College & Research Libraries
news
Association of College & Research Libraries

July/August 2025
Vol. 86 No. 7
ISSN: 2150-6698

College & Research Libraries news

July/August 2025
Vol. 86, No. 7

Features

Departments

This month's cover features a photograph of Ellen Peterson on a wet swamp walk in the 1990s from the Florida Gulf Coast University Archives and Special Collections Ellen Peterson Legacy Collection. The collection highlights Peterson, a community leader and activist with a focus on social justice and environmental conservation in Southwest Florida.

In 2006, Peterson created the Happehatchee Center, Inc., a private nonprofit organization to preserve the lush five acres of "old Florida" on the banks of the Estero River. The materials, donated by members of the Happehatchee Center in honor of Peterson, include the scrapbook and journal entries from her cross-country bike trip to promote environmental awareness, family photos, letters, awards, bumper stickers, and flyers for the Happehatchee Center. Learn more at https://bit.ly/3ZZlTEo.

Editor-in-chief: David Free

Recruitment ad sales manager: David M. Connolly

Product sales manager: Pam Marino

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.

Job advertising: Contact *ALA JobLIST*, 225 N. Michigan Ave, Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601-7616; (312) 280-2513; e-mail: joblist@ala.org.

Production office: 225 N. Michigan Ave, Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601-7616

College & Research Libraries News (Online ISSN 2150-6698) is published by the Association of College & Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, as 11 monthly (combining July/August) online-only issues, at 225 N. Michigan Ave, Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601-7616. Submission guidelines are available on the *C&RL News* website. Inclusion of an article or an advertisement in *C&RL News* does not constitute official endorsement by ACRL or ALA.

Indexed in *Current Contents: Social & Behavioral Sciences*; *Current Index to Journals in Education*; *Information Science Abstracts*; *Library & Information Science Abstracts*; *Library Literature*; and *Social Sciences Citation Index.*

Back issues: $11.00 each.

SMU Breaks Ground on Rees-Jones Library of the American West

Southern Methodist University (SMU) broke ground this May on the Rees-Jones Library of the American West. The library will house the Rees-Jones Collection of Western Americana, which consists of thousands of rare books, manuscripts, photographs, maps, and other artifacts. It will also be home to the holdings of SMU's DeGolyer Library and its complementary special collections. The library will be a premier destination for scholars, students, and history enthusiasts.

Rendering of the Rees-Jones Library of the American West.

Formed over the past 20 years by Dallas entrepreneur Trevor Rees-Jones, the Rees-Jones Collection has become one of the most significant holdings of Western Americana in the country. A diverse and deep resource for Western Americana research, the collection includes items from the late 17th century to the mid-20th century.

The library will feature study areas, reading nooks, and a grand reading room. A digitization and conservation lab will preserve rare materials, while a map room and gallery will support hands-on learning. Exhibition and seminar rooms will bring history to life for scholars and visitors. Since the May 5, 2023 announcement of a $30 million commitment to construction and endowment, plus the gift of the Rees-Jones Collection valued at over $100 million, establishing the Rees-Jones Library of the American West, Trevor Rees-Jones and his wife, Jan, have continued to make significant contributions for collection enhancement and expenses related to the incorporation of the collection into the SMU library system.

Project MUSE and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Launch New Initiative

Project MUSE, a division of Johns Hopkins University Press, in collaboration with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, have announced a new landmark in the museum's longstanding *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945* (*ECG*) series: *ECG* volumes I-IV are now fully searchable, open-access digital publications freely available to everyone around the world. The most comprehensive resource on Nazi persecutory sites, the *ECG* offers users the ability to dynamically engage with empirically grounded research that documents thousands of camps, ghettos, and other sites of persecution operated by the Nazis and their allies. Work on the multivolume encyclopedia stretches back over 25 years and involves the work of more than 700 scholars in the fields of history, Holocaust Studies, and other related disciplines. To date, this global scholarly collaboration has documented evidence of thousands of camps and ghettos.

Project MUSE and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum are committed to broadening access to and increasing engagement with this vital scholarship. This new digital format will be an invaluable resource for wide-ranging audiences, including scholars, researchers, Holocaust survivors and their descendants, digital humanists, educators, students,

librarians, archivists, nonprofits, and the general public. Users will gain straightforward access to extensive bibliographic citations comprising research in more than a dozen languages and varied source bases, including material in hundreds of archival collections, survivor and eyewitness testimonies, memoirs, diaries, memory books, and up-to-date scholarship. Users can navigate to the text of the *ECG* through a new interactive map that demonstrates the vast scale of this network of Nazi-era persecution. Learn more at https://muse.jhu.edu/encyclopedia/ushmm.

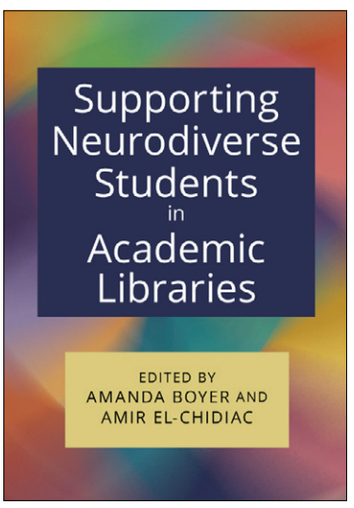
Stanford Debuts Rare Music Online Exhibit

The Stanford University Libraries recently announced that the refreshed and greatly expanded Rare Music at Stanford online exhibit is now available for exploration. This exhibit was established in 2016 as a beachhead for items digitized for patrons from the Memorial Library of Music and numbered approximately 250 objects. In 2016, Ray Heigemeir, Head of Public Services in Music, initiated the Memorial Library of Music Plus project (MLM+), a systematic review of rare music collections in the Stanford University Libraries holdings, aiming to identify all manuscript scores and musicians' letters. The review included the Memorial Library of Music Collection, plus other collections such as the Mario Ancona Collection, as well as items added individually to our rare music holdings over the decades. With MLM+ completed, 1,300 digital objects are now available to the public for close viewing and download.

Exhibit highlights include autograph manuscript full scores by Cherubini, Brahms, Mascagni, and Stravinsky; collections of letters by Vieuxtemps, Spohr, and Gounod; copyist manuscripts documenting Lully's operatic output; a complete set of 16th-century Flemish master engravings, *Encomium musices*; and archival materials from the life of the Swedish soprano Jenny Lind. Learn more and view the online exhibit at https://exhibits.stanford.edu/rare-music.

New from ACRL—Supporting Neurodiverse Students in Academic Libraries

The ACRL recently announced the publication of *Supporting Neurodiverse Students in Academic Libraries*, edited by Amanda Boyer and Amir El-Chidiac, offering practical advice and effective practices for supporting students with autism spectrum disorder, brain trauma, depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders.



Neurodiverse students encounter myriad barriers and hurdles to thriving in academia, and there is an increasing need for all types of accessibility in our libraries. Librarians and educators working in academic institutions can partner with neurodiverse students to help them flourish on campus and establish community.

In five parts, *Supporting Neurodiverse Students in Academic Libraries* offers practical advice and activities that can be easily implemented and scaled to various types, sizes, and budgets of libraries.

- Instruction
- Services
- Cross-campus collaborations
- Resources
- Spaces

Chapters include effective practices for students with autism spectrum disorder, brain trauma, and PTSD, but also depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders. *Supporting Neurodiverse Students in Academic Libraries* demonstrates the power of working alongside students to create welcoming spaces, services, and resources that can help all students succeed.

Supporting Neurodiverse Students in Academic Libraries 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.

Standards for Libraries in Higher Education Draft Revision Review

The ACRL Value of Academic Libraries (VAL) Committee invites feedback on a proposed draft revision of the ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education. VAL is following ACRL procedures for updates and an open comment period laid out by the ACRL Standards Committee. After the close of the review/comment period, the VAL subcommittee working on the revision will review and incorporate feedback as needed before sharing the proposed draft revision with the ACRL Standards Committee and the ACRL Board of Directors.

The draft revision, along with a link to the feedback form, is available on the ACRL website at https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards-guidelines-and-frameworks-alphabetical-list. Please share comments and suggestions by July 31, 2025. Contact Subcommittee Chair Mark Emmons of the University of New Mexico at emmons@unm.edu with questions.

ResearchGate and AccScience Publishing Announce 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 five 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 25 million researcher members, in particular across Europe and North America.

The journals will benefit from seamless integration of all version-of-record into the ResearchGate platform, increasing the discoverability of all ASP's content and a growing readership worldwide; increasing the journal brand profile, with dedicated profile pages that showcase key information and content, along with prominent journal branding on all associated article pages; ensuring continuous engagement with authors throughout their researcher cycle and unique audience insights, enabling ASP to deepen relationships with researchers, attract new authors, and increase author loyalty; and providing an 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. Learn more at https://www.researchgate.net/journal-home.

Taylor & Francis Collective Funding Pilot Reaches OA Target

Taylor & Francis has confirmed that both journals in its Collective Pathway to Open Publishing (CPOP) pilot will be converted to open access (OA) for 2025. Announced in November 2024, CPOP has been devised as an alternative OA model for Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) journals, particularly those focused on regions with a high uptake of OA agreements.

With funding thresholds met for the pilot, every article in the 2025 volumes of *Nordic Psychology* and *Nordic Social Work Research* will now be published OA at no cost to authors. This includes all specialist and professional content, a key feature of HSS journals that is not usually included in OA agreements. The CPOP model combines several existing funding sources to support the conversion of journals to OA, one volume at a time. Institutions participating in Taylor & Francis' OA agreements fund publishing for their affiliated authors, accounting for a high percentage of articles in the Nordic pilot journals. In addition, continued support from a small group of institutions with subscriptions and other read access is used for the remaining new articles.

Tech Bits . . .

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

Scite is a subscription AI-powered tool to help researchers understand how academic papers form a universe of research. For example, an article cited 300 times may indicate it is essential and well-regarded. It might also mean the research is no longer relevant, and other articles refer to this. Scite provides information about references, indicating whether other works mention a particular source, support it, or contrast it. Scite's browser extension allows users to access information about sources from the open web, including via Google Scholar and social media sites. Scite Assistant, a generative AI tool for academic research, allows users to ask questions and obtain results from scholarly literature. Its use raises issues related to academic integrity and the importance of individuals independently understanding how to employ research methods.

Jessica Epstein
Georgia State University

Scite
https://scite.ai

ACM Joins India's ONOS Initiative with a Transformative ACM Open Agreement

ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery, the world's largest computing society, has joined India's One Nation One Subscription (ONOS) initiative through a transformative new read-and-publish agreement with the ACM Open program. This agreement provides 6,500 government-funded higher education and research institutions across India with premium access to the ACM Digital Library, while enabling authors in participating institutions to publish an unlimited number of open-access research articles in ACM journals, ACM conference proceedings, and ICPS Proceedings with no article processing charges (APCs).

ONOS is enabled by the Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre, an initiative of the Government of India. Institutions across India will gain access to ACM's full suite of research publications and tools.

Katherine Tucker

Resisting Neoliberalism

Information Literacy Instruction as a Political Act

Much scholarship, especially in the field of critical university studies[1], has been written concerning the trend toward neoliberalism in higher education. Less of this work focuses specifically on academic libraries; however, librarianship has, to some extent, internalized neoliberal values. This internalization appears in the language we use. We "market" our services to faculty members, even making "elevator pitches." Students ask to "rent" books from the library, and some libraries even intentionally call patrons "customers." In our instruction, we teach students that information has value, but we rarely engage with how that value is determined or how a view of information as capital affects the ways in which students use the information they seek. In doing so, we reduce librarianship to another cog in a capitalist machine which exists to create laborers, rather than to educate citizens prepared to engage in society.

Instead of accepting this trend toward neoliberalism and academic capitalism,[2] I argue that academic librarians should challenge neoliberalism from the perspective of our discipline. The concepts and ideas the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (henceforth, the Framework) provides can be used to bring us closer to justice. Critical pedagogy gives us a lens through which we can reexamine our instruction as a political act and work to dismantle structures of oppression that affect our instructional methods.

Critical Pedagogy: Against Neoliberal Ideals

Many definitions of neoliberalism exist. For this article, I selected a general definition from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, which defines neoliberalism as "the philosophical view that a society's political and economic institutions should be robustly liberal and capitalist... [which] redefines citizens as consumers."[3] The harms of neoliberalism have also been extensively detailed. Racial capitalism, a framework that understands capitalism as grounded in the exploitation of nonwhite people,[4] is one helpful critique. Though neoliberal thinkers see capitalism as morally neutral or arbitrary, racial capitalism and other critiques see capitalism as an oppressive, biased, and racist system. Critiques of neoliberalism in higher education describe the neoliberal university as an "edufactory" or a place in which "all forms of knowledge are considered in service of the neoliberal agenda that would privilege and protect competition,"[5] rather than in service of the learner. Librarians are often encouraged to connect information literacy skills to labor—how will applying the Framework help students to seek jobs, careers, and economic gains? In short, how does information literacy serve to grow one's prowess in a capitalistic system?

Katherine Tucker is the assistant director of the Westminster University Giovale Library, email: kpaterson@westminsteru.edu.

But what happens if we approach information literacy for its role in developing the student not as a laborer but as a citizen and member of a community? Critical pedagogy gives us a lens through which we can critique these oppressive capitalist structures and helps our students to examine the ways in which power dynamics affect the information available to them.

Henry A. Giroux is noted for his focus on utopian pedagogy, which aims to resist neoliberalism in education. He argues, "if students lack the ability to address how knowledge is related to power, morality, social responsibility and justice, they will have neither the power nor the language necessary to engage in collective forms of struggle against society's efforts to write them out of the script of democracy."[6] What else is information literacy if not that very ability? The following paragraphs detail strategies for reframing our information literacy instruction toward that end, focusing on three of the six frames.

Engaging with the Framework

Rethinking Information as Capital: Information Has Value

Many of the frames encourage us to see information as capital, but none so much as Information Has Value. The frame describes information as a "commodity," and the dispositions call upon learners to "see themselves as contributors to the information marketplace rather than only consumers of it."[7] This is not done without critique—indeed, the frame expresses that "experts understand that value may be wielded by powerful interests in ways that marginalize certain voices."[8] This vague language can be both frustrating and liberating. Though it does not provide guidance to help students understand what those "powerful interests" may be, it allows librarians to open discussions about the power dynamics inherent in distributing information as capital, particularly by engaging with information privilege.

Within the dispositions of the frame, learners are encouraged to "examine their own information privilege."[9] Others have noted that the Framework does not define the term, nor does it suggest the steps learners should take in examining their privilege.[10] However, critical pedagogy gives us a means to explicate information privilege. Since "critical pedagogy pushes us to surface power dynamics in the classroom and the larger communities in which our learners live,"[11] it is our duty to encourage students to see not only the reality of their information privilege, but the structures that prevent others from accessing information. Duke's Library 101 Toolkit[12] provides an excellent lesson plan for discussing information privilege in the classroom.

The way we talk about our resources can also help us to engage with information as capital. We often describe our resources as "free" for students to access and use. Instead, we should help students understand that academic libraries serve as intermediaries between database companies and students. That's not to say we should spend entire one-shots detailing our consortial agreements and contracts. Rather, I recommend short explanations about why some information is available to them and not to others outside of academia. This can naturally take place when students encounter paywalled information or wonder what their access to library resources will look like after graduation.

Authority Is Constructed and Contextual: Beyond Checklists

To move toward information literacy as social justice and away from neoliberal applications, students should combine their understanding of information privilege with evaluation

skills. The frame Authority is Constructed and Contextual is crucial. Laura Saunders argues that "without the cognitive abilities to engage with information and assess its authority, credibility, and relevance, other forms of access are not useful."[13] However, prescriptive checklists, such as the CRAAP test, and media bias charts merely give students the ability to identify disinformation or bias without recognizing the structures that create it. Critical pedagogy calls upon us to create knowledge collaboratively, rather than presenting as a "sage on the stage." To that end, having conversations with students about *how* authority is constructed within academia and without, as well as who they see as authoritative or trustworthy, helps us to build our understanding of authority together. Conversations like this engage our students in learning more than any checklist ever could. Demonstrating lateral reading[14] and other critical reading strategies can also help students to ask detailed questions about an author's or publisher's intent, biases, or credibility.

We should also encourage students to develop evaluation skills, not just for the end goal of getting a good grade for using "good" sources in their papers, but as a means for resisting disinformation as citizens. In doing so, we fulfil the promise of training students for life outside the university without making concessions to neoliberalism—instead, we ask students to "make visible the connections between power and knowledge, and provide the conditions for extending democratic rights, values, and identities."[15]

Scholarship as Conversation: Between Whom?

In Scholarship as Conversation, the Framework encourages learners to "identify barriers to entering scholarly conversation via various venues."[16] When we apply the lenses of racial capitalism and critical pedagogy, we can explicate this statement more deeply. Rather than vaguely gesturing at historic and current barriers to publishing scholarship, we can have substantive conversations about racial capitalism, academia's own biases, and the power structures that operate within and outside our institutions.

In my instruction, I have noticed I often (lazily) point to citation metrics as a reflection of a piece's value in a field. In doing so, I am teaching my students that an information source's contribution to a conversation is measurable in purely capitalistic and quantitative terms. By engaging with citation justice[17] in our instruction, we can help our students to see whose work is valued in the neoliberal university, specifically, predominantly white scholars whose research brings revenue to their institutions. In doing so, we can encourage students to seek out the scholarship of those who have been denied access or amplification in academia.

This is not to say the scholarly landscape is entirely bleak: scholars cite open access, OER, and expanded opportunities for publication as helping to resist neoliberal models of commodification of information.[18] As librarians, it is our responsibility to help students locate this information and to hone their skills beyond simply picking the article with the best citation metrics.

Conclusion: Students as Collaborators, Coconspirators, and Comrades

We cannot dismantle systems of oppression in a one-shot. It takes valuable time we don't always have, and energy that students do not always have to offer to engage in praxis. However, when we see our students as collaborators in both knowledge creation and resistance to neoliberal ideals, even the smallest changes can have outsized impacts. Giroux argues that

"democracy has to be struggled over, even in the face of a most appalling crisis of political agency."[19] Critical pedagogy requires us to see learning as collaborative, and that knowledge creation occurs for all participants—students and teachers. When we apply critical pedagogy to the classroom, we invite students to join us in the struggle.

To achieve the stated goals of the Framework, we must resist neoliberal attacks on higher education, as well as any efforts to depoliticize our instruction. A return to critical pedagogy and critical information literacy will help us to reorient our teaching and to deepen our knowledge of the Framework. When we engage in a pedagogy that brings us closer to the democracy of our imagination—where students are educated as citizens, rather than as laborers—we work toward its creation.

Notes

1. Jeffrey J. Williams, "Deconstructing Academe," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 58, no. 25 (February 24, 2012): B7-B8.

2. See: Sheila Slaughter and Larry L. Leslie, *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

3. Kevin Vallier, "Neoliberalism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, Winter 2022, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2022/entries/neoliberalism/.

4. Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition,* revised and updated 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

5. Gaile S. Cannella and Mirka Koro-Ljungberg, "Neoliberalism in Higher Education: Can We Understand? Can We Resist and Survive? Can We Become Without Neoliberalism?," *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 17, no. 3 (June 1, 2017): 155-62, https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708617706117.

6. Henry A. Giroux, "Neoliberalism and the Weaponising of Language and Education," *Race & Class* 61, no. 1 (July 1, 2019): 26-45, https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396819847945.

7. *"Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,"* American Library Association, February 9, 2015, https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework.

8. *"Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."*

9. *"Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."*

10. Sarah Hare and Cara Evanson, "Information Privilege Outreach for Undergraduate Students," *College & Research Libraries* 79, no. 6 (September 6, 2018): 726, https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.79.6.726.

11. Laura Saunders and Melissa Wong, *Instruction in Libraries and Information Centers: An Introduction* (Windsor, CT: Windsor & Downs Press, 2020), https://doi.org/10.21900/wd.12.

12. "Information Privilege - Library 101 Toolkit," August 13, 2018, https://sites.duke.edu/library101_instructors/2018/08/13/information-privilege/.

13. Laura Saunders, "Connecting Information Literacy and Social Justice: Why and How," *Communications in Information Literacy* 11, no. 1 (July 12, 2017): 59, https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2017.11.1.47.

14. Sam Wineburg and Sarah McGrew, "Lateral Reading and the Nature of Expertise: Reading Less and Learning More When Evaluating Digital Information," *Teachers College*

Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education 121, no. 11 (November 2019): 1-40, https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811912101102.

15. Henry A. Giroux, "1. Utopian Thinking in Dangerous Times: Critical Pedagogy and the Project of Educated Hope," in *Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments Against Neoliberal Globalization*, ed. Mark Cote, Richard J.F. Day, and Greig de Peuter (University of Toronto Press, 2007), 25-42, https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442685093-004.

16. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."

17. Sarah Clark and Caroline Monnin, "Incorporating Citation Justice within Citation Instruction," 2025.

18. Cannella and Koro-Ljungberg, "Neoliberalism in Higher Education."

19. Giroux, "1. Utopian Thinking in Dangerous Times."

Drew VandeCreek, Jaime Schumacher, Stacey Jones Erdman, and Danielle Taylor

No One Left Behind

Digital POWRR Project Promotes Preservation of Digital Materials in Smaller Organizations

The Digital POWRR Project at Northern Illinois University Libraries addresses a problem that has largely gone unrecognized in the field. Research shows that digital objects are considerably more subject to loss than paper resources. Large amounts of digital content remain at a high risk of loss, especially in the collections of the smallest organizations with the fewest financial resources. These organizations often contain materials documenting the history and culture of historically marginalized populations but frequently lack the ability to secure them for future use. Most cannot afford to purchase and operate integrated digital preservation products and services available from commercial vendors. Outreach activities related to improving organizations' digital preservation capacity have most often excluded them by charging considerable registration fees and requiring expensive travel.

The Digital POWRR Project has addressed this situation in several ways. First, it has promoted a provisional, iterative approach to digital preservation. It encourages information professionals to improve local practice in any way possible, no matter how simple or seemingly insignificant, then expand capacity incrementally as local conditions allow. Second, POWRR has recognized significant affective aspects of digital preservation work. Preserving digital objects requires the development of skills very different than those used in the care of analog collections, and many practitioners found themselves intimidated or overwhelmed. Unsure how to proceed, many did nothing. POWRR publications and instructional events have identified and addressed this situation directly by showing how a "good enough" approach can build practitioner confidence. Third, POWRR has used grant funds to make professional development training available at no charge and provide stipends for practitioners showing that their organization cannot fund the costs of travel and lodging at an event site.

Origins

In 2012, the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded Northern Illinois University Libraries $575,000 to study challenges arising from digital materials' susceptibility to loss and how smaller organizations with limited resources might meet them. Lynne Thomas, then Head of Rare Books and Special Collections at NIU Libraries, and Drew VandeCreek, director of digital initiatives, served as co-Principal Investigators.

Drew VandeCreek is the director of digital scholarship at the Northern Illinois University Libraries, email: drew@niu.edu. Jaime Schumacher is the senior director of scholarly communications at Northern Illinois University, email: jschumacher@niu.edu. Stacey Jones Erdman is a digital preservation librarian at the University of Arizona, email: staceyerdman@arzona.edu. Danielle Taylor is a digital preservation librarian at the Indiana University Libraries, email: dhtaylor@iu.edu.

They coordinated the activities of a team that also included librarians and archivists from Illinois Wesleyan University, Western Illinois University, Chicago State University, and Illinois State University. The team hired Jaime Schumacher, a recent graduate of the University of Illinois' School of Information Sciences, to direct the project.

The project collaborators began to explore how their libraries stored and preserved digital materials. Although many people believed that digital resources are more durable than analog objects, literature in the field showed that they are, in fact, subject to a multitude of factors that can result in their loss. Digital materials created in a given software application may become unusable as that application becomes obsolete. Once-viable software applications may recede from widespread use as new competitors displace them. Digital storage media may fail for a variety of reasons, including manufacturing defects, inhospitable local storage conditions, and age. Individuals and institutions charged with the care of digital materials may also simply lose track of them or fail to convert them to formats readable by new software applications.

Project Research and Report

The project team named their program the Digital POWRR Project (Preserving Digital Objects with Restricted Resources) and focused their efforts on addressing digital preservation challenges faced by small and medium-sized organizations with limited staff sizes, restricted IT infrastructures, and tight budgets. Project research showed that many of these institutions held unique digital content, yet practitioners seeking to enhance the probability that their materials would survive for use in the longer-term future indicated that they were often unsure how to secure this result.

In 2014, the project published a white paper based on research conducted under its original grant.[1] It found that the cultural heritage and information science communities had developed guidelines and best practices that could enable an organization to achieve high levels of digital preservation, but these protocols were often highly theoretical and complex in nature and required the use of more resources than many organizations could provide. Seeking to provide practitioners at these organizations with a well-defined, realistic path toward sustainable digital stewardship, the project team set out to test a variety of tools and services for the preservation of digital library collections.

The report included the results of tests conducted on several digital preservation tools and services. It included a graphic tool grid that showed the functionalities of more than 60 digital preservation utilities and how they fit into the digital curation lifecycle that existing protocols described.[2] In the course of project activities, the project successfully merged this resource with a similar online registry based in the United Kingdom, producing COPTR (Community Owned Digital Preservation Tool Registry).[3]

The white paper presented its evaluations of tools and services in the context of a provisional, "good enough" approach to digital preservation. This stood in contrast to the common supposition that only integrated, and often prohibitively expensive, utilities could do the job. The authors encouraged readers to evaluate their organization's digital preservation capacity by reference to the National Digital Stewardship Alliance's Levels of Digital Preservation and seek ways of improving local practice.[4] Even the simplest activities, like creating an inventory of digital materials on hand and noting their characteristics, could improve local practice. Looking forward, the report emphasized how practitioners might assemble multiple

open-source or low-cost tools and services into a larger digital preservation process suited to local collections and conditions. Together, applications providing single functions could produce affordable, scalable digital preservation solutions for under-resourced organizations.

The report also acknowledged the affective issues involved in meeting the challenges of digital preservation. Its case studies of five participating institutions' digital preservation capacity noted that practitioners often felt overwhelmed or anxious in the face of a very complex situation. Many believed that they should address the problem in one fell swoop by purchasing an appropriate digital preservation utility but could not begin to determine which one. The unavailability of institutional resources often compounded this challenge at smaller organizations by making the purchase of a single product impossible. POWRR's white paper advised practitioners to set these fears aside and build confidence by focusing on relatively simple, "good enough" practices that could make incremental progress toward better preservation capacity.

In 2015, the project white paper received the Society of American Archivists' Preservation Publication Award for "outstanding published work related to archives preservation." In that year, the publication also won the National Digital Stewardship Alliance's 2015 Innovation Organization Award**.**

Move to In-Person Professional Development Instruction

The project team used its research to develop a pragmatic, hands-on professional development workshop. It taught the initial steps necessary to access and inventory digital content as well as how to approach the development of a digital preservation workflow fitting local conditions. Although the project team created online learning modules containing the workshop curriculum, they emphasized in-person training events in order to help participants create a community of practice by which they might share information and support. Event curricula also promoted the use of open-source software developed for digital preservation work. Contrary to a widely held assumption, POWRR instructors have shown that practitioners can employ several effective applications without the assistance of a programmer.

In the process of conducting research for the project white paper, POWRR team members noted that organizations providing professional development training in digital preservation required registration fees that often exceeded $1,000 and asked participants or their organizations to pay for travel to an event site along with related accommodations. Recognizing that many of their target organizations could not provide practitioners with training and travel budgets, the POWRR team requested IMLS permission to use funds from its original research grant to conduct these workshops at locations around the country at no charge. The project team also received permission to provide travel and lodging stipends for participants who could show that their organization was unable to pay these costs.

In 2015, the Digital POWRR Project received a new grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Division of Preservation and Access for the provision of additional one-day workshops presenting the curriculum developed and delivered during the original study's dissemination phase. Subsequent grants from the IMLS and NEH have provided POWRR with new opportunities. The former, proposed and administered by Stacey Erdman, an original member of the project team currently employed at the University of Arizona, provides librarians and archivists with opportunities to learn about digital

preservation concepts and processes by participating in ongoing mentorship, cohort-building, and peer assessment activities. The latter is allowing Schumacher and project collaborators to expand POWRR's professional development program into a two-and-a-half-day institute event featuring an updated curriculum.

Outreach to Historically Marginalized and Overseas Groups

As the Digital POWRR Project has developed, it has increasingly focused its efforts on reaching practitioners and organizations devoted to sustaining cultural heritage materials produced by historically marginalized groups. Many of these organizations function with very small annual budgets and enjoy limited access to technology and expertise.

The project has provided instruction to librarians and archivists in conjunction with the Sustainable Heritage Network, an organization supporting Native American tribal libraries and archives in the Pacific Northwest, the Black Metropolis Research Consortium (Chicago), the Latino Digital Archive, and the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums.

These relationships have facilitated the preservation of unique materials. At a 2018 event, members of a tribal nation from the Pacific Northwest approached instructors seeking assistance with a box of digital tapes. The tapes contained recordings of Tribal Elders giving oral histories in their native language. Only a few of the Elders were still living, and their language was at risk of being lost with their passing. POWRR provided digital preservation training and assisted them in formulating a plan to transfer the recordings from the legacy media to additional devices, perform initial curation actions on them, and create a workflow to preserve them into the future.

At a 2024 event, librarians from American Saipan brought instructors' attention to recordings of oral history materials recorded on a cell phone by members of a local ethnic community. POWRR team members helped the librarians move identical copies of the materials to other media, promoting their preservation through the existence of duplicates. They also assisted the librarians in the development of a workflow for future use.

At this event, POWRR staff members also helped a representative of the Sequoyah National Research Center at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock, to create a workflow for preserving Native American periodicals and newspapers. The center holds the largest collection of such materials in the US but has not created a plan for capturing and preserving those that are now appearing only in digital formats.

In the coming year, the Digital POWRR team will produce a new set of online learning modules presenting the contents of the project's professional development institute. The project team will work with the Latino Digital Archive to provide these online materials to Spanish-speaking practitioners in a Spanish-language format. Project staff members also look forward to working with Northern Illinois University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies to provide online professional development materials to librarians and archivists in Thailand and Indonesia in Thai and Indonesian language subtitled formats.

Conclusion

Erdman has described Digital POWRR as providing "foundational, hands-on, and extremely practical digital preservation training opportunities.... Digital preservation is an intimidating topic, and many practitioners feel overwhelmed and frankly unqualified. Our instructors are approachable, friendly, and encouraging, and espouse a "no person left

behind" philosophy. People depart our events feeling confident and empowered, with close connections established, and our evaluations continually bear this out." To date, the Digital POWRR Project has used more than $1 million in federal awards for this purpose.

Notes

1. Jaime Schumacher, Lynne M. Thomas, Drew VandeCreek, Stacey Erdman, Jeff Hancks, Aaisha Haykal, Meg Miner, Patrice-Andre Prud'homme, and Danielle Spalenka, *From Theory to Action: Good Enough Digital Preservation for Under-Resourced Cultural Heritage Institutions* (2014). *Faculty Peer-Reviewed Publications.* 1056. https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/allfaculty-peerpub/1056.

2. "Curation Lifecycle Model," Digital Curation Centre, accessed May 26, 2025, https://www.dcc.ac.uk/guidance/curation-lifecycle-model.

3. "Main Page," COPTR: Community Owned digital Preservation Tool Registry, accessed May 26, 2025, https://coptr.digipres.org/index.php/Main_Page.

4. "Levels of Digital Preservation," National Digital Stewardship Alliance, accessed May 26, 2025, https://ndsa.org/publications/levels-of-digital-preservation/.

Clarissa M. Ihssen

Becoming Embedded by Supporting Departmental Accreditation

One Librarian's Experience

In June 2023, I was approached by two faculty members in the American University Math and Statistics Department about adding Data Science to my list of supported subjects on our website and creating a research guide about library resources. This simple ask is how I learned that the Math and Statistics Department was officially adding a Data Science bachelor's degree option and that accreditors were coming in the fall of 2023. Beginning with easy conversations around what the department was looking for and what they needed, I was able to work with faculty throughout the summer to add new resources to our collection, develop relationships with a department I rarely interact with, and convince the accreditation team (both internal and external reviewers) that library involvement with accreditation is important for student learning and success.

There are case studies[1,2] in the academic literature about how librarians have supported university-wide accreditation activities or reaccreditation in the US and abroad, but there is a lack of information about how librarians can support a single department in gaining accreditation for a new program, such as a BS in Data Science. In this article, I will share my experience in the hope that it may help others in supporting departments in similar situations.

Programmatic Accreditation Processes

Accreditation is the process by which academic institutions are credentialed and given recognition by a governing body. For example, a valid master's in library science degree is obtained from a library school that is accredited by the American Library Association. In some university-wide accreditations, also called institutional accreditations, library services and materials are evaluated because they affect the quality of students' educational experiences and reflect the priorities of the institution.[3] Less detail is put into programmatic accreditation, also called specialized accreditation. Programmatic accreditation aims to evaluate the "educational preparation of entry level professionals"[4] by using standards set by the profession.

The process for accreditation often occurs over two main phases: an internal self-assessment and an external peer review. The internal self-assessment begins with the institution or department evaluating itself, its services, and the support the entire institution provides for students. Self-assessments can include a variety of categories, but typically they will involve planning and creating goals for the future, as well as evaluating how the institution or department has

Clarissa M. Ihssen is science librarian at American University, email: ihssen@american.edu.

accomplished goals from previous self-assessments. The external peer review is conducted by a group of evaluators from other institutions, usually during a campus visit when they assess the quality of the curriculum, facilities, faculty, administrative structures, and more. After the visit, the external reviewers submit a report to the institution detailing current strengths and weaknesses, an accreditation decision, and changes the accrediting body wants to see in the future.

The specific accreditation body for our assessment was the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), specifically its Applied and Natural Sciences Commission (ANSC). ABET's ANSC has general and program criteria. There are eight different general criteria: Students, Program Educational Objectives, Student Outcomes, Continuous Improvement, Curriculum, Faculty, Facilities, and Institutional Support. These criteria apply to all accreditation seekers. ABET recognizes 10 distinct categories for the specific programs being evaluated. In this case, the Math and Statistics Department followed the Data Science, Data Analytics, and Similarly Named Programs criteria. Each of the 10 program criteria has different requirements that provide specific requirements that clarify how each discipline should interpret the general criteria. The program criteria for Data Science, Data Analytics, and Similarly Named Programs are separated into two main groups, Curriculum and Faculty, with most of the focus on curriculum.[5]

Librarians can support accreditation activities in a variety of ways. During institutional-level reviews, librarians need to provide input and feedback on the self-evaluation process. There are several ways for librarians to get involved in the accreditation process. The most common way is to serve on a committee at either the institutional or departmental level. Additionally, librarians will often provide information on library collections and services or write letters to the external evaluation board as a part of the self-assessment. During the accreditation visit, they may also offer tours or presentations. For program-level accreditation, it is more common for a librarian to write a letter or provide a brief presentation to the evaluators.[6] Librarians are poised to provide unique insights into the informatics infrastructure of a university and demonstrate all the additional research and instructional supports that students and faculty have access to. Having librarian inclusion on these committees elevates the work we do and has the added benefit of further embedding subject liaisons or people in similar roles with the departments and disciplines they serve.

The Ask and Early Involvement

When the departmental self-evaluation committee approached me about supporting their accreditation process, I agreed to create a research guide and offered to purchase new titles and support their accreditation process in any way I could, most likely by writing a letter or offering a library tour.

While we have plenty of resources on computer science, my library's collection on resources for data science was scant. As I built the research guide for data science students, I sent faculty members in the department an Excel spreadsheet to fill out with any necessary or desired titles. I worked with our acquisitions team to set aside some funds for building the new collection and create a new budget line going forward for data science acquisitions. Because the data science faculty listed only a few titles, I asked a colleague who is the program director for Geospatial Research Support to recommend some titles and asked our ProQuest representative to create a curated collection of titles that would be considered part

of a "core" for us. Curated collections are a service that ProQuest provides. The suggested collection was based on titles we were missing and excluded coding books.

In August 2023, I met with faculty in the Math and Statistics Department and stakeholders in the data science degree program to solicit feedback on the research guide and discuss purchase requests. Most purchase requests were either Open Access titles that did not need to be purchased or were already owned by the library and available through the O'Reilly Media database. This was an important meeting to learn about what faculty valued, while also educating them about what the library offers and the best practices of an online research guide. For example, we discussed how a research guide is best as a starting place for researchers new to the discipline. Compromises on the difference between having a "list of all the resources" and a "starting place for beginning researchers" were reached. The research guide ultimately included some of the specific resources faculty members requested, as well as links to databases the library subscribes to for literature searching and accessing data, information on data management and version control, and books on responsible data science practices.

The Site Visit

The onsite visit was planned for October 2023, and I was given 30 minutes to meet with one member of the accreditation team. While I love talking about the library and all the services we provide, I struggled to figure out what I should talk about and what the accreditors cared about. I was not given much information about how the visit would work or what specifically they were looking for, but I did receive a fact sheet written for all internal participants. This fact sheet was a summary of the self-evaluation and explained the criteria that the evaluating body would use during their visit. Based on the criteria, I decided the library fit under their "Institutional Support" category. The presentation covered three major categories:[7]

- The library by the numbers
  - Our budget
  - Number of staff and faculty
  - Number of items owned and shared with the consortium
  - Number of databases we subscribe to
- Support services the library provides
  - Research assistance with subject specialists
  - Information literacy instruction sessions in classes at all levels of instruction
  - Technology, such as media and GIS subscriptions
  - An institutional repository
  - Plans for more services
- Resources specific to data science
  - Databases
  - New fund and monograph collection
  - Data Science research guide

The presentation was surprisingly informal and conversational. I met with an evaluator from a large state institution who was relatively unaware of his library's resources. I organized my presentation around the theme "Library as Institutional Support" because that was where I assumed the library would fit within the criteria. While presenting, I learned

that the accreditors placed the library in the "Facilities" category of the accreditation criteria. This provided an opportunity to talk about the library as more than a space. The accreditor I worked with was impressed with the amount of support the library provides and was engaged with the presentation. He was also impressed by the new research guide and was glad students would have that resource to support their studies and research. The presentation helped provide a holistic view of the academic institution and all the support students and faculty receive to best learn and grow.

Conclusion and Next Steps

My time working with the accreditation team was short, but it was a fantastic opportunity to embed myself in a department that rarely sees itself as using library resources or services. My interactions also solidified my role as a liaison to the department. As a result, I have begun receiving more reference requests via email, typically from students who were directed to me by their professors. Professionally, developing a new collection and learning about a new discipline was a valuable summer activity. Giving a short in-person presentation to the accreditation team was an enjoyable experience to highlight the library, explain what librarians do, and advocate for including more library interaction in the final evaluation. If I were to support another accreditation process, I would be more confident in what value I bring to the accreditation process and would be comfortable offering assistance to the accreditation team.

The new major was successfully accredited and is one of the first data science programs to be accredited in the country. Hopefully, interacting with the accreditation body will encourage them to consider the library and librarians in their future evaluations. Moving forward, the library will continue to develop a strong data science collection and further refine the research guide, as well as continue to build connections with faculty and students.

I would recommend others to get involved with their departments' accreditation if possible. An email as simple as addressing your role at the institution and how you can support the accreditation process goes a long way in convincing accreditation team members to include you in their work. Offering a service such as creating a research guide, writing a section of the self-assessment, or meeting with external reviewers will help to provide value for the accreditation team and future students.

Notes

1. Natalie Tagge, "Leveraging Accreditation to Integrate Sustainable Information Literacy Instruction into the Medical School Curriculum," *Journal of the Medical Library Association* 106, no. 3 (July 2018): 377-82, https://doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2018.276.

2. Shafeek Fazal, "Library Strategic Planning for Middle States Accreditation: A 10-Year Road to Success," *Journal of Library Administration* 56, no. 1 (November 2015): 27-40, https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2015.1105027.

3. Prudence W. Dalrymple, "Understanding Accreditation: The Librarian's Role in Educational Evaluation," *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 1, no. 1 (2001): 23-32.

4. Dalrymple, "Understanding Accreditation," 23-32.

5. "Criteria for Accrediting Applied and Natural Science Programs, 2023-2024," ABET, last modified February 9, 2023, https://www.abet.org/accreditation/accreditation-criteria/criteria-for-accrediting-applied-and-natural-science-programs-2023-2024/.

6. Tom Schmiedel, "Library Support for Accreditation: A Guide to Online Resources," *College & Research Libraries News* 78, no. 2 (February 2017): 96-100, https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.78.2.9624.

7. Clarissa Ihssen, "Institutional Support-Library Resources" (presentation, 2023). https://doi.org/10.57912/25582734. Or "a [or the] Sciences Libarian"?

Russell Michalak, Kevin Hunt, and Devon Ellixson

From Book Club to Campus-Wide Engagement

The Power of a Graphic Novel in a First-Year Common Reading Program

Since it started in 2013, the Goldey-Beacom College library has hosted and led a book club for students with the financial support of the Student Government Association (SGA). The book club has been more than just a forum for discussion; it has been a place to build and foster community, exploring themes and narratives, such as bullying and immigration, to racism, including those presented through fiction and nonfiction, and diverse media like graphic novels. This commitment to inclusivity in content and format laid a solid foundation for what would become a significant step forward in the college's approach to our Common Reading Program.

In 2023, the book club, recognized for its diverse literary exploration of themes such as bullying, immigration, and racism, underwent a significant transformation. Inspired by the club's success in fostering a strong sense of community and motivated to broaden its impact, the library director launched a new initiative. The goal was to expand the book club into a common reading program, making it accessible to all first-year students and the wider college community. For this expanded program, *Seek You* by Kristen Radtke was chosen as the inaugural selection. This graphic novel profoundly resonated with previous club members, especially student-athletes, making it an ideal choice to kickstart this ambitious initiative.

The transition from a focused, discussion-oriented book club to an extensive reading initiative, particularly integrated into the curriculum of first-year writing courses, represented a significant and rewarding shift. This evolution required building new collaborative relationships between the academic support department and the library. A vital aspect of this initiative was integrating *Seek You* by Kristen Radtke into the ENG 175 curriculum, showcasing a forward-thinking approach to including graphic novels and various literary forms in academic study. The program culminated in a visual expression poster session, highlighting the novel's profound impact and the college's dedication to progressive and inclusive educational methods.

As this article unfolds, we will explore the intricacies of this transformation, including the collaborative efforts behind the expansion, the impact of integrating a graphic novel into the curriculum, and how this initiative influenced first-year students and the wider college

Russell Michalak is the director of the library and archives at Goldey-Beacom College, email: michalr@gbc.edu. Kevin Hunt is the director of academic support services and associate professor, Arts and Sciences, at Goldey-Beacom College, email: huntk@gbc.edu. Devon Ellixson is a library intern at Goldey-Beacom College, email: ellixsdn@gbc.edu.

community. This story shows how a traditional discussion-based book club, where members met for 45 minutes over food and drinks, grew into a common reading program that invited the entire campus to participate and required first-year students to read, highlighting the power of inclusive literature and innovative educational practices.

Collaborative Program Development

Expanding the library's book club into a comprehensive Common Reading Program in 2023 was a remarkable feat, underpinned by mutual support and collaboration between the Department of Academic Support and the library. This joint effort transformed the initiative from a small-scale book club into a campus-wide educational experience. In partnership with the Department of Academic Support, the library played a crucial role in enriching the program. Both departments worked hand-in-hand, with the library contributing its resources and expertise in literature and the academic department integrating the program seamlessly into the curriculum. This synergy was pivotal in selecting *Seek You* as the centerpiece for the program and in orchestrating a range of discussions, events, and faculty involvement that extended the program's reach and impact across the college.

The successful integration of *Seek You* into the college curriculum was mainly due to the participation of faculty and first-year experience staff. They brought the book into their classrooms, finding innovative ways to weave its themes into their syllabi and discussions. This cross-disciplinary engagement ensured the program extended its reach beyond the library and student club meetings, embedding itself into the First-Year Experience and first-year English writing courses.

Equally pivotal were the student leaders, particularly those from the original book club. Some helped to promote the program among their peers, leading discussions and creating an engaging atmosphere around the common read. Their initiatives and enthusiasm played a significant role in fostering a vibrant reading culture on campus. The library and academic support's leadership, SGA's support, faculty and staff's academic integration, and student leaders' active participation all converged to create a comprehensive and immersive reading experience. This collaborative model enriched the first-year students' introduction to college life and set a precedent for future reading initiatives.

Curriculum Integration and Creative Expression

The decision to embed *Seek You* into the academic curriculum transformed how literature was approached in the classroom, offering first-year students a fresh and engaging perspective. In ENG 175, instructors used *Seek You* as a reading assignment and a catalyst for deeper exploration and creative expression. The curriculum intentionally encourages students to engage with the book beyond its pages. Instructors tailored assignments to provoke critical thinking and personal reflection, connecting with students' experiences and perceptions of the graphic novel's themes.

A key highlight of the program was the visual expression poster session, where students transformed their interpretations of *Seek You* into visual art forms. This endeavor went beyond a simple assignment, evolving into an innovative exhibition of creativity and understanding. The posters, vividly showcasing how students internalized and articulated the complex themes of the novel, were not only displayed in the library but also were digitized and permanently archived in Quartex as part of the student portfolio collection. This digital

preservation extended the reach of the students' work beyond the physical confines of the library and offered a lasting testament to their creative and intellectual engagement with the novel. The visual expression poster session thus served as both the culmination of the students' learning journey and a lasting contribution to the college's academic archives, reflecting the depth and diversity of student perspectives. The success of this integration lies not only in the faculty's dedication but also in the support and resources provided by the library. The library provided workshops, discussion guides, and additional reading materials to help instructors and students navigate the graphic novel's format and determine its educational value.

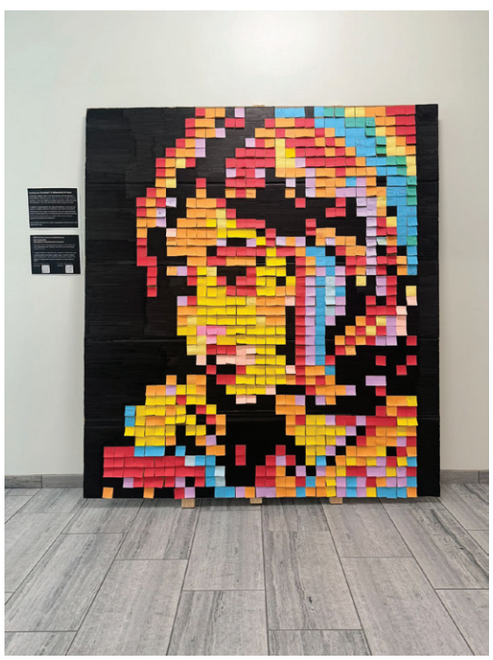
The curriculum integration of *Seek You* represented an innovative approach to learning, where literature became a dynamic tool for exploration, discussion, and expression. The program's impact was evident in the academic outcomes and how it fostered a deeper connection between students, their peers, and the literature they explored.

Expanding Beyond the Classroom

The impact of the Common Reading Program extended far beyond the confines of the classroom, permeating various aspects of campus life and fostering a sense of community among the students. A series of engaging events and projects highlighted the program's success, complementing the academic exploration of *Seek You*.

One of the most notable events was a visit with author Kristen Radtke, which included a reception followed by a presentation and book signing. This event allowed students to interact directly with Radtke, deepening their understanding of the book and offering insights into the creative process. Radtke's visit brought the novel's themes to life, allowing students to connect the text with its creator, enriching their reading experience, and fostering further discussions about other literary initiatives, like launching a student-led literary journal.

Another innovative program component was the visual expression student poster project. This project involved a communal mosaic displayed in the library, where students and other college community members could express their thoughts on loneliness and connection. Participants added to the mosaic with 2x2 Post-it notes, gradually creating an image depicting the community's shared feelings and experiences (see Image 1). This interactive art piece became a physical manifestation of the book's themes and a powerful symbol of collective expression and unity.



Mosaic depicting the community's shared feelings and experiences.

However, not all planned activities were successful. The attempt to schedule discussion group sessions faced challenges and did not materialize as intended. This setback highlights the learning curve in implementing a program of this scale and the importance of adaptability and resilience in the face of obstacles.

Expanding the program beyond academic learning into a series of creative and engaging events significantly enhanced the overall impact of the Common Reading Program. These activities complemented

the curriculum and played a crucial role in building a vibrant, connected community on campus, exemplifying the power of literature to unite people from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Impact and Outcomes

The impact of the Common Reading Program became evident as the academic year unfolded. The program succeeded not just in its reach across the campus but in deeply engaging first-year students, faculty, and the college community.

The most notable impact was on student engagement and learning. The graphic novel format of *Seek You* sparked an increased interest in reading among students, particularly those less inclined toward traditional texts. This medium helped simplify complex themes, making them more accessible and engaging. Discussions around loneliness and the role of technology in modern society resonated with the students' experiences, enhancing their critical thinking and empathy. Beyond academic learning, the program significantly strengthened community bonds. Various events, like the community art project and the author's visit, facilitated interactions outside the classroom, contributing to a more inclusive and cohesive campus environment.

Feedback from the college community was predominantly positive, highlighting the program's effectiveness in making literature engaging and relevant. However, it also pointed out areas for improvement, such as the need for more structured discussion groups. Particularly poignant were the reflections from the original book club members, who took pride in seeing a book they had discussed transform into a central component of the college's academic and cultural life. Looking forward, the success of using a graphic novel has paved the way for exploring other nontraditional media, suggesting a future rich in innovative and inclusive literary initiatives. The program's focus on *Seek You* enriched the college experience beyond academics, fostering personal development and community engagement, and stands as a testament to the unifying power of literature.

Conclusion

As the program concluded, the evolution of the library's book club into a comprehensive Common Reading Program stood as a significant achievement. The selection of Kristen Radtke's *Seek You* marked a departure from conventional texts and proved to be a masterstroke in fostering engagement and discussion among first-year students. This innovative approach broadened the students' literary experiences and offered new avenues for exploring complex themes through a more accessible and relatable medium.

The program's success lies in its collaborative spirit, with the library, faculty, SGA, and students coming together to create a multifaceted experience. From integrating the book into the ENG 175 curriculum to the various events and projects that complemented the reading experience, each component played a crucial role in enriching the college community's engagement with the book.

While there were challenges, notably in scheduling discussion group sessions, these setbacks offered valuable lessons in flexibility and the importance of adaptability in educational programming. The program's impact extended beyond academic engagement, fostering a sense of community and belonging among students and strengthening the bonds within the college community.

Looking ahead, the program has set a new standard for exploration and engagement at the college. It has opened up possibilities for incorporating diverse literary forms and themes in future common reading initiatives, paving the way for more inclusive and innovative approaches to student engagement. The Common Reading Program centered around *Seek You* has enhanced the first-year experience and demonstrated the transformative power of literature in connecting people, stimulating thought, and enriching the educational landscape of the college.

Cheyenne Kelly and Jill Stockton

Captain Underpants and the Conundrum of Creating a Custom Cookie Cutter

Creating a Unique, Edible Treat for Banned Books Week

The University Libraries at the University of Nevada, Reno, celebrated Banned Books Week in late September 2024 by hosting their popular Edible Books Festival. The annual event celebrates the freedom to read and spotlights current and historical attempts to censor books in libraries and schools. Each fall semester, the University Libraries' Outreach Committee, faculty, and staff host the Edible Banned Books Festival to show the libraries' shared support of the freedom to read.

At the Edible Books Festival, which took place inside the Mathewson IGT-Knowledge Center Breezeway, participants and passers-by were presented with opportunities to learn about banned and challenged books, enjoy a sweet treat from the University Libraries, and view and vote for their favorite edible banned book creation presented at the festival. Each of the clever, food-related, edible, banned book-themed entries included was created by the library's faculty and/or staff.[1]

In 2024, we had a very unique entry to the festival—the *Captain Underpants* cookie. Did you know the *Captain Underpants* books are among ALA's list of the top 100 most banned and challenged books from the past decade, due to complaints from parents about violent imagery? In recognition of *Captain Underpants* consistently being listed among ALA's banned books list, our Coordinator for E-Resources and Discovery, Cheyenne Kelly, wanted to create an edible *Captain Underpants* cookie to help celebrate Banned Books Week, and use her University Libraries-learned skills to make her own 3D-printed *Captain Underpants* cookie cutter.[2]

The Captain Underpants Cookie – Cheyenne Kelly

This event is one of my favorite events that the University Libraries puts on every year. I truly believe in freedom of information (even if I do not agree with the information), which led me to want to work for the libraries in the first place. People have the right to consume information and apply their judgment to it, regardless of their age or background. Book bans cause so much harm to the schools and libraries that have to deal with them, not only in reducing the available information but also in expending legal fees that could be used to provide resources instead. This is especially harmful for public libraries where the community relies on the free services.

Cheyenne Kelly is coordinator, discovery and e-resources at the University of Nevada, Reno, email: cheyennekelly@unr.edu. Jill Stockton is marketing communications specialist at the University of Nevada, Reno, email: jbstockton@unr.edu.

I first started reading *Captain Underpants* in middle school, and the humor in the books is what caught my imagination. In 2023, I worked the volunteer table for the festival, and *Captain Underpants* was on the poster of banned books on display at the event. University students participating in the event kept commenting on how surprised they were to see it on the list. The main reason I could find was that it was "unsuited for age group." I wanted to make the *Captain Underpants* cookie for the 2024 Festival would help bring attention to the silliness of banning books like *Captain Underpants*—the age-appropriate subversiveness of potty humor is what gets kids interested in reading in the first place.

I was blessed to have the opportunity to come back to school at the University in 2021 for a second bachelor's degree in Information Systems. At that time, I was able to gain employment as a student worker at the DeLaMare Science and Engineering Library Makerspace despite being a nontraditional University student. I loved working at DeLaMare and learned so much during my time on the University Libraries' team. The Makerspace requires a two-week intensive training to learn all the machines found in the space, but it takes more time to fully learn the quirks and tricks of using the machines and their software.

The Makerspace was my first real exposure to 3D printing. Despite being fiddly, these machines were my favorite to watch and listen to while they were running. Over time, I learned various ways to troubleshoot the machines and print settings to get a quality print. I ended up focusing on mastering Adobe Illustrator for 2D vector images and Autodesk Tinkercad for creating 3D items. Adobe Illustrator is software provided by the University, while Tinkercad is a free 3D modeling program that is geared toward public schoolers, making it a perfect introduction to creating 3D objects for someone completely new, like me! Although I have started learning other 3D modeling software for more complicated projects, I still use Tinkercad for simple or quick projects.

As time went on, I promised myself I would get my own 3D printer when I got a full-time job. In 2023, I found the posting for my current position and was hired. As soon as I got my first paycheck, I purchased my 3D printer, an Ender-3 S1 Pro. I have experimented with materials and techniques that our machines in the Makerspace did not have available during my time there, such as PETG and different slicing software for running the print itself.

Fast forward to fall 2024; here is how I made our hero: I used Illustrator to trace an image of *Captain Underpants*, converting him into a black and white vector image. I also used Illustrator to create offset lines of my image. These offset lines were used to create a back for the image stamp and the cutter itself. I then exported all of my parts as individual SVG files, which allowed me to import the 2D lines into Tinkercad.

In Tinkercad, the import process automatically converts the image into a 3D block, so all I had to do was adjust the heights of each part and merge the pieces to create my final 3D parts. I then exported these files and printed them out in PETG, which is considered a food-safe plastic. I then found "the best sugar cookie recipe" on Pinterest and made my cookies. I would first use the outline cutter to cut the cookie, then use the image stamp to mark the cookies with our hero. Once I had completed my project, I posted my files on Thingiverse.com so others could make their own!

Conclusion

The University of Nevada, Reno University Libraries are committed to providing student employees with a diverse range of professional experiences while on the job. In this instance,

Cheyenne learned new skills while on the job as a student and was able to leverage what she learned into a full-time role with the libraries after graduation. Additionally, she continues to flex her experience gained in creative ways, such as making the cookie cutter for Banned Books Week 2024. Now that is what we call a happy ending!

Notes

1. You can see images from the festival by visiting the University Libraries at the University of Nevada, Reno Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/unevadalibraries/.

2. Read more about how Kelly used knowledge learned during her time as a student worker within the University Libraries' DeLaMare Science and Engineering Makerspace to pull off one of the cutest and most creative edible creations, *Captain Underpants* cookies, seen at the festival, at https://library.unr.edu/places/delamare/themakerspace.

Jillian Speck and Kristina Clement

Finding a Mentor in Libraries

You're Not Alone, Even If You're Solo

Academic Library Workers in Conversation is a *C&RL News* series focused on elevating the everyday conversations of library professionals. The wisdom of the watercooler has long been heralded, but this series hopes to go further by minimizing barriers to traditional publishing with an accessible format. Each of the topics in the series was proposed by the authors, and the authors were given space to explore. This issue's conversation returns to mentoring and how it is essential for healthy careers and our profession. - *Dustin Fife, series editor*

Kristina Clement: Let's jump right in—Jillian, what do you think are the benefits of mentorship?

Jillian Speck: I think there are a lot of benefits. For one, it creates a connection with someone who's in the same boat as you. Someone who's experiencing the same things—the same problems and challenges. Someone else who has a similar job, someone you can bounce ideas off. It's also nice to commiserate with someone else about the other aspects of the job or subject, or even just to learn from another person. When I first came into this job, I didn't really know anything about business librarianship. So, having a mentor to give you some resources to start with really helps.

Kristina: You said something that I think highlights one of the biggest benefits of mentorship: having someone with whom to commiserate. And I think that's especially important if it's someone outside of your institution. Commiseration is important, but it doesn't just have to be complaining. Having someone outside your institution who may have had similar experiences is not only a great way to talk through new ideas before testing them out, but also someone who you can temperature check with. "Are you experiencing something similar that might be frustrating?" "Have you tried this before? Did it work? Do you think it'll work here?" Having a person in your professional network you can ask those questions to is so valuable. I've mentored quite a few people in our field over the years, and there's been plenty of productive commiseration. So, yeah, I think you hit the nail on the head with commiseration, especially because it's not a bad thing.

Jillian: It's also good to know if I'm having a problem, so I can ask, "Is this problem unique to my own situation, or is this actually a very common problem in business librarianship?" I'm telling you, half the conversations that can go on in business librarianship are "Which databases should we get?" "I'm getting rid of this database." "I'm trying to look for a new database." "I'm trying to find a replacement for this database that costs thousands of dollars." I think everyone has their own unique process because all institutions are going through

Jillian Speck is collegiate librarian for the Coles College of Business at the Kennesaw State University Libraries, email: jspeck4@kennesaw.edu. Kristina Clement is assistant director of academic engagement and instruction at the Kennesaw State University Libraries, email: kcleme19@kennesaw.edu.

changes at different times. It's just good to know if something is a common problem so we can all come together and try to problem solve. We don't always have to have a solution, but we can create better steps to get to where we want to go, as opposed to, "Is this something just unique to my particular institution or context?"

Kristina: That's a great point, Jillian. I think mentors can be useful in helping us check the reality of our situations. If you have a mentor who is outside of your institution, they likely have no stake in what's happening. And, so, I think there's a lot more honesty about how we're feeling and what we're doing. Something that I do with a couple of the people that I mentor is we do a story check where I ask them, "What's the story you are telling yourself?" This is helpful when my mentees are experiencing conflicts because it allows them to step back and see if they might be seeing reality differently from the others involved. And because I have no stake in what happens, I feel like I can ask them the questions that challenge them to think critically about the situation. I think if someone from their institution asked them that, especially if it was their boss, that might not help them be as reflective because there is a hierarchical authority structure at work. With your external mentor, it's just helping people grow.

Jillian: I think that's also a good thing that I like about that relationship, especially if they're outside your institution. You do get that extra point of view. And yeah, just trying to help us grow as best we can in our professional positions, when we don't always have resources or professional networks that are freely available as opposed to those hidden behind paywalls.

Kristina: I'm curious. How did you find your mentor, and how has it helped you on your professional journey?

Jillian: I didn't have any sort of formal mentorship program to fall back on, so I found a mentor on my own. Basically, I started with a list of things I wanted from my mentor. I needed someone familiar with the basics of business research and who knew how to develop student engagement opportunities and activities. At the time, I wasn't looking for anyone who would help me build a career in business librarianship, just someone who could give me advice about the subject.

I also wanted someone whose experiences were like my own. I've worked at different types of libraries, like public, school, and academic, so I thought it would be easier to relate to a mentor that had done the same. I also aimed to have a mentor in the same time zone as me because trying to keep track of meetings in different time zones requires more time management and scheduling.

As far as benefits go, I've really appreciated the resources my mentor gave me. Business librarianship is somewhat niche, so it's not easy to find professional development materials that are free. But she gave me a great listserv that I've used, where anyone can post a question and receive feedback or more resources.

Kristina: Your consideration of time zones, while it seems small, is actually wise. While I think mentorship is incredibly important, it's equally important to acknowledge the invisible labor that we're asking of people. We're asking for their time, for their effort. I think it goes both ways between the mentor and the mentee. I think one barrier to seeking mentorship is not wanting to take someone's time. Did you ever feel like that when you were looking for a mentor, or did that never cross your mind?

Jillian: I think it definitely crossed my mind at one point. As librarians, I know we have a lot to do, and when I looked at my mentor's list of publications and scholarship, I thought,

"Wow. She's done so much and knows a lot. I want to learn from her, but what if she doesn't have the time because she's doing all these things? I don't want to take away time from her own work to ask her to help me." But you sort of have to put yourself out there if you want to learn more. You must go for it, even if you're nervous about taking up someone else's time.

Kristina: I think that could be a big barrier for people just joining the profession, not feeling like they have the right to ask someone for their time and knowledge, when in reality, I think, we're in a very giving profession where everyone in it benefits from sharing. We often give our time very freely, maybe a little too freely. Personally, I like mentoring people. I think it's a lot of fun. I'm usually hard pressed to say no to someone who asks me to be their mentor.

I started volunteering to be a mentor early in my career. Maybe I had a bit of a full head, but I think we always have something to learn from one another, regardless of where we are in our careers. I volunteered for the ACRL Instruction Section's mentoring program a few years ago as a mentor and got paired with a mentee who was new to doing library instruction but had been in the profession almost 10 years longer than I had. That was a little awkward to start. But I think it worked out well, and it eventually transformed into more of a friendship than a mentorship, which was nice because I gave her advice on instruction stuff, and she gave me advice on being a manager. We learned a lot from each other.

Jillian: So, you've been part of some more structured mentorship programs. How did you find those structured programs to be?

Kristina: The structured programs can be good. I think when you've got someone or a group of people who are really dedicated to running them well and giving clear guidelines and expectations for mentors and mentees, they do well. One of the structured ones I participated in had a topic of the month that they would send out, which I thought was helpful. My mentee and I used them now and then but tended to talk about other things. So, when a mentorship program is well run and thought out, I think they can be incredibly valuable. The opposite is also true—poorly run programs lead to poor mentor/mentee experiences.

Jillian: You just touched on this, one of the big frustrations and barriers of mentorship is that if there is the structure of a formal mentorship program, it must be consistent. There must be people who have time to volunteer and make it what it is. And so often, we're stretched so thin because again, libraries are underfunded. We don't have very big budgets. We're given more to do with less resources, and that puts a strain on our own mental states. It's like having this other extra thing to do. You can't put as much effort or energy into it as you would like, no matter how much you really want to. I'm wondering, Kristina, what have you gotten out of these relationships?

Kristina: The mentor-mentee relationships I've gotten the most out of were impromptu and either ones that I sought out or kind of fell into. So, my favorite example of that is back when a lot of librarians were on Twitter in the before times, someone tweeted that they were in their first faculty role, and they needed help learning how to "faculty," and I tweeted back and said, "I can help you with that." I had been a faculty librarian for maybe two years at that point and decided that I knew enough to mentor someone. Maybe I did, maybe I didn't, but we started meeting regularly and talking about what it meant to be a tenure-track faculty member versus a staff librarian. She had been a librarian for about as long as I had, but in a staff role. Our conversations were fantastic, and now she's a very close friend. I'm so glad I volunteered my time for her.

So, Jillian, any final thoughts on mentorship?

Jillian: I think mentorship is important, and I wish librarians in general weren't so stretched thin at times, so we could put more effort into networking with each other and talk more with each other about all the challenges and advantages of our jobs. It's helpful to have someone else to talk to, especially when you're just the only person in your position, and you're like, "Wait, how do I do this?"

Kristina: Mentorship can be great. But we must be very conscious of our time and others' time and strike a balance between asking for what we deserve and what other people can give. If we don't, we won't have anything to give.

Jane Hammons, Spencer Brayton, Audrey Gunn, Matthew Weirick Johnson, Melissa Mallon, and Mira Scarnecchia

Celebrating 50 Years of Information Literacy

A Presentation Series

The term "information literacy" dates back to 1974.[1] To celebrate 50 years of information literacy, Jane Hammons organized a series of webinars to bring together librarians to discuss key information literacy-related issues. This article provides an overview of the series, shares perspectives from several panelists, and considers what the popularity of this series suggests about the need for affordable professional development and venues for collaborative discussion among librarians.

Series Overview

The series consisted of seven free webinars, all organized by The Ohio State University Libraries and open to all:

- Celebrating 50 Years of Information Literacy: A Panel Discussion (April 2024): Symphony Bruce, Craig Gibson, Karen Kaufmann, Clarence Gibson, and Nicole Pagowsky shared perspectives on key moments or "inflection points" in information literacy's history and the future of information literacy (300+ participants).
- Preparing Future Librarians for Instruction and Advocacy: A Panel Discussion (June 2024): Mira Scarnecchia, Eamon Tewell, Merinda Kaye Hensley, and Laura Saunders discussed perspectives on the challenges of preparing LIS students for instructional roles (200+ participants).
- AI Literacy and Information Literacy: Considerations for the Future (June 2024): Michael Flierl discussed essential questions that librarians need to consider related to artificial intelligence (450+ participants).
- Information Literacy and Related Literacies: Exploring Relationships and Future Directions (July 2024): Melissa Mallon, Spencer Brayton, Audrey Gunn, and Sarah Morris shared views on the intersections between information literacy, digital literacy, and media literacy (200+ participants).
- Teaching Information Literacy: Considering Current and Future Approaches and Models (July 2024): Bill Badke, Matthew Weirick Johnson, Heidi Julien, and Jane Hammons shared their perspectives on different models for teaching information literacy (400+ participants).

Jane Hammons is associate professor and teaching and learning engagement librarian at The Ohio State University, email: hammons.73@osu.edu. Spencer Brayton is director of library services at Waubonsee Community College, email: sbrayton@waubonsee.edu. Audrey Gunn is research and instruction librarian for natural sciences and English at St. Olaf College, email: gunn4@stolaf.edu. Matthew Weirick Johnson is director of research and instruction at the University of South Florida Libraries Tampa campus, email: matthewjohnson@usf.edu. Melissa Mallon is associate university librarian for teaching and learning at Vanderbilt University, email: melissa.mallon@vanderbilt.edu. Mira Scarnecchia is OER librarian at Columbus State Community College, email: mscarnecchia@cscc.edu.

- Teaching Information Literacy: Exploring the "Teach the Teachers" Model (July 2024): Jane Hammons outlined the faculty-focused model of information literacy instruction (200+ participants).
- Information Literacy as a Concept and Practice: Where are We Going (July 2024): Clarence Maybee, Sara Miller, Veronica Arellano Douglas, and Logan Rath discussed future directions for information literacy (450+ participants).

In total, more than 1,600 unique individuals attended at least one presentation. Participants came from almost every state and a range of institution types, from community colleges to large research universities. In the following section, several panelists will share their reflections on their participation in the series.

Participant Reflections

Spencer Brayton

Over the past decade, much of my work as a librarian has focused on the intersection between media literacy and information literacy. A major part of my philosophy as a librarian is to make connections between different literacies, departments, and services across campus to support students, believing that librarians are natural facilitators and connectors across these different areas. Media literacy became more permanent because I found a colleague who always wanted to grow and refine their work to better support students. This collaborative work has led to a powerful journey and model for librarians to think about as the profession continues to push against outdated notions of what libraries do and how librarians are educators. For this reason, I wanted to participate in the "Information Literacy and Related Literacies" panel.

I enjoy shining a light for those outside of libraries on all that librarians and libraries can do to support their communities. Media literacy was one way to do this, both in the classroom and in conversations at conferences outside of the library world. I have found there is much connection and overlap between media literacy models and definitions, and information literacy models and definitions. Yet, in the academy, there remain opportunities and challenges (many of which may have to do with the lack of respect and outdated thoughts about libraries). I have also found that academics from different disciplines who focus on media literacy are strongly in support of collaboration, especially with librarians, and who understand information literacy. But the opposite can be true, with academics viewing librarians as intruding on their turf and with little respect for what they bring to supporting learning through different literacies. (I mean no disrespect to different epistemologies.) However, I have always thought that librarians are not trying to "own" information literacy but share it in a variety of ways as educators in support of student learning. I encourage librarians to collaborate with faculty intentionally in different disciplines, be absorbed by another area of study, and represent what we do at other conferences to tell our story and value.

Audrey Gunn

It was such a pleasure to collaborate with Jane and my co-panelists on the "Information Literacy and Related Literacies" panel. This topic—of how information literacy intersects with other literacies, such as media, data, and maker literacy—is one that librarians and technologists at St. Olaf College have been contemplating for several years. In 2023–2024,

our team undertook a grant-funded project in which we identified and defined the key literacies we teach, then developed a "Literacies Framework" to help us visualize the connections between these literacies.

In the panel, I presented our work with a couple of goals in mind: to gain insights from peers beyond our institution and to showcase how collaboration with technologists can deepen our conversations about the intersection of information literacy with other literacies. St. Olaf is unusual in that our instruction librarians and instructional technologists are all part of the same department – a structure that has encouraged closer collaboration on numerous projects, including our literacies framework. The opportunity to share our framework was invaluable, and the comments of my fellow panelists and attendees have deepened my thinking about literacies. In particular, the discussion of information literacy instruction at the K–12 level has motivated me to learn more about the experiences our students have had with these concepts before college. This panel emphasized just how many educators play a role in teaching information literacy, and I look forward to seeing how conversations beyond the library – and the academy – will continue to enrich our teaching.

Matthew Weirick Johnson

I am incredibly grateful to have been on the "Considering Current and Future Approaches and Models" panel, and it was amazing to share space with Bill, Heidi, and Jane. I think our current predominant one-shot library instruction model contributes to the high levels of burnout that we see among academic teaching librarians, so I found this discussion important both for considering the nature of information literacy instruction and academic library work.

I found the discussion in our panel valuable to consider the strengths and weaknesses of new (or just other) approaches to teaching information literacy. Jane and I have both done teach-the-teacher programs with faculty, and Heidi, as a teaching faculty member, pointed to potential pitfalls in those models that serve to improve and expand our thinking. Bill talked about working to scaffold research assignments, using them as a teaching tool for information literacy, and embedding that thinking into teach-the-teacher programming for faculty. There is no single perfect model for doing library instruction, which I think was clear from our discussion, but that also highlights a key flaw in the dominance of the one-shot model. We need innovative and context-specific approaches to library instruction, and we need to be able to try new approaches with support from library administration, teaching faculty, ourselves, and our colleagues. The panel helped me expand and reflect on my thinking, and I hope it leads to more discussions about the future of library instruction and library work.

Melissa Mallon

I have spent my career in academic libraries involved in information literacy initiatives, both advocating for the library's role in information literacy on a variety of college campuses and engaging in professional conversations with librarian colleagues in online courses, committee work, and through publications and conferences. After a chat with my sister, who teaches 5th grade, and other K–12 educators, I suspected that I was missing a piece of the puzzle. I realized that as the information landscape gets increasingly more complex and our students are arriving at college with disparate skill sets, focusing only on *information* literacy was doing a disservice to students. We need to increase emphasis on teaching the

"other" literacy skills necessary for both academic success and an informed citizenry; digital, media, and algorithmic literacy are just as important as the research and critical thinking skills we refer to as information literacy.

I had the great fortune of joining the "Information Literacy and Related Literacies" panel with Audrey, Sarah, and Spencer. (I would like to give an extra shout-out to Spencer, one of the first librarians with whom I had the opportunity to dive into discussions about media literacy.) I loved hearing about the unique approaches of my colleagues, each bringing different perspectives and passions to the conversation about how we, as librarians, can be more creative in the ways we partner with faculty to further student learning. I remember one of the questions was related to whether we should deemphasize the term "information literacy" in favor of "digital literacy" or some other literacy. The panelists and participants engaged in an animated conversation about the *either/or* dichotomy. Sarah Morris noted that we should not pigeonhole ourselves by getting caught up in semantics, letting this messiness get in the way of doing the important work of advancing students' information and media (etc.!) literacy development. I still find myself reflecting on this conversation and am excited to continue the dialogue and partnerships across our profession.

Mira Scarnecchia

I participated in "Preparing Future Librarians," and I provided an early-career librarian perspective. My MILS coursework covered the theoretical background related to information literacy, but I did not have experiential learning opportunities. I was heartened to learn that my fellow panelists, who are instructors in iSchool settings, are implementing strategies for providing their students with practical and theoretical instruction.

I have relied on experienced colleagues and professional development opportunities to gain the necessary skills to teach information literacy. It would be beneficial to provide MILS students with connections to local professional organizations and LIS professionals during their programs, so that they have these resources available when they are new to the workforce. LIS professionals must understand that gaining knowledge on these topics is an iterative, career-long process, especially considering the constant evolution of information literacy. I appreciated that this series provided the chance to discuss major topics with academic librarians from diverse institutions and geographic locations. As an early-career librarian in a community college context, challenges including cost and travel can be prohibitive to attending in-person events where this type of networking and communication traditionally takes place. Our session had 218 participants, which was possible due to the free and virtual format. I would be excited to be involved in similar programming in the future, and I feel that it is essential to the advancement of our field.

Conclusion

While librarians do have options for collaborative discussion of key issues within the field, it can be challenging for some to take advantage of these opportunities. As Mira noted, conferences and travel can be prohibitively expensive, and webinars through ACRL or other organizations often require payment. By offering these presentations for free and opening them to all, we were able to engage participants from across the country. The strong interest in each discussion, demonstrated by high attendance and engagement, indicates a continued need for low- or no-cost options to allow librarians to come together and

engage in conversation. To build on the need for affordable information literacy-focused professional development, in fall 2024, the Ohio State Libraries' Teaching and Learning Department began piloting a free Teaching Information Literacy Certificate program. More than 50 librarians have already completed the certificate program, and more than 130 are enrolled in the program for spring 2025.

As we think about the next 50 years, it is important for librarians to continually engage in discussions about how we want to move forward in our efforts to support information literacy. The Celebrating 50 Years of Information Literacy series is an example of how one library and many librarians contributed to this conversation.

Note

1. Zurkowski, Paul G. *The Information Service Environment Relationships and Priorities. Related Paper No. 5*. (Washington, DC: National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, 1974).

Center for Constitutional Rights. *Access:* https://ccrjustice.org/.

The Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) is a nonprofit legal advocacy organization established in 1966. It protects civil liberties and human rights through legal action and public outreach. The CCR tackles a wide range of pressing issues and cases, including abusive immigration practices, racial injustice, discriminatory policing, and the persecution of LGBTQI individuals.

The CCR provides a collection of materials for active and historical cases that the legal team has managed or is currently addressing. This includes the high-profile ongoing case of Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia University student and Palestinian activist, recently detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Each case features a dedicated page with essential information, such as status updates, legal team details, relevant overarching issues, documents, and timelines. Users can search for cases using keywords, filter by specific issues, or browse by date.

The CCR's website highlights various critical social issues, offering detailed information on significant legal cases, insightful expert commentary from CCR staff, and curated news articles and videos. This rich collection aims to keep users informed and engaged in ongoing conversations on these important topics.

While the CCR produces most of the content, its website provides links to external sources that offer additional perspectives on the CCR's cases and advocacy efforts, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of the issues at hand. Another engaging section of the website details the organization's long-standing initiatives, such as the impact of 9/11 and the Open Records Project, which advocates for and educates individuals on using the Freedom of Information Act to challenge oppressive power systems. Additionally, the website features organizational details, annual reports, and opportunities to get involved.

With a user-friendly layout, the website serves as a dynamic hub for information, complete with embedded links and subject tags for easy navigation. However, some instances of social media links are not clearly identified as clickable, which may confuse some users. Furthermore, the website's accessibility requires improvement, as an automated accessibility checker has identified several errors.

The CCR website is an essential resource that provides detailed information on urgent legal issues and significant cases the advocacy agency is currently addressing. In today's climate, it is crucial for citizens to stay informed about these matters. The site provides timely updates and empowers individuals to advocate for their communities, seek assistance, and act against injustices they may encounter. — *Colleen Lougen, SUNY New Paltz, lougenc@newpaltz.edu*

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. *Access:* https://www.healthdata.org/.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) is a population health research organization based at the University of Washington. Through worldwide collaborations, the goal of IHME is to provide an evidence-based picture of global health trends to inform population health research, policy, and practice. The IHME website is a robust source of information for both learners and experts, including overviews of health topics, country level summaries, published studies, policy reports, public data, and more, all easily browsable

through the site's drop-down menu and links in the website footer, and searchable through the "Research library" link at the top of the page. The information spans disciplines including public health, medicine, public policy, economics, political science, and more.

IHME's most significant initiative is the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study, described as "the most comprehensive effort to date to measure epidemiological levels and trends worldwide." The GBD provides a wealth of data and publications that can be used to inform improvements to health systems and eliminate global disparities. The GBD landing page provides a summary of program initiatives and links to recent research and data. Full information is organized by key findings, data, and publication links.

The IHME website also features a suite of broader public data sources and user-friendly interactive data comparison and visualization tools, organized under "Data tools and practices." The nested "Data sources catalog" link connects users to the expansive Global Health Data Exchange catalog, through which datasets are navigable by both simple and advanced searches and browsable by data type, organization, country, and grouped series/systems. The "Interactive data visuals" link features more than 50 user-friendly data visualization tools.

Under the "Research and Analysis" menu, readers can explore health topic summaries and key findings from studies, and can access related datasets, publications, reports, and data visuals via the "Research library" tab linked on each topic page. Other key research and analysis resources include "US health" and "Country profiles," where users can read summary information, see data visualizations, and link out to location-specific research and data. This menu also links to health policy and planning resources related to health financing, forecasting, and program/policy evaluations, which focus on population health policies rather than health topics and may be particularly useful to professionals and governments. — *Amy Jankowski, University of New Mexico, ajankowski@unm.edu*

Kristina Rose has been named the dean of libraries at New York University (NYU). Rose had served as interim dean since January 2025 and was appointed as the associate dean for collections and content strategy in 2019. She was made interim head of access, delivery, and resource sharing services in 2011 and named permanent head in 2013. She first joined the NYU libraries in 2004 as an access services librarian. Prior to coming to NYU, she was the supervisor of the Butler Reserves and Milstein College Library at Columbia University.

Rose has served on many committees in service to the library profession, including for the American Library Association (ALA), the Pennsylvania Academic Libraries Consortium, the Center for Research Libraries, and the Access Ivy Plus Symposium Planning Committee. She has published scholarly articles and made multiple presentations in the field, and she is the recipient of the ALA Emerging Leader Award (2007) and the NYU Division of Libraries Dean's Award (2014).

Samantha Buoye is now the assistant director of development at the University of Central Florida Libraries.

Kaijsa J. Calkins is the new associate dean of the University of Washington Tacoma Library.

Tanessa King has joined Binghamton University as the cataloging librarian.

Rae Mair is the new embedded learning librarian at the University of Central Florida.

Alaina Pearce has joined the Penn State University Libraries' Data Learning Center in the Research Informatics and Publishing Department as the data curation librarian.

Moira Stockton is now the digital preservation librarian at the Penn State University Libraries.