone Between Legitimate and Predatory Open Access Scientific Publishing," *Revista de Investigación Clínica/Clinical and Translational Investigation* 76, no. 1 (2024): 1–5, https://doi.org/10.24875/RIC.23000191.

12. Claire Sewell, *The No-Nonsense Guide to Research Support and Scholarly Communication*. 1st ed. (London, UK: Facet Publishing, 2020), 72, https://doi.org/10.29085/9781783303953. See Berger, "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know" for additional information about journal publishing in countries outside of the United States.

13. Carter, *Introducing Scholarly Research*, 127.

14. Carter, *Introducing Scholarly Research*, 127.

15. Berger, "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know," 213.

16. Carter, *Introducing Scholarly Research*, 127.

17. Jenessa McElfresh and Megan Sheffield, "Gamified Library Instruction and Predatory Publishing: Connecting Undergraduate Nursing Students with Trends in Scholarly Communication," Clemson University Library Presentations 127, October 25, 2018. https://open.clemson.edu/lib_pres/127.

Additional Resources

Recommended Reading

Association of College & Research Libraries LibGuides. "Scholarly Communication Toolkit: Scholarly Communication Overview." Last updated August 27, 2024. https://acrl.libguides.com/scholcomm/toolkit.

Berger, Monica, and Jill Cirasella. "Beyond Beall's List: Better Understanding Predatory Publishers." *College & Research Libraries News* 76, no. 3 (2015): 132–35. https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.76.3.9277.

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Matsuuchi, Ann, and Elizabeth Jardine. "Scholarly Communications Guide for Faculty, Staff: Predatory Publishers." Library Media Resources Center, LaGuardia Community College LibGuides. Last updated December 16, 2024. https://guides.laguardia.edu/scholcomm/predatory.

Webber, Nicole R., and Stephanie Wiegand. "A Predatory Primer: What Every Librarian Should Know About Problem Publishers." Association of College & Research Libraries, May 25, 2021. YouTube, 1:00. https://youtu.be/5u20r9b-12w?si=trtjmiu970b0J1rM.

Tools, Checklists, and Rubrics

Compass to Publish, University of Liège, https://services.lib.uliege.be/compass-to-publish/.

Email Assessment Tool, Emme Lopez and Christine Gaspard, https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.7342769.v1.

Is It Predatory? Checklist for Evaluating Journals, Megan Wacha and the Office of Library Services, The City University of New York, https://libraryguides.salisbury.edu/ld.php?content_id=41083097

Journal Evaluation Tool, Shilpa Rele, Marie Kennedy, and Nataly Blas, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, https://scholars.lmu.edu/en/publications/journal-evaluation-tool

Journal Evaluation Workflow, Karen Burton, Clemson University Libraries, https://clemson.libguides.com/predatorypub

Open Access Journal Quality Indicators, Sarah Beaubien and Max Eckard, Grand Valley State University Libraries, https://www.gvsu.edu/library/open-access-journal-quality-indicators-144.htm

Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing, OASPA, COPE, DOAJ, and World Association of Medical Editors, https://doaj.org/apply/transparency/

Think.Check.Submit, cross-industry initiative, https://thinkchecksubmit.org/

Directories and Rankings

African Journals Online (AJOL), https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajol

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) members (publishers and journal titles), https://publicationethics.org/

Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) journal titles, https://doaj.org/

Google Scholar Metrics journal rankings, https://scholar.google.com/

Journal Citation Reports (JCR) journal rankings and journals by discipline, https://clarivate.com/

Journals Online (JOLs), International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP), https://www.inasp.info/

Journalytics Academic, Journalytics Medicine, and Predatory Reports databases, Cabell's Publishing, https://cabells.com/

Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association (OASPA) registered publishers, https://www.oaspa.org/

Public Library of Science (PLOS), open access publisher, https://plos.org/

Ulrichsweb directory of periodicals, https://about.proquest.com/en/

And the Winners are . . .

The Official Results of the 2025 ACRL Election

Brad Warren, dean of libraries at Augusta University, is the 88th president of ACRL.

"As I start my presidency year with ACRL, I am deeply struck by what a truly challenging moment we are in with our organization and industry, as well as our own personal journeys in navigating significant shifts in libraries and higher education. I am indebted to my fellow volunteer leaders of the ACRL Board during my vice-presidency year, as well as the outstanding staff of ACRL. In the next year, we will tackle an ambitious agenda of initiatives to provide content and value both professionally and personally to members. We will also be working without fail to advocate on behalf of academic libraries and librarianship during this year.

"In my year as president, I will work with the Board, membership, and ALA to shore up and provide resources for librarians to support academic freedom. I am also greatly interested in our work to develop and enhance ACRL's Benchmark data tool to ensure compatibility with IPEDS as well as enhancements of other data elements such as actionable salary benchmarks. My goal during my presidency year is to develop useful tools and support for our individual members while also ensuring that our vibrant collaborative community can support and be supported by each other. I was so heartened by my experience at the ACRL 2025 Conference in Minneapolis this year and am energized to do everything I can to benefit our members during my presidential year.

"I cannot disregard or ignore what can only be described as significant systemic threats to our work, industry, and educational missions that transcend the buzzwords being used to dismantle them. On an individual basis, the first few months of this year have been personally and professionally troubling. It is, however, only through our work with each other that we are able to not only advance our missions but also take care of each other as people.

"I am honored to be serving as the president of ACRL during this timeframe and am confident that our collective strength and support of each other will be critical in the next year."

During his 15 years of ACRL membership, Warren has served as a member of the ACRL Standards Committee (2023–present); member of the ACRL *College & Research Libraries* Editorial Board (2016–2023); co-chair of the ACRL 2023 Conference Contributed Papers Committee (2021–2023); member of the ACRL 2021 Conference, multiple committees (2019–2021); convener of the ACRL ULS Public Services Directors of Large Research Libraries Discussion Group (2021–2023); and founder, convener, and member of the ACRL Access Services Interest Group (2016–present).

Warren's experience with ALA includes being a member of the ALA Committee on Organization (2020–2022). Warren has also served as a member of the LLAMA (now Core) Program Committee (2015–2018) and Public Relations and Marketing Section Swap and Shop Committee (2008–2009).

Warren's activity with state, regional, and other national associations include serving on the Regents Academic Committee on Libraries, University System of Georgia (executive committee member, 2022–present), and ARL Membership Engagement and Outreach Committee (member, 2021–2022). Warren also served on the Strategic Ohio Council for Higher Education Library Council (member, 2021–2022), OhioLINK Regional Depository Governing Council (member, 2021–2022), Ivies+ Borrow Direct Policy Group (previous chair and member, 2014–2018), and the SOLINET Marketing Group (member, 2006–2007).

Warren's honors and awards include the Distinguished Achievement in Access Services Award (2016), Concertmaster of the New London Community Orchestra (2016–2018), and being part of the 1999–2000 inaugural class of the North Carolina State University Library fellowship program.

Other notable accomplishments for Warren include his role as the inaugural dean of Augusta University Libraries, where he created a new structure, secured a $1.1M increase to the budget, and completed a second-phase renovation of Augusta University's Greenblatt Library and facility as well as furniture refreshes of Reese Library in the first two years. Warren led the University of Cincinnati (UC) Libraries' Organizational Development initiatives and co-led all aspects of UC Libraries' planning and services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic across 13 jurisdictional libraries. He also led the UC Langsam Library Living Room project to increase more diverse seating and collaborative options.

Additionally, Warren led the service redesign of the Yale Sterling Memorial Library Nave during its 2014 restoration project, along with several reorganizations of Access Services operations and services. He also led multiple large-scale service and facilities projects at Yale University Libraries, requiring collaboration and consultation across multiple departments and unionized staff.

Warren founded the ACRL Access Services Interest Group and co-chaired the development and completion of the Framework for Access Services Librarianship in 2020.

His publications include co-author with Cheryl McGrath of the book chapter "Seizing the Opportunity for Innovation and Service Improvement" in *The Library Innovation Toolkit: Ideas, Strategies and Programs*, edited by Anthony Molaro and Leah L. White (Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2015); author of the editorial "Developing a Practical Approach to Change" in *College & Research Libraries* 81, no. 1 (2020); and author of the book chapter "The ACRL Framework for Access Services Librarianship" in T*wenty-First-Century Access Services: On the Front Line of Academic Librarianship*, second edition, edited by Michael J. Krasulski and Trevor A. Dawes (Chicago, IL: ACRL, 2023).

Alexia Hudson-Ward, associate director of Research, Learning, and Strategic Partnerships at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Libraries, has been elected ACRL vice-president/president-elect. Hudson-Ward will become president-elect in July 2025 and assume the presidency in July 2026 for a one-year term.

"I am deeply honored to serve as the next ACRL vice-president/president-elect. Thank you for placing your trust in me. I step into this role with deep gratitude and a clear vision—to amplify our collective excellence, strengthen strategic partnerships, champion advocacy,

invest in professional development for all library staff, and foster inclusive, thriving workplace cultures.

"Academic libraries are navigating urgent challenges and transformative opportunities. We face intensifying pressures—shrinking budgets, AI-driven technological change, and the global spread of misinformation. At the same time, federal-level actions and policy shifts—such as attacks on intellectual freedom and declining investments in higher education and research—place libraries and our communities at risk. Now more than ever, we must be proactive, united, and strategic.

"Our ACRL 2025 Conference in Minneapolis affirmed how academic libraries are vital engines of innovation and transformation. We must make our impact visible through intentional storytelling, data-informed strategy, strategic partnerships, and community-centered messaging. I am committed to advancing ACRL's advocacy efforts to ensure our voices are heard by institutional leaders, legislators, and the public. We must champion equitable funding, inclusive policy, open access, and the core values that define academic librarianship.

"Professional development remains foundational to our future. I will work to expand inclusive learning opportunities for all library workers—across roles, career stages, and institutions—to grow, lead, and thrive. Above all, we must build a more inclusive profession that reflects and respects the diversity of our communities. I am ready to lean into the critical conversations and collective action needed to get us there.

"Thank you again for this opportunity. I look forward to working with incoming ACRL President Brad Warren, the ACRL Board, and you to shape a dynamic, equity-centered future for all academic libraries."

During her 22 years of ACRL membership, Hudson-Ward has held several positions on the ACRL Conference Committees, including chair of the ACRL 2025 Conference (2023–2025), co-chair of the ACRL 2023 Conference Keynotes Committee (2021–2023), and a member of the ACRL 2011 Conference Virtual Conference Committee (2009–2011).

Hudson-Ward has also served on the ACRL College Libraries Section as past chair (2020–2021), chair (2019–2020), and vice-chair (2018–2019). She was a member of the ACRL Budget and Finance Committee (2016–2020), co-chair of the ACRL Instruction Section (IS) ALA Midwinter Conference IS Soiree (2007–2008), and a member of the ACRL Marketing to Academic and College Libraries Committee (2007–2010). Hudson-Ward also served as a member of the ACRL IS and the Women and Gender Studies Section (2007–2009), the ACRL IS Instruction for Diverse Populations Committee (2007–2009), and a member of the ACRL IS Advisory Committee (2007–2008).

Hudson-Ward's experience with ALA includes Life Membership in ALA and the Black Caucus of ALA. She has also served as a member of the ALA Executive Board (2012–2015) and divisional executive board liaison to ACRL, ALSC, and United for Libraries. She was also the ALA councilor representing the Pennsylvania State Chapter (2010–2015). Hudson-Ward was a member of the ALA Committee on Professional Ethics (2020–2021), a member of the ALA Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (2018–2020), a member of the ALA Budget and Planning Assembly (2011–2015), a member of the ALA Training, Orientation, and Leadership Development Committee (2007–2011), a member-mentor for the ALA Emerging Leader Program (2008–2009), and a member of the ALA Recruitment

Assembly (2007–2008). She is currently a member of the Library History Round Table (LHRT).

Hudson-Ward's activity with state, regional, and other national associations include serving as the Pennsylvania Library Association's ALA chapter councilor (2010–2015), a Board of Directors member (2010–2015), and chair of the Annual Conference Evaluation (2008–2010). Her service to the Pennsylvania African American Library Association includes terms as president (2007–2008), vice-president/president-elect (2006–2007), and immediate past-president (2008–2009).

Hudson-Ward's honors and awards include ALA Emerging Leader (2007), the Pennsylvania Library Association's New Librarian of the Year (2007), a *Library Journal* Mover and Shaker (2008), Penn State Great Valley School of Professional Studies Faculty Diversity Achievement Award (2008), and the University of Pittsburgh School of Computing and Information Outstanding Young Alumni Award (2013). She was a Penn State Big Ten Academic Alliance Academic Leadership Program Fellow (2013–2014) and a UCLA Library Senior Fellow 2024 cohort member.

Other notable accomplishments for Hudson-Ward include co-creating the successful MIT Libraries–ACRL Diversity Alliance Administrative Fellow program to prepare underrepresented talent for future academic library leadership. During her tenure as Oberlin College's first BIPOC Azariah Smith Root Director of Libraries, she spearheaded naming the main library after civil rights leader Mary Church Terrell and supported an educational partnership with the Smithsonian.

Hudson-Ward's board memberships, both past (LYRASIS and Center for Research Libraries) and current ("The Conversation U.S. Edition," The Corning Museum of Glass, and the MIT Press Editorial Board [ex-officio]) support the global library community, scholars, writers, and artists across the disciplines through publishing, research, curatorial, and shared resourcing. As a faculty member of Harvard's Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians and a nonprofit volunteer, she has positively impacted nearly 1,000 leaders as a leadership development educator.

Additionally, Hudson-Ward conceptualized Choice Publishing's *Toward Inclusive Excellence* (an award-nominated multimedia blog that advances discourse regarding diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, belonging, and social justice in higher education) along with Mark Cummings and Bill Mickey, serving as its inaugural editor-in-chief for three years.

Her publications include D. Fife and A. Hudson-Ward, "Professional Development," in A.C. Powers, M. Garnar, and D. Fife (eds.), *A Starter's Guide for Academic Library Leaders: Advice in Conversation* (Chicago, IL: ALA, 2019); A. Hudson-Ward, J. Widholm Rodrigues, and S. Walter (eds.), *Cultural Heritage and the Campus Community: Academic Libraries and Museums in Collaboration* (Chicago, IL: ACRL, 2022); and A. Hudson-Ward, "Open, Inclusive and Diverse," in S. Hirsh (ed.), *Library 2035: Imagining the Next Generation of Libraries* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2024).

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EconBiz. *Access:* https://www.econbiz.de/.

EconBiz is a search portal for journal articles, working papers, and conferences in business studies and economics. It's a service of Leibniz Information Centre for Economics (ZBW). Based in Germany, ZBW is "the world's largest special library for economics." The content comes from the following sources: ECONIS (ZBW's catalogue), RePEc (the Research Papers in Economics open access database), EconStor (ZBW's open access server), BASE (the economics and business section of the Bielefeld Academic Search Engine), and OLC-SSG (bibliographic data from the economy, business economics, and economic sectors subject collections of the Swets Database Online Contents). There are nearly 12 million publications, and two million of those are open access full text. With content written in multiple languages, selecting English for the language filter is an important step. Some filters, such as subject and type of publication, contain non-English options.

Underneath the search bar on the homepage, there are four buttons providing information geared toward different audiences: "For students," "For researchers," "For teaching," and "For institutes." The section for institutions includes information on contributing open-access publications to make them discoverable in EconBiz, something that may be of interest to faculty researchers. Undergraduate students may find evaluating sources in EconBiz more difficult compared to other databases because it contains grey literature and does not have a peer review filter. However, assistance is available through EconDesk, which is staffed by ZBW business and economics subject librarians. Questions asked via the chat icon at the bottom of all pages will be answered within two days.

A strength of this resource is the help provided. An interactive tour provides a series of pop-ups that highlight the steps on the screen for searching, filtering results, and accessing full text. It also includes quick tips and examples for finding fewer or more results using quotes, wildcards, and Boolean operators. Another helpful tool linked from the EconBiz homepage is the STW Thesaurus for Economics. It includes more than 6,000 standardized subject headings to support searching.

Ongoing development is evident. A "Beta" page highlights new features, including author profiles using linked data and a visual event search with items from the events calendar plotted on an interactive map. For researchers in economics, EconBiz is particularly useful for grey literature that may be difficult to discover elsewhere. *—Lucy Rosenbloom, Xavier University of Louisiana, lrosenbl@xula.edu*

Latino Cultures in the US. *Access:* https://artsandculture.google.com/project/uslatinocultures.

Latino Cultures in the US is an online hub of digital collections available through Google Arts and Culture. All items in Latino Cultures in the US relate to Latino art, culture, and history and come from well-known museums such as the Museum of Latin American Art as well as niche museums such as the Selena Museum, the Nuyorican Poets Café, and the International Salsa Museum. Latino Cultures in the US is divided into the subheadings "Art & Entertainment," "Icons & Heroes," "History & Traditions," and "Communities

Joni R. Roberts is associate university librarian for public services and collection development at Willamette University, email: jroberts@willamette.edu, and Carol A. Drost is associate university librarian for technical services at Willamette University, email: cdrost@willamette.edu.

Today," with links to more than 5,000 images, 265 videos, and 150 stories. Some of the more unique topics are early Mexican cookbooks, mestizáje identity, disabled Latinos, and the style of Latinas in Los Angeles. The website also includes downloadable lesson plans on art, culture, and politics.

Latino Cultures in the US is strongest in the arts and contains audio and video content. "The Sights and Sounds of Frida's Self-Portrait" provides a detailed analysis of the symbols in Frida Kahlo's *Self Portrait on the Borderline Between Mexico and the United States*, and later "Diego Rivera's Detroit Industry" delivers the same comprehensive breakdown of his murals in the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The metadata for each item is determined by its collection or museum, so there are inconsistencies between collections. The University of Texas San Antonio's cookbook collection includes the date, author, and link to the fully digitized document, while other collections do not have that amount of detail, and so citing the sources may be tricky. The volume of material is both a blessing and a curse, and Latino Cultures in the US cannot be searched on its own; any searches are conducted in all of Google Arts and Culture. This much material requires clear navigation, and the arrangement is not well defined; art has its own section, but it also periodically appears between sections that are not related. The interface does not allow for opening material in a new tab, so the user must back out of all links.

While the website can be cumbersome, it compiles a wealth of information about Latinos in the United States. It is an excellent source for a teacher looking to augment Hispanic Heritage Month discussions with more than Dia de los Muertos and well-known artists. The site emphasizes that being Latino is not one identity and encompasses many intersectionalities and cultures. —*Delores Carlito, University of Alabama at Birmingham, dcarlito@uab.edu*