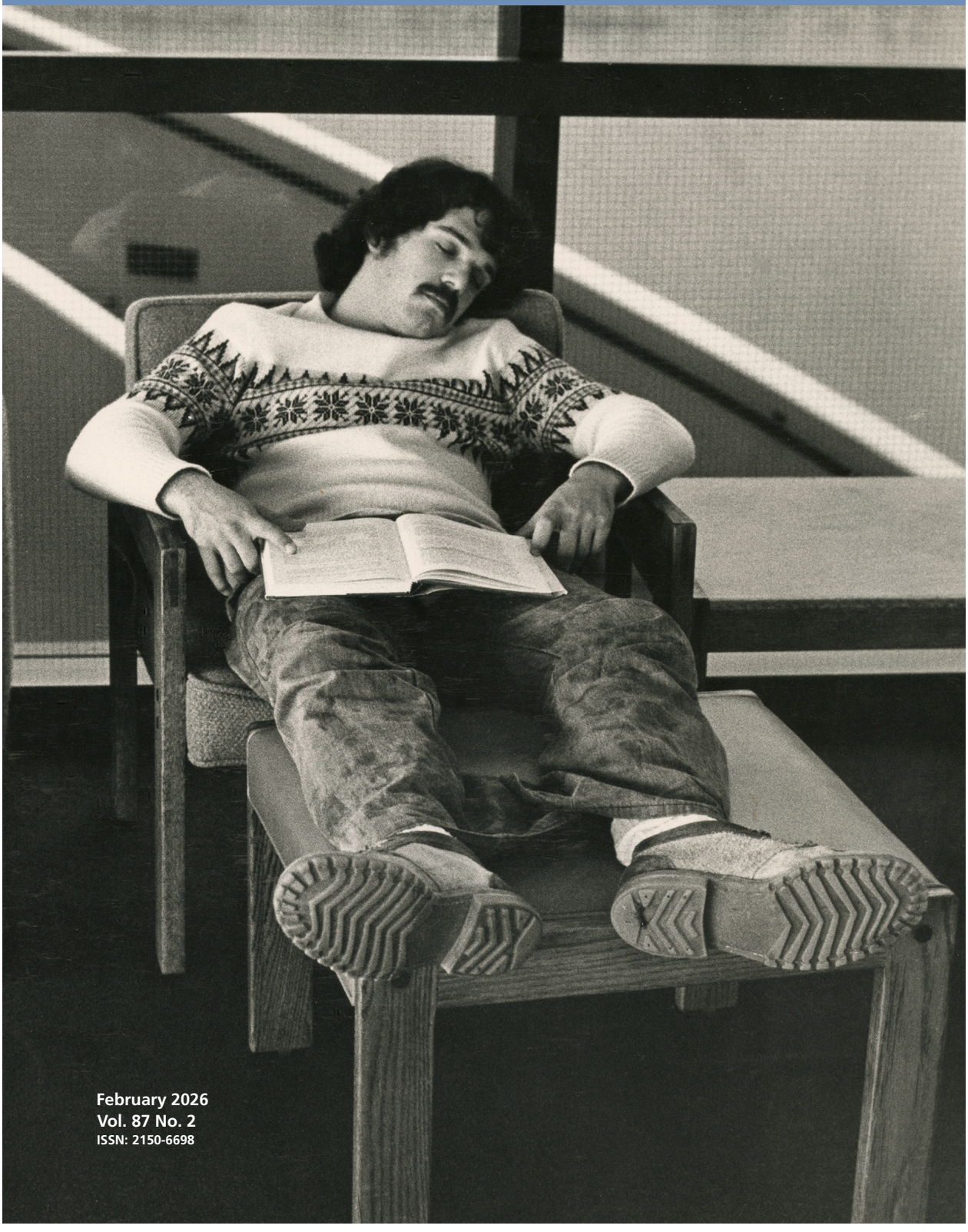
College & Research Libraries
news
Association of College & Research Libraries



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College & Research Libraries news

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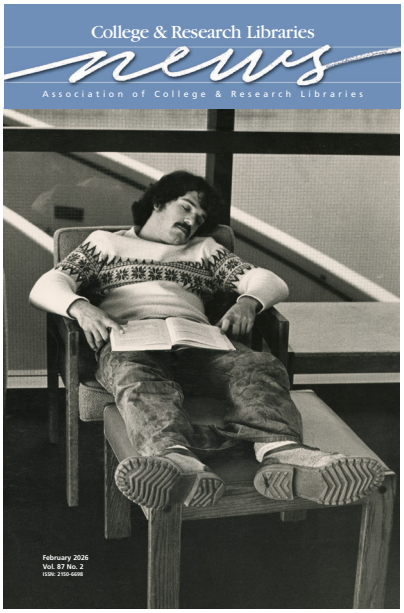
Features

Departments



This month's cover features a 1979 image of a student sleeping in the Pepperdine University Payson Library. The image is part of the Pepperdine University Archives Photograph Collection. The collection presents high-resolution digital renditions of the thousands of photographic prints, slides, and negatives that compose the Pepperdine University archival image collection. These images capture the history of Pepperdine University from its founding in 1937 as George Pepperdine College to the present (bulk dates 1940–1990). The photographs include publicity photos, candids, student work, and official university images, and cover a wide range of subjects from student life to global politics. Learn more about the collection and view additional images at https://pepperdine.quartexcollections.com/university-archives/pepperdine-university-archives-photograph-collection.

Image courtesy of the Pepperdine University Archives Photograph Collection, Pepperdine Libraries Special Collections and Archives.

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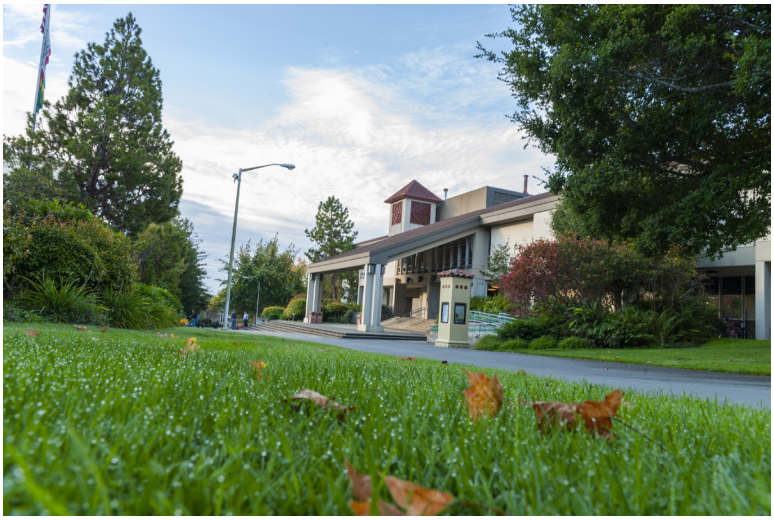
Cal Poly Humboldt Library Certified Sustainable

Cal Poly Humboldt has been recognized as a leader in sustainability by the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI), becoming only the fourth academic library in the country and the second in the California State University (CSU) system to earn the initiative's award-winning Sustainable Library Certification.

The SLI helps library leaders make sustainability a core value in everything from the design of their facilities to technology and programming. The certification program is a benchmarking system designed to provide libraries with the resources and guidelines needed to shift toward a cleaner, greener, and more equitable future.



The library is advancing sustainability through initiatives that reduce waste, lower costs, and promote equitable access to education. This includes the textbook reserve program, where over 85 percent of required course materials are available for students to borrow, encouraging a "borrow before you buy" approach that minimizes overconsumption and supports student success. The library is also home to CSU's only publishing house, as well as the CSU *Journal of Sustainability and Climate Change*, reducing barriers to information by ensuring open access.

These efforts align with Cal Poly Humboldt's broader commitment to sustainability as a gold-rated AASHE STARS campus, with thriving sustainability efforts. This includes campus-wide initiatives such as the Zero Waste Action Plan and other points of pride. For more information, please visit the Cal Poly Humboldt Library's sustainability website at https://libguides.humboldt.edu/sustainability/welcome.

University of Arizona Launches Geospatial Data Repository

Geospatial data are a foundational component of research and teaching across many disciplines at the University of Arizona. From social data such as historical American Indian reservation boundaries in Arizona; environmental data about Arizona's watersheds, lakes, streams, and rivers; and historical maps of the Southwest United States, geospatial data cover a wide range of topics.

The University Libraries' Research Engagement and Technology Strategy and Services–University Information Technology Services departments have collaborated to launch the Geospatial Data Repository, which houses all of the library's spatial datasets. An extensive collection of geospatial data is available on a single, centralized platform that students, staff, and faculty have access to use for research. Library patrons who are simply curious and interested in geographic information systems are welcome to explore spatial datasets as well. The repository is available at https://geodata.lib.arizona.edu/.

Choice Announces the Outstanding Academic Titles of 2025

The *Choice* Outstanding Academic Titles (OAT) list for 2025 has been announced. This prestigious list, released today, reflects the best scholarly titles reviewed by *Choice* during the previous calendar year, as chosen by the editors. The 2025 list features 343 books and digital resources from 103 publishers. As in previous years, Choice editors will present a weekly series of "sneak peeks" into the 2025 OAT list, providing an overview of the year's best academic nonfiction in select subject areas. While the Outstanding Academic Titles list in its entirety is available only to *Choice* magazine and *Choice Reviews* subscribers, these curated mini-lists remain available to nonsubscribers via email newsletter and on the Choice360.org website.

JSTOR Seeklight Adds Transcript Generation for Text-Based Materials

JSTOR has launched transcript generation within JSTOR Seeklight, expanding its AI-assisted collection processing capabilities beyond metadata to include full-text transcription of handwritten, typed, and mixed-media documents. The new feature is now available to all Tier 3 charter participants in JSTOR Digital Stewardship Services. Developed in collaboration with librarians and archivists, this new functionality enhances discoverability, supports compliance with accessibility requirements, and maximizes the research value of digital collections. Transcripts can be generated during upload or on demand, reviewed and refined in a built-in editor, or replaced with institutional versions—ensuring expert oversight by archivists and librarians, along with institutional control. Learn more at https://about.jstor.org/news/jstor-seeklight-adds-transcript-generation-for-text-based-materials/.

Project MUSE Launches Hopkins Book Collection

Project MUSE has launched the Hopkins Book Collection for their 2026 frontlist. This first-of-its-kind offering delivers the complete frontlist of Johns Hopkins University Press's scholarly monographs and professional books, all in one exclusive package. With this collection, libraries will enjoy immediate access to each new title as soon as it is published: peer-reviewed, trusted scholarship, curated by a leading university press, with low administrative overhead and content delivered directly via MUSE. Featuring content in higher education, public health, history, literary studies, life sciences, health and wellness, and much more, the 2026 Hopkins collection offers comprehensive coverage across disciplines. Learn more at https://about.muse.jhu.edu/librarians/book-products/.

Springshare Acquires Pathrise

Springshare has announced the acquisition of assets of Pathrise, an artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled platform that combines job search software, specialized career resources, and personalized mentorship to transform job-seeker's path to aspirational employment. The Pathrise software platform and the mentorship program will be folded into Springshare's CareerShift division, thereby further strengthening our market-leading CareerShift platform, which assists students and alumni with job search and career exploration.

Today's college graduates and recent alumni are facing a difficult job market, with AI taking over work duties of entry-level employees and with the challenging economic picture overall. As colleges and universities—and communities everywhere—invest more resources and efforts to help their users and constituents navigate jobs and career options, the enhanced

CareerShift platform will play an increasingly important role in ensuring brighter prospects for job-seekers. More detail about any potential impact on CareerShift customers as a result of this acquisition is available as FAQs on the Springshare website at https://www.springshare.com/careershift-pathrise-faq.

ASERL Publishes 2025 Annual Report

The Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) has published its 2025 Annual Report. Titled "Stronger Together: Innovation, Leadership, and Connection Across the Southeast," the report highlights the many ways in which ASERL provides meaningful programming and cultivates important relationship among its membership. Founded in 1956, today ASERL services thirty-eight member libraries in twelve states. ASERL's programming focuses on providing national leadership in professional development, enabling ready access to rich library collections and services and cultivating long-lasting and meaningful relationships across its memberships. ASERL is housed at Emory University's Robert W. Woodruff Library in Atlanta, Georgia. All of ASERL's annual reports can be found on the archive page at https://www.aserl.org/about/annual_reports/.

Tech Bits ...

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

OpenRefine is a free, open-source desktop application for working with messy datasets. Developed in Java, it runs locally through a web browser and is compatible with all major operating systems. The tool allows users to import, clean, and transform data efficiently, removing blanks, duplicates, and converting between formats such as CSV, Excel, Google Sheets, XML, RDF, and JSON. Each step is recorded within a project, making workflows easy to reproduce with other datasets. In addition, its unlimited undo/redo function supports experimentation without risking the original data. Whether performing a quick cleanup or exploring a large dataset, I find OpenRefine to be a practical and reliable tool for improving data quality and managing data preparation tasks effectively.

—Grace YoungJoo Jeon, University of South Carolina

OpenRefine
https://openrefine.org/

Kortext Acquires Talis

Kortext has acquired Talis—a platform that bridges the library's resources with academic curricula—from Sage. This strategic move enhances Kortext's position as a key provider of library solutions by simplifying and enabling seamless discovery for educators and learners looking for course content. Sage is transferring full ownership of Talis to Kortext, ensuring long-term investment and innovation in Talis products. Under Kortext's leadership, Talis will enhance its core features, expand compatibility with library systems, and benefit from ongoing investments in AI. A customer communication process will begin immediately to ensure libraries are kept informed. Over the past year, Sage has made significant investments to expand the core business that has driven the company for more than 60 years. This strategic focus prompted a reappraisal of its tech-first division, Technology from Sage (TfS), which includes the software-as-a-service offerings from Talis. For more information, visit https://kortext.com.

Martin Garnar and Rebecca Floyd

No Wrong Turns

A Year of Exploring Why We Choose Librarianship

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. In past issues, the topics were proposed by the authors. However, during 2026, the column will focus on the authors' stories of librarianship. How they got here, why they stay, and even why they consider leaving or transitioning at times. During this time of great upheaval in higher education, exploring our many "whys" is a worthy venture. — *Dustin Fife, series editor*

Martin Garnar (MG): Rebecca, I'm glad we're going to have this chance to learn more about each other. Since we're supposed to talk about how we came to the profession, I'll start with my winding road to librarianship. After my original plan to be a high school math teacher met with disaster in the form of Calc III, I switched majors to history so that I could teach social studies. Adding geography along the way, I made it to my senior year and realized I didn't want to teach high school students, so I decided to get a doctorate so that I could teach at the college level. I made it to the second semester of my doctoral program when I freaked out about my future. First, I admitted that I wasn't excited about the prospect of teaching anyone. Second, though I liked history for its universal quality (i.e., everything and everyone has a history), the focus of my studies was getting narrower with every class. How was I supposed to teach world history when all my work was on 19th century British and German feminist movements?

I knew I wasn't interested in finishing a PhD in history, but I also didn't want to just quit, so I decided to stop at a master's and see what happened. Well, the next semester I got a work-study in the science library working on the reference desk, which is how I got a taste of what it might mean to be a librarian: being curious about whatever question comes before me, feeling a sense of accomplishment when I was able to help someone, and knowing that I could be part of the academic enterprise without having to grade anyone. That experience, now more than thirty years ago, ultimately led to a library degree and a career as a reference librarian and administrator.

Rebecca, how did you come to librarianship?

Rebecca Floyd (RF): My road to librarianship actually had a lot of sharp turns one direction or another. We are similar this way, but I'm closer to the beginning of my library path.

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I often refer to being a librarian as my third career, after one in geography and one as a stay-at-home parent, school volunteer, and substitute teacher. My bachelor's and first master's degrees are both in applied geography, focusing on remote sensing and geographic information systems. My husband was in the Army at the time, and we moved to Anchorage just after I earned my master's degree. I worked at an aerial photography and digital mapping firm for most of our six years there. Then we moved three times within the next six years, and I did not have a paid job during that time.

As I began to think about what I might do when my children grew up, I kept going back to the idea of working in a library. Every place we moved I saw library jobs available, and the public library was the first place we went when settled, for books and information about local resources and to meet other families. Turns out I wrote myself a letter as a college freshman saying I wanted to major in either geography or library science. So, in 2018, I decided to pursue that second path by applying for an online LIS master's degree program. I graduated in 2021 and applied for a part-time job at Colorado College, which gave me the opportunity to apply for the full-time position I have now. I did not take any courses focused on academic libraries while in school, so much of my learning and training has been on the job.

I'm a bit older than the usual person beginning their career, but I hope to continue to grow and learn in this position and am excited to see what comes next.

What hooked you and made you stay in this profession for this long, especially after so many early direction changes?

MG: Rebecca, we need to talk more about geography—the gap year I mentioned was spent building a digital map of customers for a food distributor—but librarianship is our topic. I'd say what hooked me on libraries is that my natural inclination to want to know about everything (which makes focusing on one topic really difficult) is a feature in this profession, not a bug. My career has been in smaller academic libraries where everyone is expected to be more of a generalist than a specialist. While I was happy to use my subject expertise from my prior education as the subject librarian for history and women's studies, I was also glad to develop new knowledge in fields like business and nursing as I supported students in those programs. I also did things outside of my normal role, like running the library website (on the strength of a four-hour HTML class in library school) and, despite my initial hesitations about grading, teaching classes in the core curriculum at two different schools. Though it was a lot to juggle, I enjoyed having so much variety while staying within the same profession.

Meanwhile, I feel like I've been able to live out all of my childhood career fantasies once I became an administrator, as this role has so many different aspects to it:

- Lawyer: Though I can't give legal advice, I've learned more about contracts, copyright, free expression, and privacy than I ever expected.
- Counselor: SO MUCH of management is being able to listen, empathize, and help people figure out answers for themselves.
- Architect: While I'm still holding out for a building project before I retire, I've had the chance to reimagine spaces.
- Math teacher: Even though calculus was not my friend, I love a good spreadsheet and feel an outsized level of accomplishment when I figure out a formula on my own.

And while all of those professions are interesting, I still feel most like myself when I'm sitting at the desk on Friday afternoons and helping folks with whatever they need, whether it's checking out a power cable or finding an article from an obscure journal.

Now that I've reflected on all the different "jobs" I've had as a librarian, I'm curious to know what your experience has been so far. Is the profession as you expected it would be?

RF: Martin, the common link with geography is interesting! Future conversation for sure. With geography essentially being the study of why things are where they are and, of course, searching for things on different types of maps, I think for me it dovetailed well with librarianship and the idea of searching for information and organizing things to be findable.

I went into library school—and graduated from library school—thinking I would be working in public libraries because that's where I saw the job openings as we moved around, so most of my classes focused on topics around public librarianship. However, and obviously, I ended up working in an academic library at a small liberal arts college in the city I already lived in. Some of my classes prepared me for this, such as cataloging, research services, and the fundamentals of instruction. But many other things I have learned on the job, which has made the experience exciting and occasionally a little overwhelming. The ideas of helping patrons with research and teaching people how to use research tools are fundamentally the same, but the topics and reasons behind the research are a bit different. I also manage our institutional repository and digital archive, work with open access and open educational resources, and help with scholarship tracking and celebrations. I've learned about all those things with professional development, mentors, and from my fellow librarians. This part is not at all surprising—library professionals are a resourceful and helpful bunch of people. I have learned a lot from more experienced people by being willing to ask questions.

I do think the librarian profession is what I expected and also better. Library people are kind and courageous defenders and explorers. There are challenges in any job and profession, and the librarians I know are really great at working together to find solutions. Thinking of local and national challenges leads me to wonder what changes you've seen in academic libraries and to the library profession over your career?

MG: Three decades is a long time in any field, and I feel like the profession has been saying it's in transition the entire time I've been in it. The card catalog was still in the library during my first year of college, and five years later (when I started at the science library) our big excitement was the addition of four terminals with the Mosaic web browser. One of my regular tasks was loading the latest CD-ROM into the tower to update our Silver Platter databases when I wasn't fighting with the dot matrix printers.

Fast forward to the present: last month we withdrew all of our government document CD-ROMs because they weren't being used and, more importantly, we haven't had optical drives in our public computers for a few years (but I'm still battling printers—some things never change). At the same time, I've heard about the death of print since I started working in libraries, but students and faculty alike will almost always prefer the print book over the ebook if they're given an option in the library (unless they're in their room or office—then they want the ebook).

As librarians, we say that we've gone from gatekeepers to facilitators, though we're still hung up on using systems that are arcane to the general public. Wikipedia has gone from

being the root of all evil to a (mostly) trusted source, and now generative AI is the next subject of the perennial "useful tool or existential threat" debate that has defined my time in librarianship. The necessary skill set for librarians has also changed, though in typical librarian fashion we add new expectations while not letting go of the obligation to maintain legacy formats and services. One thing that hasn't changed is that we're still wrestling with the essential whiteness of the field, though I remain optimistic that we can move the needle on having a more representative profession in the years ahead.

Rebecca, I've been talking about the past and present of librarianship. To finish up our conversation, what are you excited to see in the future of the profession?

RF: Much has changed and much has remained the same! I definitely agree that many people prefer the print book over the ebook when it's available and accessible. I think providing materials in all different formats for all different types of learners will continue to be important for our students and faculty and staff.

For the future of academic librarianship, I'm excited to see where the idea of "open"—open education, open access, open science—leads us. In a time when resources cost more and our budgets are remaining the same or shrinking, supporting open access should be how we're moving forward. The best parts of open—free or low cost, inclusion, accessibility, customization, sharing of knowledge—all support our students, faculty, and staff in their learning, research, and publications. In my job, I support open education and open access and enjoy talking about the benefits of each with both students and faculty. I think we have come a long way with the ideas of open, but there's so much growth potential there.

Thank you for engaging with me in this conversation; it's been wonderful learning about your career and how the academic library profession has evolved during your time in librarianship. Looking forward to having this conversation someday from your end with someone like me!

MG: Thanks, Rebecca! It's been great getting your perspective, which gives me hope for the future of the profession, and hope is what we need to make it through the tough spots. Next time, let's talk about maps...

Cynthia Hudson Vitale and Annie Johnson

Anticipating Tomorrow

How the University of Delaware Is Preparing for an AI-Driven World

In February 2025, the University of Delaware (UD) Library, Museums, and Press launched a focused exploration of how artificial intelligence (AI) could shape the future of their work across libraries, museums, and publishing. With AI technologies evolving rapidly and reshaping how knowledge is produced, accessed, and preserved, UD convened its senior leadership team for a half-day strategic planning retreat grounded in foresight, collaboration, and scenario-based thinking.

Guided by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) AI-Influenced Futures Scenarios, participants explored the challenges and opportunities that AI could present over the next decade and worked together to surface robust strategies to help the Libraries, Museums, and Press navigate this complex and shifting landscape.

This article shares the goals, structure, strategic insights, and outcomes from that retreat and outlines how scenario planning can be a useful tool for an organization grappling with uncertainty in the age of AI.

Why Scenario Planning for AI?

Emerging applications of AI are reshaping research practices, altering patterns of information use, and creating new expectations for learning, collaboration, and professional expertise. As the university's center for information access and public knowledge stewardship, the UD Library, Museums, and Press recognize that these transformations are defining the library's role.

The retreat adopted a scenario planning methodology because of its value in uncertain environments. Rather than focusing on likely or desirable outcomes, scenario planning embraces multiple plausible futures. This approach encourages organizations to test assumptions, identify early signals, and develop strategies that are resilient no matter which way the future unfolds.

By using the ARL/CNI 2035 Scenarios[1] developed by ARL and CNI, the UD Library, Museums, and Press senior leadership team grounded its conversations in four divergent yet plausible futures. These scenarios were designed to help research libraries explore the strategic implications of AI in the research and learning ecosystem by considering multiple trajectories, rather than relying on a single forecast.

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The scenarios articulate four distinct futures shaped by AI:

- Autonomous AI: A world in which AI becomes an independent partner and collaborator in research and learning, reshaping workforce structures and scholarly communication.
- Consumer-Oriented AI: Where AI adoption is uneven, with most advances confined to consumer applications and markets.
- Democratized and Socially Integrated AI: A future where advances in AI and human–computer interfaces drive equitable access, inclusivity, and open knowledge.
- Laissez-Faire AI: A scenario shaped by fragmented policies, missed opportunities, and weak governance. In this world, AI adoption is hasty and uneven, exacerbating bias, privacy breaches, and misinformation.

The session began with an introduction to scenario planning, highlighting how the ARL/CNI 2035 Scenarios provide a structured approach to anticipating change and making proactive decisions. Participants then divided into groups, each working through one of the four scenarios to consider how different AI-influenced futures might affect the UD Library, Museums, and Press and the university more broadly. Groups surfaced insights about collections, services, partnerships, and workforce implications, which were then discussed and further explored.

Building from this analysis, participants engaged in a series of facilitated activities designed to move from reflection to action. In one exercise, each group identified potential opportunities and risks emerging from their scenario. These ideas were then refined into a set of possible actions and strategies during a prioritization exercise, with an emphasis on identifying "robust" strategies, or those that would hold value across multiple futures, rather than being tied to a single outcome.

Through reporting out, gallery walks, and collective discussion, overlapping themes emerged to develop a set of ten strategic priorities.

Strategic Themes and Priorities

Across all four AI futures, the retreat surfaced ten robust strategic implications that hold relevance across multiple scenarios.

Responsible AI Leadership

In all four scenarios, the UD Library, Museums, and Press become central to responsible AI oversight, whether through championing open-source principles (Democratized), managing responsible partnerships (Consumer-Oriented), navigating minimal regulatory frameworks (Laissez-Faire), or supervising automated decisions (Autonomous). This shift highlights the increasing expectation that libraries address algorithmic bias, address user privacy, and democratize access.

Shifts in Assessment and Metrics

As AI transforms teaching, research, and resource usage, traditional metrics (e.g., circulation, gate counts) decrease in relevance. UD Library, Museums, and Press will need to collect new indicators, like workshop participation for AI literacy, frequency of algorithmic queries, or levels of data or AI training data reuse, while also exploring qualitative feedback

on key areas such as trust. This evolving data environment challenges existing frameworks of performance measurement and calls for flexible, ongoing adaptation.

Physical–Digital Balance and User Engagement
Under certain scenarios (e.g., Autonomous AI or Laissez-Faire), the space considerations for the physical library may shift with some users needing tech-free zones; in others (e.g., Democratized or Consumer-Oriented), it can serve as a collaborative hub or community maker space. Regardless of scenario, shifting user behaviors and the spread of virtual services prompt reimagined physical layouts that may emphasize communal learning, specialized labs, or mental-wellness niches, reinforcing libraries as more than just content repositories.

Shifts in Staff Roles and Expertise
Across the scenarios, technical proficiency and data-informed skill sets gain prominence, especially when repetitive tasks are automated or consumer-oriented platforms raise expectations. Additionally, library roles for specialized areas like prompt engineering, metadata for AI outputs, algorithmic validation, or user-guidance services will likely expand.

Evolving Service Models
In every AI-influenced future, service models shift as AI changes how information is discovered, interpreted, and applied. The Library, Museums, and Press should consider adapting by reexamining how patron services are designed and delivered. Some ideas include potentially expanding research consultations to include AI-related topics and technology and developing guidance for responsible tool use.

Resource Allocation and Collection Priorities
Across the scenarios, resource allocation may shift as investments move toward different technological and service models. Budgets may need to prioritize open-source infrastructure and community-driven tools (Democratized), commercial AI licensing and platform partnerships (Consumer-Oriented), or blended approaches (Laissez-Faire and Autonomous). Over time, reliance on new infrastructures and licensing agreements may redirect spending away from other initiatives, affecting resource access and the balance between physical and digital holdings.

Data-Centric Preservation and IP Complexities
As digital and AI-generated content become more integral to research and scholarship, the Library, Museums, and Press face growing responsibilities for managing data, outputs, and shifting norms of authorship. Future collections may encompass algorithmically produced texts, images, and training datasets that complicate established practices for attribution and long-term preservation. With physical formats and manual workflows in decline, cloud infrastructure, repository management, and documentation of AI provenance take on greater importance for the library.

Partnerships and Collaborative Networks
The UD Library, Museums, and Press experiences greater interdependence in all futures, through consortia for open AI (Democratized), vendor alliances (Consumer-Oriented), or

shared governance models (Laissez-Faire, Autonomous). This interdependence underscores the library's bridging function, as it simultaneously engages with campus stakeholders, external collaborators, and users who demand consistent and frictionless AI services.

User Support and Education

In each scenario, complex AI applications create demand for user guidance, whether that involves critical literacy (Democratized), technical troubleshooting (Consumer-Oriented), just-in-time assistance (Laissez-Faire), or ethical oversight (Autonomous). The UD Library, Museums, and Press thereby extend instructional roles across campus, helping patrons interpret AI-generated data, navigate licensing intricacies, and critique automated findings.

Equity and Inclusivity Challenges

All scenarios highlight the possibility of digital divides, biased algorithms, or uneven resource access. Some scenarios (e.g., Democratized) welcome broader user creation but still require vigilant oversight of data provenance, while others (e.g., Consumer-Oriented) risk excluding those without budgets for premium AI tools. These conditions underscore ongoing concerns about how libraries maintain open and fair access in environments shaped by automation or patchwork standards.

Reflections and Next Steps

The UD AI strategic implications retreat brought together the leadership team from the Libraries, Museums, and Press to explore how AI may shape the organization's work in the years ahead. The retreat surfaced shared insights, deepened understanding of the evolving AI landscape, and identified concrete actions to support ongoing planning and decision-making. The three primary actions identified as a result of the retreat included actively engaging library staff in training around AI to ensure readiness for new services and workflows, collaborating closely with other groups on campus on AI initiatives instead of going it alone, and continuing to provide a welcoming space for students, faculty, and staff to come together in person.

Some of this work has already been underway. Since 2024, for example, the team has been piloting an AI-powered reference chatbot, called UDStax. UDStax was developed to answer simple questions about library resources and services. Training and enhancing the model behind UDStax has provided an excellent learning opportunity for library staff.[2] A more formal organizational-wide AI professional development plan is currently being developed, with input from staff, by the organizational development team. One of the goals of this plan is that it will build space for those who are critical of AI to participate.

In terms of collaborating with other groups on campus, librarians were key leaders on a university-wide AI Teaching and Learning Working Group. Librarians led efforts to identify and validate an AI literacy definition and framework for integrating AI-related skills into the curriculum and helped to create a guiding framework for educators using generative AI in the classroom.[3] Librarians served as co-principal investigators with campus partners in the multi-institutional Ithaka S&R Making AI Generative for Higher Education project, researching local trends in how faculty use AI in their teaching and research, as well as faculty support needs.[4] Most recently, librarians have embarked on a new project with university information technology to develop an AI literacy module for employees across the university.

This will be based in part on a toolkit that librarians originally created for UD students.[5] A member of the senior leadership team has also been asked to serve as an internal advisory board member for the campus-wide First State AI Institute.

Finally, UD will continue to invest in its physical space, Morris Library. The organization has embarked on a major renovation of its special collections and is also in the process of launching a new area for technology-focused research support services. Over the course of the retreat, it became clear to participants that even in a future where AI plays a dominant role, the human-centered experience that libraries offer remains essential.

Notes

1. Association of Research Libraries and Coalition for Networked Information, *The ARL/CNI 2035 Scenarios: AI-Influenced Futures in the Research Environment* (Association of Research Libraries, 2024). https://www.arl.org/arl-cni-2035-scenarios.

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Maxwell Gray

It's Not Easy Staying Human

Generative AI, Cognition, and Reflection

It's not easy being an academic librarian in this moment of generative artificial intelligence (AI). For librarians in research, teaching, and learning, it's like being a tour guide in a city whose critical infrastructure is in the middle of being rebuilt.

AI overviews and research assistants are changing how we search and think about research.[1] At the same time, ChatGPT and Copilot are changing how we think about the difference between research and writing.[2] Librarians in higher education are trying to teach students and faculty new technology and answer new questions about authorship and academic integrity.[3]

It's even harder if you're a librarian whose values don't align with the values of this new technology and its creators. It's like being a tour guide in a city whose critical infrastructure is being redesigned and rebuilt by technocratic oligarchs outside any democratic process.[4] We are trying to teach patrons how to use new technology and how to think critically and responsibly about this new technology.[5]

Last year, I collaborated with colleagues at Marquette's Center for Teaching and Learning to facilitate a community of practice and lead a workshop series about generative AI. This year, I'm collaborating with colleagues at the Center for Teaching and Learning again to curate a conversation series about generative AI and Ignatian pedagogy.

Teaching at a Catholic, Jesuit university, we prioritize Ignatian pedagogy to orient our pedagogies toward personal trans/formation and ground them in intellectual, spiritual, and social inquiry.[6] Approaching generative AI from the tradition of Ignatian pedagogy feels especially critical when this technology tempts us to think less, feel less, and care less—in other words, to be less human (or to embrace less of our humanity).[7]

These collaborations at the Center for Teaching and Learning have sought to teach faculty and other educators how to approach generative AI critically and ethically and how to teach students to do the same (rather than how to use any specific tool or tools). In and around these projects, I have been part of many conversations (often long) with faculty and other educators about this technology and how it is impacting teaching and learning (often not for the better).

These experiences have taught me we need to do better at speaking and connecting with our colleagues and our students about this technology and how it is impacting how all of us think and learn. In 2025, researchers at MIT published a study where they found major cognitive costs of using a large language model (LLM) tool for essay writing.[8] They found that young people who used an LLM tool for essay writing showed weaker neural connectivity and underengagement of neural networks than those who did not. Students and lifelong learners alike should learn and reflect on how using generative AI may impact how we do

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and don't think and learn. Young people especially should reflect on how they want to think and act in the world in this moment in response.

In the meantime, I believe this new technology will afford new forms and modes of thinking. Dialogue between theory and practice will be critical for building these new forms and modes. The popular terminology for these new forms and modes is "AI literacy."

Last year, Leo S. Lo published a guide for academic libraries about AI literacy in which he proposed core components and themes for AI literacy in academic libraries.[9] ACRL's new "AI Competencies for Academic Library Workers" reflects many of the core components and themes for AI literacy proposed by Lo.[10] One core component or theme I propose is missing from these documents is the human, cognitive impact of generative AI.

In academic libraries, I think we should learn and teach how to reflect on the personal, mental, and cognitive dimensions of AI. The personal impact of AI happens at a more individual scale than its societal impact; it calls us to reflect on how AI—especially generative AI—is reshaping how we think, feel, and relate with each other, in terms of both cognitive science and the humanities and social sciences. This technology will strengthen some ways of thinking, feeling, and caring, and it will weaken others. How we use this technology will also build new, emergent ways of thinking, feeling, and belonging that we don't recognize yet in this moment. What new ways do we and our students want to build together?

For many of us, this kind of reflection may be frightening, but it should also be exciting, especially for academic librarians in teaching, learning, and pedagogy. It should also be exciting for young people who need to create a hope-filled future for themselves. What values, dreams, and challenges will ground and inspire young people in this moment of technological, social, and personal trans/formation? Where and how will our students find data, information, knowledge, and, ultimately, wisdom? How will our students create these for themselves and for others?

In conclusion, Lo proposes that thinking about human–AI collaboration "focuses on using AI to enhance, not replace, human abilities. It promotes a mindset where individuals see AI as a supportive partner in tasks like decision-making, creativity, and problem-solving, rather than as a substitute for human judgment and skills."[11] Thinking about cognition and reflection may refocus on practices of thinking, feeling, and reflecting back again on how we do, don't, and desire to think, feel, and care as unique human persons. It should promote a mindset where individuals and society recognize the most human skill is thinking critically, responsibly, and ethically about our own thinking and acting, in community and solidarity together.

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Russell Michalak and Yasmeen Shorish Share Plans for ACRL

Cast an Informed Vote in the Election This Spring

Ed. Note: C&RL News offered the candidates for ACRL vice-president/president-elect, Russell Michalak and Yasmeen Shorish, this opportunity to share their views with the membership. Although many of the issues facing ACRL are discussed informally at meetings, we want to use this venue to provide a forum to all members. We hope this will assist you in making an informed choice when you vote in the election this spring.

Russell Michalak

I am honored to be nominated for ACRL vice-president/president-elect. For me, ACRL represents not just a professional home, but a collective movement—where mentorship, curiosity, and ethical leadership shape the future of academic libraries. ACRL has long been my professional community—a place where mentorship, connection, and shared learning have shaped my growth as a librarian and leader. In part through this community, I have learned that leadership is not about control, but about creating space for others to lead alongside you.

From Research Libraries to a Special Library

My career began in large research libraries, where I learned that strong, shared communication—listening as much as leading—is what makes complex organizations thrive. I started by sorting donated books in off-site storage at the University of Utah, later serving as a key holder who opened a health sciences library before earning my library degree. Those early experiences taught me the importance of reliability, humility, and the quiet power of service.

Now, as director of a special library at a small college, I've seen how limited resources and small teams magnify both the challenges and the opportunities of our work. Whether in a major research system or a one-person library, success depends on trust, empathy, and collaboration. Across research, special, and academic settings, I have learned that real leadership emerges not from hierarchy but from shared purpose and communication.

Association Work that Connects

That same spirit of collaboration defines my work in associations. Professional associations thrive when members bring their diverse experiences together to strengthen the collective good. Just as small libraries depend on collaboration to amplify their impact,

associations rely on open communication, mutual support, and shared learning to advance the profession.

In ACRL, I have seen how these values come to life. As chair of the New Roles and Changing Landscapes Committee, I helped convene national conversations that produced adaptable briefs for local library planning. Within the Digital Scholarship Section, I served in advisory and executive roles, co-convened the Research Data Management Discussion Group, and chaired the Conference Program Planning Committee- advancing work on data ethics, equity, and innovation. As convener of the ACRL Leadership Discussion Group, I facilitated cross-level dialogues and developed conversation guides that participants could bring back to their own teams.

These experiences affirmed a truth I see every day: leadership comes from the middle. By this, I mean the kind of leadership practiced by people who influence, connect, and move work forward regardless of their title—leadership rooted in initiative, collaboration, and support rather than authority. Convening the Leadership Discussion Group has shown me that leadership is not defined by rank or title—it emerges when people are given the space and support to lead in their own way. Association work creates that space. Within ACRL, members can step into leadership at no cost, connect across boundaries, and contribute their expertise to something larger than themselves. This shared structure of participation—accessible, inclusive, and collaborative—reflects what I believe leadership should be: a practice of listening, learning, and lifting others up.

Solutions in Practice

My leadership is both solutions-driven and people-centered. I transform ideas into actionable tools that colleagues can use immediately—frameworks that enhance communication, guides for navigating challenging conversations, and peer-learning spaces that reduce professional isolation, particularly for small and specialized libraries.

Working in a small library has taught me that collaboration is the antidote to the echo chamber. Writing, editing, and presenting with colleagues across institution types and disciplines expands perspective, deepens empathy, and strengthens our collective understanding of the profession. Editing, for me, is a form of relational leadership. It requires deep listening, humility, and care—qualities that make collaboration transformative rather than transactional. Co-editing *Toxic Dynamics in Academic Libraries* (ACRL Press) and co-editing the forthcoming *AI and Academic Libraries: Practical Strategies for Ethical Integration, Instruction, and Innovation* (ACRL Press) with Karim Boughida have both reinforced this truth: when we engage across differences—whether institutional size, geography, or disciplinary lens—we grow together. These collaborations create spaces of trust and shared vulnerability where lived experiences become catalysts for systemic insight and change.

Whether shaping a book, leading a library, or contributing to association work, I strive to create conditions where others can share their stories, test ideas, and see themselves as leaders. Growth happens not in isolation, but in conversation—with one another, and with the communities we serve.

Mentorship, Shared Communication, and Ethical Innovation

Mentorship and communication are the foundation of my leadership philosophy. In my library, our onboarding model builds trust through mutual expectations, open dialogue,

and continuous feedback—creating psychological safety and preventing misalignment before it becomes cultural. This same ethos of shared communication can guide our profession as we navigate technological change.

At this year's ACRL Conference, I presented a poster where I met an MLIS student who was presenting on a similar topic, AI policy. What began as a brief exchange at our poster session turned into a meaningful collaboration—one that led to her publishing her first scholarly article. That experience reaffirmed for me what makes ACRL so vital: it creates spaces where mentoring relationships are sparked, ideas are shared across generations, and professional growth is collective rather than competitive.

As libraries integrate emerging technologies, including AI, ACRL has a critical opportunity to lead through ethical innovation—ensuring that adoption is grounded in privacy, equity, and access for all. Our charge is not simply to keep pace with technology, but to shape its use with intention and integrity. When guided by our values, technology becomes a catalyst for creativity, critical thinking, and empathy—amplifying, rather than replacing, the human connections at the heart of librarianship.

A Vision for ACRL

If elected, I will focus on expanding mentorship across institution types, aligning professional development with both research-intensive and small library realities, and creating peer-learning opportunities that foster psychologically safe and inclusive leadership.

I envision ACRL as a space where ideas become practical frameworks—resources that librarians can adapt within their own contexts to strengthen communication, rebuild trust, and promote belonging.

But to grow together, we must also move beyond the echo chamber—where familiar voices and well-resourced institutions dominate the conversation. ACRL's strength lies in its diversity of experience. True progress depends on listening across institutional boundaries, valuing the insights of underrepresented voices, and ensuring that professional development speaks to all librarians, not just those with access to privilege or scale.

My vision is to further ACRL's role as a community where every member—regardless of institution size, role, or background—feels seen, supported, and empowered to lead from where they are. This means sustaining a culture of shared communication, where feedback is welcomed, transparency is standard, and collaboration is celebrated.

Closing

I am proud of ACRL's work and the community it continues to build. This association has shaped my career and my understanding of what shared leadership can achieve. If elected, I will bring that same commitment to practical collaboration, open communication, and steady progress that serves members across all institution types.

ACRL's strength lies in its people—in the everyday work of listening, mentoring, and leading together. My goal is to help sustain and strengthen that foundation so every member can see themselves reflected in the association's future.

I would be humbled and honored to serve as ACRL vice-president/president-elect and to continue advancing our collective efforts with transparency, purpose, and respect for the diverse voices that define our profession.

Yasmeen Shorish

Ever since I joined ACRL as a graduate student over 15 years ago, I have been involved in a range of member-driven efforts. Librarianship is a second career for me; my move from event production to academic librarianship stemmed from a love of both personal learning and helping others to learn. While passionate about the work, I was initially inexperienced in academic library culture and effective practices. ACRL was an invaluable community that helped me learn from and with peers across institutions, while also providing me a space to shape and contribute to particular areas—initiatives centered on diversity and inclusion, data management, and equitable scholarly communication.

I have experienced how ACRL provides the space to critically explore and define areas of librarianship, like data management, while also providing opportunities for fundamental areas of the field to meet members' ongoing and evolving needs, like information and AI literacy. Throughout my career, I have held several roles collaborating alongside other ACRL members, including as an ACRL Section committee chair, Interest Group leader, mentor, goal area committee leader and, most recently, as a Board director-at-large. The deep contributions and relationships I have built across the association have positioned me to be a well-informed and thoughtful vice-president/president-elect. In addition to experiencing the myriad ways that ACRL supports members and enables change, I have also observed areas for deeper engagement, humane critique, and sustainable growth. What follows are the core areas that I would focus on if I had the honor of being elected to this position.

Leveraging Relationships

While ACRL has been a valued professional home for me, I have been fortunate to learn from and build connections across other aligned associations, which has also directly benefited ACRL. My engagement in focused conversations around data librarianship that took place at RDAP (Research Data Access and Preservation) Summits helped inform my recommendation to the Board for more professional development in research data management for librarians, resulting in ACRL's RDM Roadshow. In turn, learning more about how an association can be structured for sustainability and success helped me contribute to the work of transitioning the Summit from an annual event hosted by ASIS&T into a standalone entity, RDAP Association.

I have found that such community-centered strategies and solutions are richer and more robust when considered from many points of view. Leveraging relationships across organizations to build better outcomes for our profession (and explicitly, the people in our profession) is a key focus of my campaign. We need to find ways to come together around topics of shared concern and design effective strategies that advance our collective goals.

Beyond ACRL, my involvement with the Digital Library Federation (DLF), SPARC, and We Here has been critical to how I view our profession and its potential. I've learned about effective community building, how to strategically advocate for issues, and what it means to be in a space where you feel a deep sense of belonging. ACRL provides those experiences to library workers in a variety of ways, but I am interested in seeing how we can embed this ethos into our structural practices. These include considering how we can collaboratively build upon the cross-divisional opportunities that have occurred within ALA. In my time on

the Board, leadership across the divisions has historically acknowledged that we are stronger together when we confer and support one another—leading to a stronger and more cohesive ALA as well.

I know that to effectively institutionalize this work, it will require the involvement of ACRL staff: a group of dedicated individuals who continue to work in service of our members, but with ever-diminishing resources. The relationship between ACRL members and staff is critical to the success of the association. As vice-president/president-elect, I would continue to leverage my longstanding work with members, the ACRL executive director, and staff to support efforts positioning our respective constituencies in cultivating productive and joyful relationships, with clear expectations and paths to advocate for additional needs.

Community Building

I acknowledge that the phrase "community building" gets thrown around a lot without much clarity on its actual meaning. I refer to intentional action across the association, and beyond it. Within the association, I mean actively building more opportunities to collaborate and conversate across sections and committees, to connect us beyond our immediate communities of practice. Library workers operate in contexts where they may not understand the work of colleagues within their own institutions; ACRL should be an association that helps demystify the siloed work of other library workers and reinforces the shared values and concerns across the profession. Through opportunities for structured sharing across groups within the association, we strengthen not just our individual knowledge base but also our ability to contribute to a greater sense of belonging and cohesion.

In leveraging these relationships within our association, we also need to think about how we conceive of community with non-members. There are a multitude of reasons why some library workers are not ACRL members. They may feel more aligned with other divisions. They may not feel that ACRL's culture resonates with them, or that they have a place in that culture. They may feel that their financial investments should or must go elsewhere. While I am interested in bringing non-members into the association through membership drive efforts or the like, I want to focus on how we actively listen and integrate their valuable perspectives and build community with them, despite the differences and challenges that may present, in support of all library workers. As the association demonstrates an ability to be reflective, welcoming, and inclusive, it is more likely that, in time, people may become members to help support and advance ACRL's work and values.

Values-Aligned Leadership

In this time of uncertainty across many fronts, it is critical that ACRL continues to lead from a place of values alignment. When considering how to create ACRL's "Vivid Description of a Desired Future," it may feel especially daunting as our libraries face funding, policy, and sociotechnical challenges. However, by holding to our professional ethics, standards, and values, we can find and even create the path that leads to a brighter future. It will be challenging for the association to navigate this landscape, and there may be moments of tension between what members call for and what an association can provide, but this desired future is attainable through our collective work.

With many competing demands on the profession and the people engaged in the work, it can be tempting to fall into two ends of the leadership spectrum: at one end is extensive

deliberation, couched in exhaustive data gathering and endless planning with little action. The other extreme represents the "move fast, break things" approach; where speed is generated from a fear of being left behind, rather than proactivity or informed decision-making. Finding the balance between deliberative consideration and rapid action is a challenge, but grounding in a strategic plan, values, and professional responsibility can be an aid to that balancing act. Fear motivates rash decisions as much as inaction. Knowing oneself—either as an individual or (abstractly) as an association—is an excellent resistor to fear. In the vice-president/president-elect position, I would ensure that ACRL is affirming its values clearly and visibly in every action and decision that is made. We must continue to lead transparently and to center our professional responsibilities throughout ACRL's activities.

The Association as Advocate

I have always viewed ACRL as an advocacy association. Members and staff have advocated for professional status, information literacy, open access and open education, professional development, research agendas, and so much more. Three of the five goal area committees in service to ACRL's Plan for Excellence explicitly mention advocacy in their objectives. However, I have also been in spaces where there was resistance to calling work within the association "advocacy." I view the purpose and mission of ACRL is to listen and help advance the concerns of the people across the profession, even or *especially* in hard times.

The three areas described above are all in service to this essential area. I recognize this is a difficult time for library professionals to speak or act in alignment with our professional ethics and values. Yet this is the time when associations must be the vehicle for community communication and action. As ACRL vice-president/president-elect, I aim to create opportunities to actively respond, process, and plan for our rapidly changing information landscape. Through engagement with structured meetings on a series of topics, library workers will come together to surface actionable items that the association can carry forward and effect change.

We need these opportunities to be in community with one another and to inform the association on the actionable priorities shared across members. While there is comfort in commiseration, these opportunities will be more rooted in building action plans. I want to build bridges for us to hear from one another, share strategies and priorities, and find venues where our advocacy will be the most meaningful. I want to help lead ACRL in its role as community advocate for its members, and for all library professionals.

John Caldwell and Kaitlyn Tanis

Intentional Co-Instruction

Bringing the Framework and Guidelines into Conversation for Undergraduate History Information Literacy Instruction

In 2019, the newly appointed history subject liaison at the University of Delaware sought a collaborator from the Special Collections Department for a three-hour history capstone instruction session on environmental history. That initial collaboration sparked an ongoing commitment between us, a special collections librarian and the history liaison, to provide co-instruction sessions that introduce history students to hands-on archival research.

When first approached about this lengthy class session, we met with the instructor to gain a better understanding of the goals for a 400-level summative writing course and asked questions such as: *What skills are the students supposed to learn from this class? What is the final assignment? What skills are they supposed to demonstrate in their final research assignment?* After receiving the above information and a copy of the assignment and syllabus, we designed the session and created a set of learning objectives integrating the ACRL Information Literacy Framework (Framework), the Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy (Guidelines), and the historical research process as our pedagogic backbone.

Session Design

The Framework needs little introduction to this audience. The Guidelines were created by the ACRL RBMS-SAA Joint Task Force on Primary Source Literacy and outline the "knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, and ethically use primary sources within specific disciplinary contexts."[1] The Guidelines were created to complement the Framework, and the two "can be used in unison to encourage informed collaboration between archivists ... who work with primary source material and information literacy librarians at the college or university level."[2] Below, we will show the alignment between the learning objectives described in the Guidelines and the concepts articulated in the Framework, as we see them. Rarely is there a one-to-one connection between the Guidelines and the Framework; rather, we see the learning objectives as articulated in the Guidelines correlating to the different concepts described in the Framework. While each learning objective is important for our students, two receive more attention in our sessions than the rest, and we discuss these first. Although we do not explicitly tell students that we are embarking on these specific points from the Guidelines and the Framework, we use these as a foundation for the objectives we create for each lesson.

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Read, Understand, and Summarize (Guidelines) & Research as Inquiry (Framework); Searching as Strategic Exploration (Framework); Authority Is Constructed and Contextual (Framework):

Understanding the format, context, and information content of primary sources is an underdeveloped capacity for many history majors, who must learn how to analyze a variety of sources in different formats (e.g., newspapers, photographs, audio recordings) and use them cohesively in developing their arguments. The same principles can be applied to secondary sources, understanding the scholarly consensus around their research topics. This objective relates to the Framework's concepts around searching and identifying resources, as well as understanding the context around an information products' creation.

Interpret, Analyze, and Evaluate (Guidelines) & Research as Inquiry (Framework); Information Creation as a Process (Framework); Authority is Constructed and Contextual (Framework); Scholarship as Conversation (Framework); Information Has Value (Framework):

Our goal is to help students see beyond the original function of a primary source and help them think about repurposing sources for their research. This is a critical ability for an information-literate student: to take an information product, analyze it, and recontextualize it for their research needs while maintaining the integrity of its original purpose. This objective finds itself echoed in almost every one of the Framework's concepts. The same skill set can be applied to secondary source research as well. For example, emphasizing critical thinking helps students become engaged citizens and conscious information consumers.

Conceptualize (Guidelines) & Information Creation as a Process (Framework); Authority is Constructed and Contextual (Framework); Scholarship as Conversation (Framework):

Key conceptualization skills include articulating the difference between primary and secondary sources while understanding their interrelatedness and defining appropriate types of primary sources for their research project. Within the Framework, these skills align with the ability to assess the relationship between an "information product" (a primary source) and an "information need" (the research project), understand the existing scholarship on their topic, and identify where their research fits into the scholarly conversation.

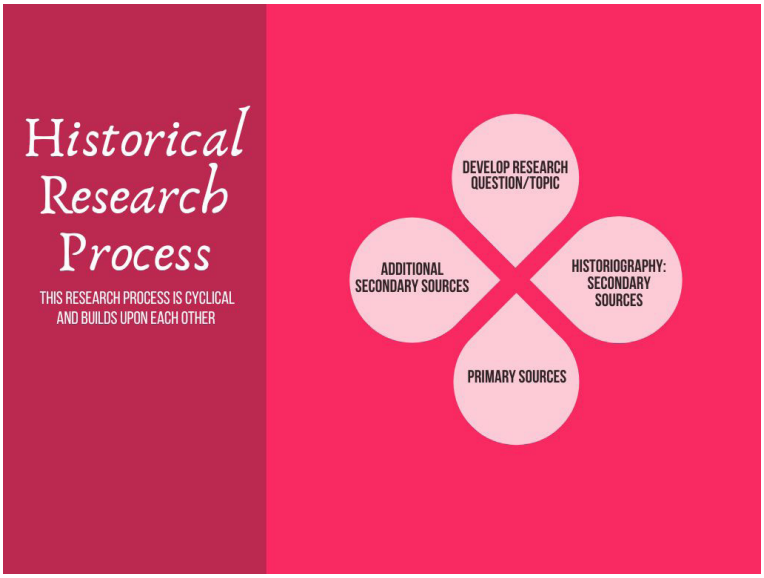
Find and Access (Guidelines) & Searching as Strategic Exploration (Framework):

This is the most direct comparison between the two resources. The purpose of both is to help students develop appropriate search strategies to execute a research project using both primary and secondary sources and to locate both across a variety of information systems. The information landscape is immensely complex and overwhelming for everyone; our job is to help students learn how to navigate these various pathways successfully. Of chief concern for our history students is getting them familiar with archival finding aids and understanding how finding aids are distinct from library catalogs and databases.

Use and Incorporate (Guidelines) & Research as Inquiry (Framework); Scholarship as Conversation (Framework); Information Has Value (Framework):

Most of our sessions are tied to a course assignment. As such, it is important for students to utilize a variety of resources to construct and defend their scholarly argument. This end goal for using primary sources aligns strongly with the knowledge practices described under the concepts "Research as Inquiry" and "Scholarship as Conversation." Part of using sources is proper citation and attribution of others' ideas, which is something we always cover, because students may not understand how to cite individual primary documents or archival collections.

Finally, we always highlight the cyclical nature of the historical research process to show students that they can approach their research from a variety of starting points. For example, a student can create research questions by looking through primary sources or they can discover a topic through a secondary source. Though flexible, by the time students begin writing, they will have engaged in every step of the process.



Historical Research Process. Created by Kaitlyn Tanis, University of Delaware.

Session Outline

Although our sessions have varied widely in their content, execution, and academic level over time, each has the same fundamental structure we created for that first class. In the sample lesson packet accompanying this article, we have provided the basic structure of how we organize and think through an instruction session, including some examples of activities that we utilize. Typically, the instruction session invitations we receive have a strong research component, and the activities we select for a particular session are informed by the information needs of students that directly apply to their culminating research assignments.

Sessions typically begin with introductions, including a bit about our backgrounds as history majors to show students the utility of a history degree. We then transition into a discussion of the basics of a research question, the historical research process, and how to find secondary sources. These topics are usually covered by the History liaison, who talks about search tips, subject headings, historical keywords, the library catalog, and the use of academic databases to find relevant sources. These topics can be extensively or briefly covered based on input from the instructor. If students are in their first research methods course, we discuss basic research skills. With senior History majors, however, we can cover more complex search strategies.

At this point, the special collections librarian leads the class into a primary source discussion. After reviewing what primary sources are in historical research, we discuss locating primary sources either in the library catalog or in our finding aid database. While demonstrating how to navigate our finding aids, we cover the basics of a finding aid: its structure, the major components, and how it differs from the catalog and databases they are more accustomed to using for research. Finally, we dive into the active learning portion of the session, where students interact with physical and/or digital primary sources. Depending on the instructor's learning objectives, the students' experience with primary source analysis, and the length of the session, we engage in different activities.

At the end of the session, we debrief the experiential learning activities as a group and discuss proper citation for both archival material and secondary sources. We may also, if appropriate to the session, introduce the differences between physical and digitized primary sources and the advantages and pitfalls of using each in their research. Although we keep this basic structure for each class we are invited into, we cater to each class's objectives.

Information Literacy Activities

If students have not developed a research question, we give them time to think through their research topic by having them look up encyclopedia articles (using Credo Reference) or use Wikipedia to find a topic that interests them; then develop their potential topic into a question by creating a mind map. Students find a topic and then have to connect different ideas to that theme, ultimately drilling down to smaller topics or questions. Then we use a combination of Special Collections material related to the class theme, primary, and secondary source databases online to find relevant sources to back up their topic.

We have also used Special Collections material to have students ask potential research questions as an activity.[3] Our goal is to answer the question: how could this material provide evidence to answer a research question? Students then are asked to think critically and engage with a single physical primary source, which pushes students to apply their own knowledge of the topic or theme of the class to a piece of history. Students are invited to use these sources in their future research project. These two activities are based on combining Conceptualize (Guidelines) and Information Creation as a Process (Framework), along with Authority Is Constructed and Contextual (Framework) and Scholarship as Conversation (Framework).

If we see students after they have developed research topics, we ask for a list of those topics ahead of the class period so that we can pull Special Collections material that aligns with their areas of interest. Students are then asked to find a primary source from the collections brought into the classroom that could provide evidence to support their argument. In this version of the class, students read a primary source closely and answer specific questions about its content, context, and research value, which gets them to engage and critically analyze these sources.[4] This activity is based on combining Read, Understand, and Summarize (Guidelines) and Research as Inquiry (Framework), along with Authority Is Constructed and Contextual (Framework) and Searching as Strategic Exploration (Framework).

Each of these exercises asks students to learn and conceptualize research as a cyclical process filled with opportunities to engage and critically question and evaluate their ideas. They also ask students to manage and create parameters for their research instead of trying to answer large complex questions that could be covered in a dissertation or monograph. Regardless of what other exercises we include in the session, we always ensure students practice locating secondary and primary source material.

Although our sessions are usually rooted in historical research practices, it is important to remember that primary sources exist in every academic discipline. For students in any major, primary sources are a valuable experiential learning opportunity that promote critical engagement with different viewpoints and make them more well-rounded researchers. This provides a model for how subject specialists and special collections librarians can work together to create a cohesive instruction session that uses primary sources within a particular discipline to support teaching standard information literacy skills. For instance, an environmental science class could use farmers' journals, documenting climate conditions in the mid-19th century,[5] and *The American Woods*, a fourteen-volume series containing over 350 wood samples of native American trees,[6] some of which are now extinct, to study the progression of climate change over the past 150 years. This provides historical context and shows students that data can be found in historical, local material and can inform their contemporary scientific research. This also adds to students' understanding of Interpret, Analyze, and Evaluate (Guidelines); Research as Inquiry (Framework); and Scholarship as

Conversation (Framework), which shapes how students' approach and think through their research.

The structure of these sessions can also be integrated into other information literacy areas based on student and course need. Looking at the outline of the lesson plan and overall class structure, a librarian could easily take the points of being a digital-literate person and use the Framework to create a digital information literacy session. For example, a librarian could create a lesson for students in which they "find, understand, and evaluate information in a technical setting"[7] and connect it with several Framework concepts (e.g., Research as Inquiry or Searching as Strategic Exploration) to create an engaging learning environment that addresses the holistic student and learner. Our lesson plan[8] creates a scaffolded structure for librarians to use these concepts objective by objective, building a natural structure that combines important goals for students to learn in a fast-changing information landscape.

Takeaways

Since our initial session in fall 2019, and despite three consecutive semesters of reduced instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have taught twenty-eight sessions together, reaching over 275 enrolled history students. Having deployed this instruction model over multiple academic years, we have begun to see the same students for multiple sessions, helping them refresh and refine their research skills while introducing more advanced research topics. For example, students we see in senior capstone courses, who have previously attended our sessions for their research methods course, have a solid foundation of information literacy skills, which allows us to teach more advanced searching tips and work one on one with students to provide more individualized instruction. Feedback from instructors has been overwhelmingly positive, with four faculty members asking us to teach sessions for the same course in subsequent semesters.

Despite our successes, we continue to refine our practice. Having a growing number of instructors who engage with us regularly has allowed us the opportunity to experiment with the flow of the session, try new activities, and swap sources to pinpoint the Special Collections material students find most engaging. Although we believe the ideal format would be multiple sessions in a semester, one focusing primarily on secondary sources and another dedicated to primary source literacy, finding instructors willing to surrender a full week of instruction has been challenging. Although we always ask for student and instructor feedback, we are trying to find ways to build more robust assessment into reviewing our teaching.

Putting the Framework and Guidelines in conversation with each other has allowed us to create dynamic library sessions that can adapt easily to all expertise, research levels, and academic subjects but ultimately create experiential learning opportunities that develop important information literacy skills for students of all majors.

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Tangled Terms

How We Talk About Transformative Agreements

Transformative agreements (TAs) are a relatively new type of journal package that typically includes both access to the publisher's paywalled content and coverage of the open access (OA) publishing fees for an institution's authors. As many libraries have entered into these agreements in recent years, analyses of their "value" are increasingly being presented at conferences and in the literature. However, these assessments often reveal inconsistencies in how TAs are defined. The term "transformative agreement" is broad, encompassing considerable complexity and diversity in terms and requirements. It is important that we have a clear understanding of what is being assessed. Additionally, we must critically engage with the language that publishers use surrounding TAs, not simply adopt or amplify their terms by framing results of these agreements as "cost savings."

We suggest exercising caution when using language that assesses the value of TAs and recommend considering several key questions to guide this reflection: How are terms such as "value," "savings," and "cost avoidance" defined? What indicators are used to assess success? Do these indicators account for administrative costs—such as launching new platforms, developing new processes, or the human labor required to administer these agreements—which are often rendered invisible to authors who benefit directly from not paying an article processing charge (APC)? We contend that in most cases, it is more accurate to describe "value" or "cost savings" as a shift or redistribution of funds. It is also important to recognize that the "value" of TAs can be perceived in other ways, such as eliminating barriers to authors and facilitating more OA content. Here we aim to initiate a conversation among collections librarians and scholarly communications librarians about these issues, with the goal of developing a shared understanding and consistent language for discussing and assessing TAs.

Defining "Transformative" Agreements

It has been argued that, globally, the funds libraries spend on subscriptions are sufficient to fully "transform" the publishing system to support OA services—eliminating the need for authors to pay APCs out of pocket.[1] This idea gave rise to the term "transformative agreement." A TA is generally defined as an agreement "in which former subscription expenditures are repurposed to support OA publishing of the negotiating institutions' authors."[2] Unlike conventional agreements that might include contract elements such as an APC

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discount, an embargo period, or deposit into an institutional repository, TAs aim to convert prior subscription payments into immediate OA publishing. Over time, TA has become an umbrella term that encompasses agreements with a variety of different terms and conditions.[3] Other labels such as "Read and Publish" and "Publish and Read" are also used—sometimes with distinct meanings and other times used interchangeably with the term TA. Choosing not to use the term "transformative" is itself a deviation from Schimmer et al.'s[4] original vision for these agreements.[5]

Regardless of the specific terminology or definitions, the details of these agreements vary widely. For example, some agreements include caps on the number of eligible papers, while others allow unlimited publishing (e.g., TAs negotiated via Canada's consortia, the Canadian Research Knowledge Network [CRKN]).[6] Whether or not gold journals are covered in the agreement can also vary, as do the types of works (research articles, review articles, case studies, letters to the editor, commentaries). How the terms and total cost of each negotiated contract are determined and whether previous APC spend is factored in vary widely and is not standardized.

This diversity of TA models matters when it comes to any assessment, evaluation, or discussion of TAs. For instance, whether gold journals are included becomes significant when discussing the financial impacts of a particular agreement because many commercial publishers provide a lower APC discount for gold journals (e.g., 10–20 percent) than hybrid journals (e.g., 100 percent; see CRKN's Read and Publish agreements).[7] Given these variations, broad generalizations about the benefits and drawbacks of TAs should be made with caution. Aggregating and analyzing data from agreements with different terms and conditions is unlikely to yield meaningful conclusions regarding their impact. Still, the complexity should not deter analysis or discussion. It simply underscores the need to clearly articulate these differences and account for them in the framework for evaluation.

Defining "Savings," "Value," and "Cost"

Just as there is no single definition of a TA, there is no consensus methodology for measuring the "savings" achieved or the publication "costs" involved in TAs. Traditional subscription models have clear metrics, such as comparing a package price to individual list prices or calculating cost per use (the price divided by the number of uses).[8] However, these metrics cannot be applied with hybrid journals that combine both closed and OA articles or with TAs. Ironically, institutional usage of articles under a TA can now only be accurately measured for paywalled content. As a result, libraries and consortia are grappling with how to assess and analyze their value, requiring reevaluation of assessment models and practices.

In the context of collection assessment, "savings" typically means actual dollar amounts, thereby defining value in financial terms. Although TAs clearly reduce or eliminate APCs for authors, the reductive nature of defining savings and value in this way both simplifies the complexity of OA benefits and impacts and obscures the costs. The idea that TAs produce savings due to the elimination of APCs assumes authors would pay APCs in full if such an agreement did not exist. However, the cost reduction associated with TAs may incentivize publication in hybrid journals at the expense of other models such as diamond, which charge no APCs, or fully gold journals, which frequently charge a lower APC than hybrid journals.[9] The impact of the TA on author publication behavior is still not well understood, although studies are beginning to illuminate some findings.[10] Are authors intentionally seeking out

journals covered by TAs? What role does an APC waiver play in determining where to publish? And how does the choice of corresponding author, generally used to determine TA eligibility, factor in? More work needs to be done on the relationship between TAs, APCs, and author behavior to better understand how APC waivers might actually translate into savings.

APC pricing lacks transparency. This is an important factor to consider when discussing APC cost savings. As Butler et al.[11] demonstrated, there is a large amount of variability in terms of APC list prices, even across journals for the same publisher, suggesting that prices are not cost based but driven by other factors. Although delving into the cost drivers and market conditions related to APCs is beyond the scope of this piece, it is worth noting that the savings being asserted are more akin to the traditional big deal argument made by publishers, namely, that the big deal represented massive savings compared with the aggregated list subscription prices for the included journals.[12] It is necessary to critically examine any argument of cost savings for TAs that depends on APC list prices because these prices are set by the publisher, often without any perceivable standards or transparent framework around cost breakdown (i.e., how the APC is calculated based on elements like production). Efforts have been made to promote transparency, as seen in the Open Access Toolkit's[13] approach to categorizing the costs of running a journal or early initiatives like the Fair Open Access Alliance,[14] which provided a framework through a breakdown of publishing services and fees. More often, however, publishers do not follow any standardized approach; instead, APCs are tied to metrics such as journal prestige.[15] The lack of transparency around these costs preserves publishers' pricing strategies and becomes even more obscured when APCs are rendered invisible to authors via TAs, where the expense is transferred to libraries. This begs the questions: how is "cost savings" defined and what is being "saved"?

As academic libraries grapple to frame the value of TAs as cost savings, the term "cost avoidance" has emerged in the literature.[16] While the term "avoidance" reframes the discussion to emphasize preventing spending rather than reducing existing costs, it is still predicated on the financial value of "avoiding" an APC. Even if cost avoidance is accepted in theory, the question remains: a cost to whom? Libraries—and by extension institutions—frequently bear the costs of TAs, though APC funding can also come from a variety of sources including institutional or individual grant funding.[17] Although researchers manage their own grants, institutional programs are administered by staff, generating hidden labor or technical costs, a burden TAs similarly carry. Although authors may avoid directly paying the APC, TAs impose additional invisible costs on administrative units and libraries through increased staff time. TA administration, like the APCs, is not standardized, and the communication, marketing, institutional verifications (if necessary), troubleshooting the TA pipeline from institution to publisher, and assessment of the agreements are not consistent within the TA model. A 2004 Jisc report[18] on TAs found that these agreements did not necessarily remove administrative burden of managing OA and that TAs remain resource heavy.[19] Libraries more often witness this burden as we support authors who often rely on libraries for guidance in navigating complicated and potentially confusing publisher workflows (e.g., understanding author agreements, choosing open copyright licenses, interpreting jargon). Libraries, then, are inheriting additional administrative activities with these agreements, and we argue that these administrative costs must be considered when assessing a TAs value.

Cost savings or cost avoidance arguments often overlook the growing numbers of third-party technologies (e.g., OA Switchboard,[20] SciFree's Journal Search Tool[21]) and services used

to administer and better manage TAs. As OA models evolve and the number of TAs increases, so does the development of vendor technologies to integrate, evaluate, and assess. Some of these tools operate using open infrastructure (e.g., Research Organization Registry),[22] but most require financial support for access and maintenance (e.g., SciFree, OA Switchboard, Journal Checker Tool[23]). Although initial expenses may be covered by grants or sponsorships, sustaining these tools once funding ends will likely fall to library collection budgets—as is indeed the case now with OA Switchboard.

While TAs are often framed in terms of financial savings, their evaluation must also consider the value of the increased number of articles made openly accessible to the world. TAs clearly advance OA objectives, but value assessment should move beyond calculations of savings based on the number of papers and APC list prices or discounts to reflect the full spectrum of OA publishing practices. When value is reduced to financial savings, OA becomes further equated with TAs and APC discounts, reinforcing many publisher narratives about library savings,[24] overlooking other costs, and positioning TAs as the default path to meeting OA mandates and policies at the expense of more equitable models such as repository-based green OA and no-fee diamond OA journals.

Conclusion

This article is not meant to suggest that understanding the costs associated with TAs lacks value or that reduction in publication costs for the institution or researcher is not occurring. Rather, we argue that when assessing and reporting on these issues, we must carefully examine the assumptions embedded in terms like "savings," "cost avoidance," and "value." Such terminology often reinforces the revenue-driven business models of commercial publishers, rather than reflecting institutional and library OA priorities and the principles of open scholarship.

Framing outcomes as "savings" or "cost avoidance" may obscure the fact that these agreements often redirect funds rather than reduce overall expenditure. This framing also hides the labor behind TAs, the complexities of the systems, and the lack of transparency in the publishing costs. In this context, defining savings, value, and costs must go beyond financial metrics to include equity, sustainability, transparency, and alignment with institutional and scholarly values. Only then can we meaningfully assess whether TAs are truly "transformative"—or simply transactional.

Developing such an evaluative approach that moves beyond traditional subscription methods of assessment will require time to and collaboration across sectors, including infrastructure providers, publishers, consortia, institutions, and authors. However, this work is essential to reclaim the discourse around OA for those most invested in its successful future.

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Becky Croxton and Megan Oakleaf

Pathways to Impact

Anticipating Action in Library Assessment

Making Assessment Matter is a four-part *C&RL News* series focused on maximizing the impact of academic library assessment. The first article outlined four key strategies for launching assessment projects designed for action and impact. The second article focused on enabling librarians to use the results of their assessment projects. This third article outlines eight distinct outcomes or "pathways" that can guide libraries in converting assessment results into action. The final article in the series will explore how to design communications that present compelling results to key decision-makers, providing evidence that drives meaningful change and encourages ongoing investment and engagement in assessment for continuous improvement. Together, the series equips librarians to use assessment to drive meaningful change.

Introduction

A major principle of assessment is the notion of "closing the loop." Closing the loop refers to a key goal of any assessment: not to just **do** an assessment, but to **learn** from the assessment and use that learning to **make decisions** or **take actions** that lead to positive impacts. Librarians engaged in assessment should be open to unexpected results, avoid prejudging the outcomes of an assessment, and stay vigilant against results that confirm existing biases. At the same time, it is helpful to have a general knowledge of common outcomes for library assessment projects. The ability to anticipate likely outcomes, while remaining open to new possibilities, can help librarians **smooth the path from assessment to impact** more quickly and effectively. Understanding how assessment results will be used can help shape the design, guide the framing of user stories or questions,[1] and identify which stakeholders should be involved from the outset.[2]

The sections below highlight **eight distinct outcomes or "pathways"** that can guide libraries in converting assessment results into action. These pathways build on the content in the "Realizing Outcomes of Assessment: Decision-Making and Action Taking" module in the ARL Research & Assessment Cycle Toolkit.[3]

Pathway 1. Inform Changes to Policies, Procedures, or Practices

Library assessments can inform updates to library policies, procedures, and practices, which serve as the operational frameworks that shape how library services, resources, and spaces are offered. Written policies and procedures delineate the levels, limits, and priorities of library services, define employee roles, and model desired behaviors. To remain effective,

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these documents must **continuously be adapted** to meet the growing and evolving needs of libraries, their environment, and their users. Through the assessment process, misalignments between current practice and organizational values, priorities, and aspirations are sometimes revealed. Assessment results can inform library efforts to ensure that these documents and library practices remain responsive, relevant, and aligned with the library's mission and values. Librarians conducting assessments with implications for organizational guidelines can keep the following questions in mind:

- What **policy, procedure, or practice changes** might be needed?
- How can we **prepare staff** for these changes?
- When might **exceptions** apply?

Pathway 2. Prioritize Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Cultural Competence

Assessment results can be used to prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), belonging, and cultural competence in library services, resources, spaces, or the library organization itself. When librarians plan projects that are intentionally multidimensional, intersectional, and inclusive of voices that may otherwise be omitted, assessment results can point the way to making library offerings more **equitable and supportive of previously underserved users**. DEI-conscious assessment projects can help librarians ensure that all user viewpoints inform library offerings, rather than relying on librarian-centric perspectives or assumptions. In contrast, assessment projects that omit DEI, belonging, and cultural competence from study design considerations are likely to have diminished capacity, or no capacity at all, to effect change in these areas. Librarians might prepare for this use of results by thinking through the following questions prior to commencing an assessment project:

- Are we planning a one-size-fits-all approach to our assessment design?
  - If so, what **limitations** does that put on the usefulness of the results?
  - How might we **redesign** the project to be more inclusive of diverse perspectives?
  - How can we ensure that **all relevant participants and communities** are included in the assessment process?
  - How can the library **maintain collaborative action** with those communities after the assessment project is complete?
- If a more refined, intersectional, and multidimensional process were used, how might those results be used to **increase equity and inclusivity** in the library?
  - Do the insights gained from the assessment apply only to this project, or are they broadly generalizable?

Pathway 3. Guide the Reallocation of Resources

Assessment results often highlight the need to allocate or reallocate resources to **align with library priorities and values**, based on a dynamic understanding of services, spaces, resources, and user needs. As indicated in other pathways outlined in this article, insights from assessment can drive changes in strategic goals, DEI initiatives, policies, staffing models, and more, all of which may require reallocating financial and human resources, including staff time and effort.

Library personnel are among the most important resources for creating impact, so any **changes to roles or responsibilities should be supported**. Assessment sometimes uncovers opportunities that lead to shifts in staff effort and attention. These reallocations may feel disconcerting or, in other cases, desired and long overdue. When assessment-driven changes impact job roles, libraries should support their employees with adequate resources, professional development opportunities, and recognition. By planning for these implications early, libraries can deploy financial and human resources where they matter most.

Pathway 4. Shape Revisions of Strategic Plans

Assessment results can help libraries achieve desired outcomes by influencing strategic planning priorities, activities, and processes. Results can shape strategic planning by:

- Demonstrating **progress** toward existing strategic priorities.
- Revealing **new understandings** that can be reflected in new or revised strategic goals.
- Checking **alignment** of stated and tacit goals and intentions with planned activities.
- Demonstrating that a strategic plan, or activities identified in the plan, should be **rebalanced or realigned** for better effect.
- Uncovering **unintended consequences** of strategic decision-making.
- Librarians seeking to explore whether assessment results can be used for this purpose might ask themselves:
- Do the assessment results indicate that **goals** identified in the strategic plan are being realized?
- Are there **new understandings** revealed by assessment results that could be incorporated into strategic planning?
- Could the strategic plan benefit from **rebalancing or realigning** based on new realizations derived from assessment results?

Pathway 5. Inspire Innovation

Assessment results that highlight areas where libraries fall short in supporting their users can motivate librarians to take a **reflective, problem-solving approach** that serves as a catalyst for inspiring innovative ideas about what libraries could do differently or better.

Assessment data can be used to inspire innovation in a number of ways. For example, assessment projects often require clearly articulated outcomes and impacts. Helping libraries define their intentions and evaluate whether those intentions are met encourages librarians to be **explicit about what they are achieving and what they are not**. When gaps are clear, new ideas can emerge to fill those spaces. Indeed, understanding where gaps exist between user needs and library offerings is foundational for making changes, enacting improvements, and fine-tuning library services, resources, and spaces for various user groups. In other cases, libraries might discover that they're meeting or surpassing their intended outcomes. Such a scenario might lead to transferring practices found to be effective in one area to another library offering, adapting effective practices to meet the needs of additional user populations, or systematizing an isolated one-off success into a more intentional, scaffolded program that can "scale up" and serve additional users or make a

longer-term impact. Librarians seeking to use assessment results to drive innovation might ask themselves these additional questions:

- Are we, as the library, the **right ones to make the changes** we've envisioned? Who else might be a **good fit for collaboration**?
- What will doing something new or differently mean that we need to **stop** doing?

Pathway 6. Plan Sunsets

Assessments may reveal that a library service, resource, or space is no longer achieving its intended outcomes. In such cases, sunsetting, or "planned abandonment," can be necessary for a **healthy organization committed to evolving with changing needs**.[4]

Assessment evidence should guide these decisions and ensure coordination with those who provide the offering. Sometimes, **scaling down** to specialized services for targeted populations may be more appropriate than discontinuing services altogether. Done well, planned abandonment illuminates what to reduce, redesign, or retain and offers **opportunities for innovation** by freeing resources for new priorities.

When planning or reporting results that suggest a sunset, consider:

- What data show the **impact** of the offering?
- What would be **lost or gained** by ending the offering?
- Could improvements **delay or prevent** a sunset?

Thoughtful planning, grounded in assessment results, helps libraries make informed choices that balance finite resources with emerging needs.

Pathway 7. Decide Not to Act

Generally, the goal of assessment is to make decisions or take actions that lead to improvements. However, not every assessment culminates in a clear action; sometimes deciding not to act is the appropriate response to assessment results. In some situations, an assessment does not produce actionable results. Perhaps the assessment design omitted a crucial element and the appropriate next step is to **redesign and redeploy an improved assessment approach**. Or perhaps the results are inconclusive, flawed, or unintentionally skewed and the best path forward is to **alter the assessment method, include different constituents, give a process more time** to develop before repeating an assessment, and so on.

Other times, assessments reveal that taking action is not desirable or appropriate because the library offering assessed is functioning well and **does not require any changes**. In all of these situations, it's necessary to **communicate to stakeholders** that the action resulting from the assessment is an intentional decision not to act; not to do so would be to risk sending a message that the assessment was not valuable for decision-making. Deciding not to act is sometimes the best path forward, and, even when an assessment goes awry, learning how to improve an assessment approach for future projects is a valuable outcome.

Pathway 8. Develop New Understandings and Affective Outcomes

In addition to informing decisions, assessment often leads to **new ways of thinking** about users, practices, policies, and even the assessment process itself. These shifts in understanding

can be powerful outcomes on their own. Assessment may also produce **affective outcomes**. Participants, colleagues, and practitioners may develop more positive attitudes toward assessment, greater trust in evidence, increased buy-in on actions resulting from an assessment, and stronger connections with others. These experiences can reduce uncertainty and foster feelings of **agency and empowerment**.

Finally, nearly every assessment enhances understanding of the process, including what worked well, what did not, and where capacity needs to grow. Anticipating cognitive and affective outcomes during planning helps libraries leverage them, reinforcing assessment as a tool for **learning and continuous improvement**.

Conclusion

Anticipating pathways to impact is a key element in ensuring that assessments lead to meaningful impact. **Thoughtful planning**, including **awareness of common uses of results**, increases the likelihood that assessment will spur action in impactful ways. Envisioning outcomes helps libraries prepare to leverage findings, make informed decisions, and avoid missed opportunities for improvement. At the same time, the reality is that **assessment rarely comes to an end**. To gain maximum benefit from assessment, it must be embraced as an ongoing, iterative process that drives meaningful change. The ability to anticipate potential outcomes, while remaining open to new possibilities, can help librarians "close the loop"—a practice essential for both organizational learning and meeting evolving user needs.

The final installment in the series will explore how to design communications that present compelling results to key decision-makers, providing evidence that drives meaningful change and encourages ongoing investment and engagement in assessment for continuous improvement.

Notes

1. Megan Oakleaf and Becky Croxton, "Start at the End: Strategies for Actionable Assessment Results," *College and Research Libraries News* 86, no. 9 (2025): 382–85. https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.86.9.382.

2. Becky Croxton and Megan Oakleaf, "From Subjects to Partners: Centering Participants in Library Assessment," *College and Research Libraries News* 86, no. 10 (2025):449–54, https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.86.11.449.

3. Megan Oakleaf, Emily Daly, and Rebecca Croxton, "Research and Assessment Cycle Toolkit," Association of Research Libraries, December 17, 2024. https://www.arl.org/research-and-assessment-cycle-toolkit/.

4. John Watts and Sierra Laddusaw, "Robust to Overwhelming: A Case Study on Planned Abandonment for GIS Services," *Journal of Library Administration* 61, no. 3 (2021): 347–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2021.1883371.

Annette Day

Progressing Through Groundhog Day

Navigating the Impacts of Campus Turnover on Library Collaborations

Collaboration is inherent in academic libraries, and the relationships and partnerships we develop with our colleagues across the university are central to our effectiveness. Building and sustaining those relationships takes time, energy, and intention, but those efforts can be disrupted when there are shifts in the organizational structure of the university. Turnover in key positions carries the potential of lost institutional knowledge, communication breakdowns, and shifting priorities. Projects may stall, not because they lack vision or merit but because they are not yet embedded in the university's framework and depend heavily on the advocacy of individual champions. When those champions depart and new colleagues fill those roles, the library must reintroduce its expertise, demonstrate its strategic value, and rebuild a shared sense of purpose.

This challenge is a familiar one for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Libraries. In just over a decade, the University has experienced significant turnover in senior leadership, with six vice presidents for research (VPR), four provosts, and five presidents, including interim appointments. Each new leader has brought a distinct set of priorities, often accompanied by ripple effects that reach other administrative roles as teams are reorganized. These changes have been especially impactful as UNLV continues to grow its research enterprise, having relatively recently been designated an R1 institution. The libraries have been actively engaged in a cross-organizational effort to develop services, tools, and infrastructure to support our researchers and have been at the table with partners including deans, the Research Office, University IT, and faculty experts. Although these partnerships have been productive, progress has frequently hinged on individual leaders who can make decisions, drive change, and allocate resources. At this stage in UNLV's development, the institutional scaffolding for a robust research infrastructure is still developing, and individual relationships carry the momentum. This makes them drivers of progress but also precarious points of weakness. When the abovementioned turnover disrupted these relationships, the libraries found itself having to regroup, reassess, and adapt its approach to restart stalled initiatives. One example was a university-wide initiative, led by the VPR, to develop a research excellence program. The libraries had been partners in program development and were committing staff resources in key areas such as research data management, open access, and author identity management. We were also in the process of establishing a shared position with the research office to support its success.

When the VPR left the university, however, the initiative lost momentum. The university redirected funds and resources to other priorities, leaving the libraries to reassess our approach

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to integrating these services and resources into the research life cycle. Without the authority and visibility of a university-wide program, we shifted to a more localized strategy, working directly with individual colleges and departments and using individual library relationships to facilitate introductions and outreach. This approach moved progress forward more slowly, but it allowed us to maintain engagement. With the arrival of a new VPR, we again needed to reintroduce the libraries' expertise and demonstrate our strategic value in advancing the university's research enterprise. This cycle of restarting conversations, revisiting proposals, and reestablishing trust is part of the reality of working in the frequently changing environment of higher education, but it has been frustrating and at times demoralizing for staff, who feel like they are in an endless version of Groundhog Day, where the same ideas and initiatives must be explained and advocated for again and again.

So, what can I share from my Groundhog Day experiences that may help other librarians stuck in this repetitive cycle remain motivated and positive? OCLC's work on social interoperability, defined as "the creation and maintenance of working relationships across individuals and organizational units that promote collaboration, communication, and mutual understanding,"[1] is something that I return to frequently to help. This framing reminds me that relationship-building is not simply a means to an end but is a valuable and tangible outcome in and of itself.

Often, or maybe I'm speaking only for myself, we focus primarily on the outcome a partnership might yield, say, co-developing a research data management program with the Research Office. When that outcome is not readily achieved, we consider our efforts to be a failure and we overlook and/or undervalue the essential "social interoperability" work we undertook. To address this, we should more actively articulate the work of collaboration and relationship-building as a tangible outcome for inclusion in goals, tenure and promotion materials, and annual reviews. We can work with colleagues, supervisors, and our library directors/deans to advocate for this, using the language of social interoperability to define this work. If we are able to make this work more visible and give weight to the ongoing investment of time, effort, and expertise that facilitates successful collaboration, it can help us feel supported and build resilience as we move through Groundhog Day cycles.

Of course, acknowledging the value of this work doesn't make it any less frustrating when projects stall. It's valid to feel drained by starting over, repeating conversations, and reexplaining and readvocating for your work. But it's equally important to remember what is still in place after turnover: the relationships you have with colleagues who remain, the trust you've earned, and the recognition you've built for the library's expertise. These connections can be your entry point to reengage new leadership and continue advancing shared goals. Progress may feel slow—much slower than we would like—but the foundations you've built are still there. Each turnover cycle, although disruptive, also brings opportunities for fresh perspectives, different strategies and renewed energy. And, as in the classic movie *Groundhog Day*, it presents a chance for a "do-over," to sharpen your message, revisit what really resonates, and let go of what hasn't worked.

Note

1. Rebecca Bryant, Annette Dortmund, and Brian Lavoie, *Social Interoperability in Research Support: Cross Campus Partnerships and the University Research Enterprise* (OCLC Research, 2020). https://doi.org/10.25333/wyrd-n586.

The Association of Religion Data Archives. *Access:* https://www.thearda.com/.
The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) "strives to democratize access to the best data on religion." Founded in 1997 as the American Religion Data Archive, ARDA is now a worldwide resource led by researchers from the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland, with funding from the Lilly Endowment and other sources. ARDA draws on the US Census and surveys by academic and corporate institutions and offers researchers tools including MARC and syntax files, a dictionary of religious terms, papers, teaching resources, a question bank, and maps.

The showcase resource is the Community Profile Builder, which allows users to select a region in the United States and see a list of congregations, major religious traditions, and other local factors such as housing and some demographic information. The Data Archive and other sections of the site offer additional data, including the Measurements database, which contains a selection of single-item measures on topics such as abortion, the environment, and belief in God. The Community Profile Builder appears to be limited to US data, and the international coverage is uneven, with some countries well represented and others scarcely included.

Reflecting the broader Western discourse on religion, ARDA's content is predominantly Christocentric, with an emphasis on Protestantism. The Religious Traditions page features eight varieties of Christianity (including three Protestant traditions) alongside single links for Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and an "Other" category. On the Measurements page, many items appear to be framed for a Christian audience. For instance, respondents are asked about their "views of" Buddhists, Jews, and Catholics, but not Protestants, and questions about God include options for belief in a higher power but not for polytheistic perspectives. Exploring further may uncover more useful data on non-Christian practice and belief among the archived materials, but the focus is Christianity. Notably, a Community Profile search of an area well known for its substantial Jewish population, which Google Maps indicates contains more than a dozen synagogues, yielded no results for Jewish congregations.

Despite these caveats, ARDA constitutes a valuable resource, especially for researchers and instructors examining contemporary religious trends within the US Christian context. Academic librarians will find ARDA particularly useful for collection development, research support, and information literacy instruction in religion and the social sciences, given its extensive datasets and instructional resources. — *Maggie Froelich, Claremont School of Theology, mfroelich@cst.edu*

The Asia Society. *Access:* https://asiasociety.org.

The Asia Society website clearly presents its global mission: "Navigating shared futures for Asia and the world across policy, arts and culture, education, sustainability, business, and technology." The site creates a refined, modern tone with a full-width hero slider featuring events and multimedia. The navigation is clearly structured under Programs, Arts & Culture, Education, and Policy, offering intuitive access for academic users—librarians, faculty, and

students—to browse by topic and explore content across disciplines. However, while the visual design is appealing, the large amount of content—events, news, and exhibitions—can make it challenging for users to locate discrete scholarly materials rather than event-driven updates.

From a content standpoint, the site covers three general pillars: Arts & Culture, Education, and Policy. The website offers policy briefs, cultural commentary, exhibition listings, and instructional activities, all of which are useful for academic librarians who are curating resources for faculty and students. These are items of genuine scholarly interest, but they are dispersed throughout various program sections rather than being housed in a discrete, searchable archive. Although there is a search icon on the site, it is a basic keyword search with no academic-level filtering by author, publication type, or date. There is no single repository with rich metadata tagging or subject indexing. Thus, librarians, faculty, researchers, and students must search within individual program pages or general searches to access comprehensive reports and expert analysis, less specific discovery than in traditional academic databases.

In terms of usability, the site employs a responsive design that adapts effectively to different screen sizes, which is useful for both desktop and mobile users. There is readable typography, and sufficient contrast color aids legibility. The site appears reasonably accessible, but more structured headings and clearer image descriptions would likely make the site usable by all users, including assistive technology users.

For academics, the Asia Society site offers valuable curated commentary, global perspectives, and timely observations regarding Asian policy, culture, and education. Adding more detailed citation information and more stable references for significant materials would help scholars incorporate the site's content more effectively into teaching and research. Academic librarians will find the Asia Society website to be a rich resource for curating interdisciplinary materials, guiding faculty and students to relevant policy briefs, cultural analyses, and educational content across Asia-related topics. — *Jia Mi, The College of New Jersey, jmi@tcnj.edu*

Society for Classical Studies. *Access:* https://www.classicalstudies.org/.

The website for the Society of Classical Studies (SCS) has a wealth of information for a variety of audiences, from those with a passing interest in ancient Greek, Roman, and Mediterranean studies to the faculty researcher. Originally founded in 1869 as the American Philological Association, the group was renamed the Society of Classical Studies in 2014. As the primary North American association for Classical Studies, members include universities and college and classical scholars but is open to all with an interest.

The site is regularly updated and provides access to both informal and formal scholarship through their publications. The SCS Blog offers shorter insights into a variety of topics and projects in Classical Studies, although the number of posts to the blog has greatly reduced in recent years. The site also provides access to *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (*TAPA*), a peer-reviewed journal dating to the society's founding. The current issue of *TAPA* is open access, and the site provides contents and abstracts from 1996 onward. Subscribing institutions and society members can access full text for issues from 2000 to present via Project Muse, and back issues (1869–2016) can be accessed by JSTOR subscribers.

General information about the Society is provided, such as goals, governance, and volunteer opportunities. The Society has five divisions including Resources, Communications and Outreach, Education, Professional Matters, and Program. Members of SCS can access membership and annual meeting information and member-only information on the website.

Interested individuals can also access career postings, resources, professional data, awards information, and past annual meeting information. SCS data topics include faculty and curricula, journal data, placement and hiring, among other subjects.

The SCS site is a robust site, offering both information about the Society and a variety of resources for those interested in Classical Studies. With its impressive history and resources, the SCS website is an essential research and professional tool for all levels of academia, especially Classical Studies, while also offering accessible information to the generalist. The SCS website serves as a key resource for academic librarians, providing access to peer-reviewed journals, historical archives, career and curriculum data, and other materials that support research, instruction, and collection development in Classical Studies. — *Krista Godfrey, University of Victoria, kgodfrey@uvic.ca*

Lyrasis, in collaboration with the Big Ten Academic Alliance's Center for Library Programs and the California Digital Library (CDL), has been awarded a $206,886 grant from the Gates Foundation to advance community-governed, open access scholarly publishing in the United States. The grant will support the project Mapping US Diamond Open Access Journals, which will conduct the first national mapping of Diamond Open Access (OA) publishing in the United States. Diamond OA journals are peer-reviewed publications that are free for both authors and readers and operate without commercial profit motives. The project will illuminate the decentralized US landscape of Diamond OA journals, surface sector-wide challenges, and provide actionable recommendations in support of sustainable, noncommercial scholarly publishing. By identifying infrastructure, investment, and policy needs, the project aims to produce actionable recommendations to guide institutions, funders, and coalitions in creating sustainable, field-informed investments that strengthen openness and resilience in scholarly communication. This work builds on the ongoing commitment of the organizations to advance Diamond Open Access in the United States.

Acquisitions

The Hoover Institution Library & Archives has acquired the collection of Colonel Jack T. Young, a legendary explorer, soldier, and diplomat. The collection follows Young's extraordinary path of service from Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Chinese government to the United States and broadens our knowledge about China before the 1949 divide and beyond. The Jack T. Young papers preserve his story through personal writings, correspondence, photographs, official reports, news clippings, films, maps, and printed materials. Together, the materials follow Young's path from explorer to soldier, from mediator to military advisor. They detail his life and illuminate the complex history of China before and after the 1949 divide, as well as the evolving relationship between the United States in the 20th century. Learn more about Young and the collection at https://www.hoover.org/hoover-acquires-collection-colonel-jack-t-young-legendary-explorer-soldier-and-diplomat.

North Korean documents captured by Jack T. Young's team during a secret raid into Pyongyang in the fall of 1950.

The Hoover Institution has also acquired an extensive collection of oral histories related to the Red Scare that were conducted by Bay Area author and Stanford alumnus Griffin Fariello. In the early 1990s, Fariello developed an interest in McCarthyism and the 1950s Red Scare that led him to seek out and interview individuals who had participated in or

been affected by the ideological conflicts of America in the post–World War II era. Fariello's collection includes interviews with notable figures such as Alger Hiss, Ring Lardner Jr., Chris Trumbo, and Peter Szluk. The interviews portray repression and resistance, narrated by veterans from all sides of the Red Scare. Throughout his research for the book, Fariello interviewed blacklisted actors, writers, professors, scientists, schoolteachers, union members, and federal employees. He also conducted oral histories with the FBI agents and informers who worked against the targeted and spoke with men and women who, as children, were caught in the ideological crossfire of the 1950s. More details are available at https://www.hoover.org/news/hoover-acquires-collection-oral-historian-griffin-fariello.