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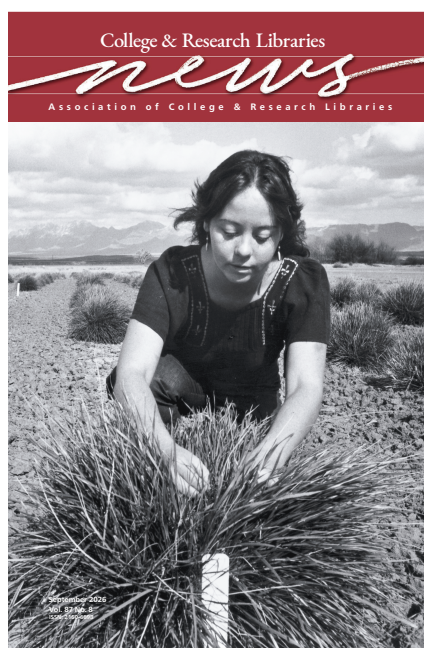
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This month's cover features a photograph by Fred Huff of an unidentified woman inspecting grasses at a New Mexico State University (NMSU) facility, with the Las Cruces' distinct Organ Mountains in the background, circa 1970s. Used at one point for an Agronomy brochure, this photo shows NMSU's commitment to developing and enhancing state agriculture as part of its land grant mission; a mission that is over 100 years old. Learn more about NMSU's extension program (including open access publications) on the university website at <https://extension.nmsu.edu/index.html> and the NMSU College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at <https://aces.nmsu.edu/index.html>.

Image courtesy of the New Mexico State University Library, Archives and Special Collections, UA86-029-Information Services-UA04090003.

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ACRL 2027 Proposals Due October 16

The deadline for ACRL 2027 community chat, lightning talks, poster session, roundtable discussion, and virtual presentation proposals is coming up: October 16, 2026. The ACRL 2027 Conference, to be held April 7–10, 2027, in Portland, Oregon, and online, recognizes the changes shaping our communities and embraces the opportunities they bring. More than just a chance to tackle the important work ahead, ACRL 2027 is an opportunity to connect with colleagues, build new relationships, and expand the skills that support your work. We welcome you to share your academic research and innovative projects at ACRL 2027. The conference offers eight unique session formats designed to accommodate a variety of presentation and learning styles. Whether you're a first-time presenter or an experienced expert, there's a format that's perfect for showcasing your ideas. The complete Call for Proposals is available on the conference website at <https://cvent.me/MOoqWL>.

Penn State Special Collections Announces 2026–27 Research Grant Recipients

The Eberly Family Special Collections Library at Penn State University Libraries has announced the recipients of its 2026–27 research grants. These awards support scholars, students, and independent researchers whose work draws on Special Collections' distinctive collections and advances new scholarship across disciplines. This year's awardees represent a dynamic range of research areas, including art history, immigrant print culture, military memory, inter-American intellectual history, and Black diaspora studies. Their projects highlight the depth and breadth of Special Collections while demonstrating the continued relevance of archival research to contemporary scholarship and creative work.

Each recipient will conduct in-person research using the Eberly Family Special Collections Library's rare books, manuscripts, archival collections, and audiovisual materials. The program reflects the library's commitment to advancing research, supporting emerging and established scholars, and supporting new interpretations of the historical record. Awardees will complete their research by June 2027 and will share their findings through a virtual program open to all in the summer of 2027. Learn more about the program and 2026-27 awardees at <https://www.psu.edu/news/university-libraries/story/libraries-special-collections-announces-research-grant-recipients-2026>.

New and Revised ACRL Standards, Statements, and Frameworks on Access Services, Status of Academic Librarians

The ACRL Board of Directors approved a revision of "A Framework for Access Services Librarianship" at its June 27, 2026, meeting. Developed by the ACRL Access Services Interest Group (ASIG), the revised document now opens with six core concepts ASIG identified as central to the practice of the craft of Access Services Librarianship, informed by a series of open forums and a survey of access services professionals' personal experiences with the existing document.

The Board also approved an updated version of the “Statement on the Terminal Professional Degree for Academic Librarians” and new “ACRL Standards for the Employment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Librarians.” Developed by the ACRL New Roles and Changing Landscapes and Value of Academic Libraries Committees, the “Statement on the Terminal Professional Degree for Academic Librarians” consolidates and updates the prior versions of the “Statement on the Certification & Licensing of Academic Librarians” and the “Statement on the Terminal Professional Degree for Academic Librarians” into a single statement. The “ACRL Standards for the Employment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Librarians” consolidates and updates the previous “ACRL Standards for Faculty Status for Academic Librarians,” “ACRL Standards for Academic Librarians Without Faculty Status,” and the “Standard for the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Academic Librarians” into a single document. All ACRL Standards, Guidelines, and Frameworks are freely available on the ACRL website at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>.

GPO Launches Public Access to 1.2 Million Historic Government Records Dating back to 1895

The US Government Publishing Office (GPO) has launched public access to more than 1.2 million newly available records of historic US government publications, making it easier than ever to find documents published between 1895 and 1976. The records are now live in the Catalog of US Government Publications (CGP) and are available to the public at no cost. This launch improves search and discovery and opens the door to decades of government publications that were previously difficult to locate online. Historic highlights from this launch include hearings on the causes of the 1912 Titanic disaster, “Plant a Victory Garden, Our Food Is Fighting” World War II poster urging Americans to grow their own food to support the war effort from 1943, and 1970 hearings on the Apollo 13 accident. The new records come from the Monthly Catalog of US Government Publications, often called “MoCat.” They were converted from the print catalogs to a searchable form and freely licensed to the public by Proquest, part of Clarivate. For many years, MoCat served as the official list of publications the GPO produced. Published from 1895 through 2004, it helped libraries and the public track government publications. After MoCat ended, the CGP became the primary tool for finding government publications. Although newer publications have long been searchable online, many older publications had limited or no digital records.

APTrust and CLOCKSS Launch Digital Preservation Advocacy Toolkit Project

The Academic Preservation Trust (APTrust) and CLOCKSS are teaming up to build the Digital Preservation Advocacy Toolkit, a practical collection of resources to help practitioners clearly, confidently, and effectively make the case for digital preservation. The Digital Preservation Advocacy Toolkit will be a shared, adaptable set of resources that practitioners and digital preservation advocates, particularly in US academic contexts, can use immediately in presentations, strategic planning conversations, grant narratives, and outreach efforts. Planned materials include executive briefing documents, presentation templates, messaging and communication guides, audience-specific advocacy materials, case studies and examples, strategic planning resources, and outreach and engagement tools. All

resources are being designed with adaptability in mind; practical enough to use across different institutional contexts, and flexible enough to be made your own. More details are available at <https://aptrust.org/2026/06/03/building-the-case-aptrust-and-clockss-launch-a-digital-preservation-advocacy-toolkit-project/>.

Choice and Wiley Publish Report on Transformative Agreements

Choice announces the publication of “Transformative Agreements, Open Access and Research Impact,” the latest in a series of research reports designed to provide actionable intelligence around topics of importance to the academic library community. Through a collaboration between Wiley and Choice, this survey report examines how academic libraries are navigating the transformative agreements landscape, offering insights into their roles, challenges, and progress. Transformative agreements (TAs) have emerged as a pivotal mechanism in the evolution of scholarly publishing, designed to transition institutions from traditional subscription-based access models to publishing open access (OA). As institutions increasingly emphasize research visibility, public access compliance, and global impact, TAs have become a focal point of strategic library planning. This report presents the findings from a survey designed to assess the role that US-based academic libraries play and the sentiments they have toward institutional research priorities, including open access publishing objectives and the adoption of transformative agreements. A generous contribution from Wiley provided funding for this research. “Transformative Agreements, Open Access and Research Impact” has been published under a CC BY-NC 4.0 license and is available on the Choice website at <https://www.choice360.org/research-papers/>.



OverDrive and EBSCO Announce New Integration to Enhance Discovery of Digital Resources in Academic Libraries

OverDrive and EBSCO Information Services (EBSCO) have announced a new integration that connects OverDrive's ebooks and audiobooks on Libby directly to the EBSCO Knowledge Base (KB) and EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS). This collaboration delivers ongoing synchronization of digital library holdings within institutions' Integrated Library Systems (ILS), streamlining workflows for librarians and enhancing discovery for students and faculty.

Through this partnership, mutual customers can now discover Libby content directly within their existing EBSCO environments. The integration simplifies management of digital collections by allowing librarians to select OverDrive collections from the EBSCO Knowledge Base and automatically populate them into their catalogs. Students and faculty

can discover ebooks and audiobooks alongside other library resources and seamlessly link to Libby to borrow content.

The integration ensures that mutual OverDrive and EBSCO customers can connect students to their libraries' full range of ebooks, audiobooks, and videos, all in one place. For librarians, it means fewer steps to manage digital content and more opportunities to highlight the rich media collections that support student success. This initiative underscores both organizations' commitment to empowering libraries with technology that simplifies resource management and promotes discovery. By uniting OverDrive's digital reading and streaming platforms with EBSCO's robust discovery tools, the partnership supports a more integrated and accessible experience.

LibraryOne Launches Open Print Book Marketplace for Libraries

LibraryOne recently announced the launch of an open print book marketplace within TitleSource 360 (TS360). This marks a significant expansion of TS360's role from a trusted acquisitions tool to a centralized, vendor-agnostic marketplace where libraries can discover, evaluate, and order print books from multiple suppliers all within a single workflow. TitleSource 360 has long been a trusted platform for library acquisitions. Under LibraryOne, TS360 is being repositioned as the go-to collection development destination for print books—a single place where public and academic libraries can browse availability, compare supplier options, and place orders without disrupting existing ILS workflows. LibraryOne is also in the process of onboarding an international foreign language supplier, extending the marketplace's reach to non-English language collections. Learn more at <https://www.libraryone.com/products/ts360>. *~*

Tech Bits . . .

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

If you've ever struggled using the built-in screen capture on your computer to send example images or instructions to students or faculty, you might consider installing TechSmith's SnagIt. SnagIt is a tool used for screen capture and screen recording. It comes with editing software that allows you to quickly and easily add text, callouts, or step-by-step buttons to your screenshot. You can also combine multiple screenshots to create a one-page how-to guide. Additionally, SnagIt has a screen record feature that allows you to record your screen and highlight items live—making it much easier to put together video tutorials for your library services. You can even turn short videos into gifs that can be embedded into LibGuides or share your captures to PowerPoint.

Stephanie White, Troy University

TechSmith SnagIt

<https://www.techsmith.com/snagit/>

Policy, Procedure, and Perceptions

Mapping the Sociomaterial in Academic Libraries

The librarian performance peer review process is a cornerstone of professional advancement, with outcomes that carry real weight for all participants. Many academic librarians may recognize familiar, and often stressful, scenarios that recur across institutions.

A senior colleague who is being reviewed has submitted evidence of their effectiveness as a librarian, and a committee of their peers has met with this colleague in advance of the performance review meeting, bolstering their optimism. Everything seems to be working according to the procedures and policies that guide the performance review process, but the colleague becomes visibly upset and surprised with the final report of the committee, finding it inaccurate and unfair. Equally likely is a new librarian who has never gone through a peer review process being confused by the policy documents and unclear on how the process works. They ask their peers what is expected of them and get differing answers. They turn to the policy documents again to see if they can reach clarity, and they walk away with more questions. These are not isolated incidents; they represent a fundamental disconnect in the review process.

The subjective experience of candidates shapes their understanding of the process, and these perceptions of fairness, clarity, and collegiality are carried forward, influencing future reviews whether they participate as a candidate or a review committee member. To understand this disconnect, we can turn to sociomateriality, a theoretical lens that has emerged in organizational studies over the past two decades. Sociomateriality positions the social (e.g., bias, confusion, emotion) and the material (e.g., written policy, procedures, rules) as inherently entangled rather than separate domains.¹ Academic librarian performance review systems aim to evaluate librarians' effectiveness for the purposes of retention, promotion, and tenure. Performance review criteria, standards, and procedures are often regarded as well documented and typically enacted with the primary intention of being objective, evidence based, and repeatable.

We can think of this as *material*. Conflict, emotional responses, or even conformity in the interpretation of review criteria and standards can be considered *social* phenomena. Social phenomena, particularly when review stakes (and emotions) run high, can be organizationally awkward. These may be dismissed as irrational, inappropriate, or antagonistic behaviors that need to be deescalated in order to move forward. But what if the social phenomena of a material-based process were included in organizational assessment? Could that allow

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organizations to improve? Or conversely, what happens to an organization that does not recognize or strategically utilize social phenomena, especially the uncomfortable or awkward aspects? Employees in environments like these may fall to “maladaptive self-regulation strategies” like cynicism and disengagement.² Identifying pain points in the sociomaterial can be an opportunity for the organization to improve processes or, if ignored, can contribute to employee burnout.³

Developing a Visual Methodology

Observing these dynamics across multiple institutions, the authors noted that though material artifacts like policy documents remained stable, their interpretation was in constant flux. To investigate this further, two authors from the University of Utah (UU) sought to capture these observable but undocumented phenomena. They theorized that a visual representation could make the entanglement between the documented process and librarians’ lived experiences tangible. Their initial prototype (see Figure 1) was a mind map on a whiteboard with the material process drawn in black ink (e.g., populations, documentation, reports, votes) and the associated social phenomena overlaid in red (e.g., surprise, worry, consensus).

The result was a fascinating, multilayered insight into their local performance review system. To test the transferability of this idea, the UU authors collaborated with librarian peers at two California-based institutions: San Diego State University (SDSU) and University of California San Diego (UCSD). This partnership led to the design of a more formalized mapping exercise. Using SDSU’s retention, tenure, and promotion (RTP) documentation as a test case, the team developed and refined the SDSU RTP material process map to ensure it accurately reflected the documented process.

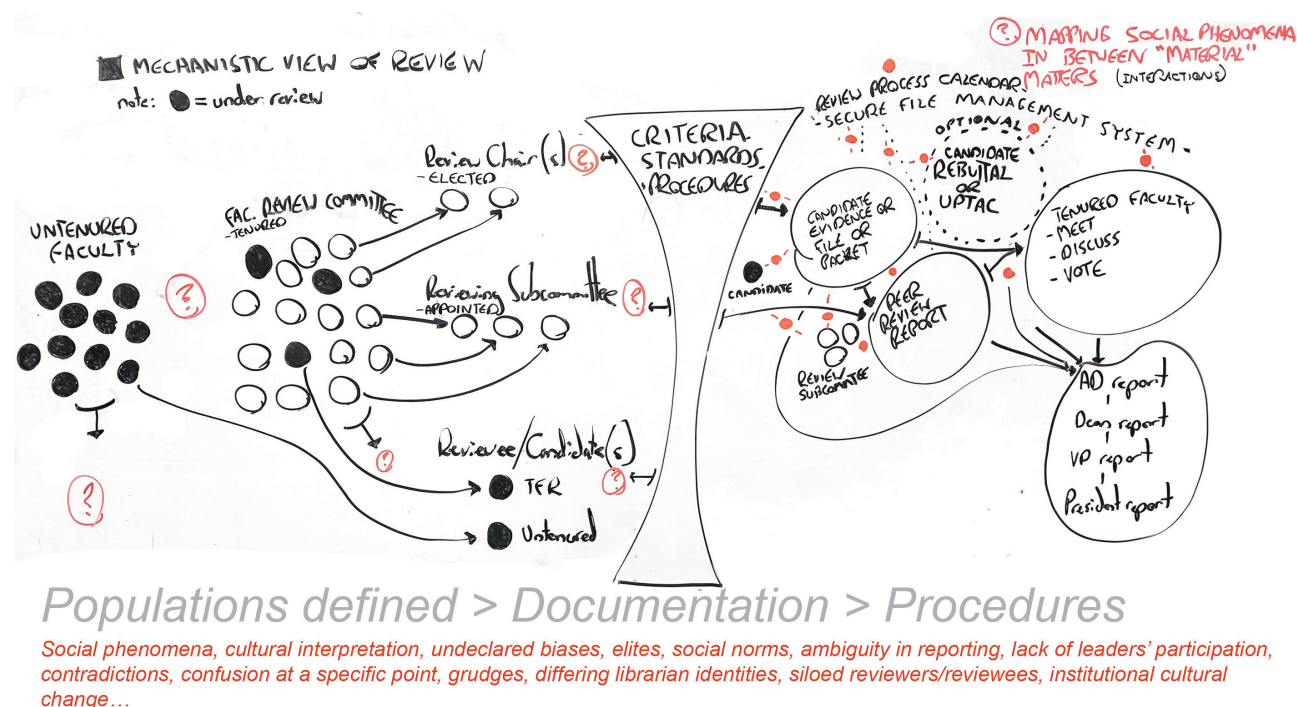


Figure 1. Early conceptual prototype of a whiteboard UU retention, tenure, and promotion (RTP) process map.⁴

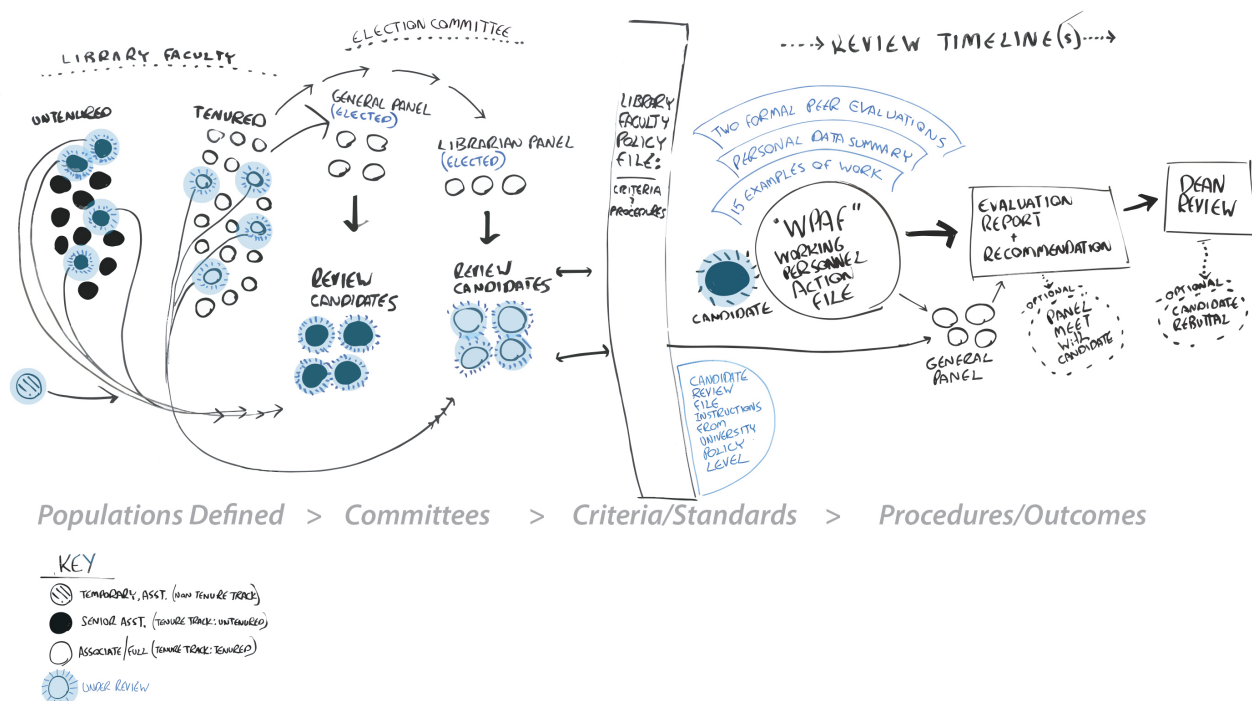


Figure 2. Revised SDSU RTP material process map.⁵

Pilot Study: The Mapping Exercise in Practice

Using the revised SDSU RTP material map (see Figure 2), the SDSU authors conducted a study to test the process of annotating it with social phenomena. They invited eight librarians at various career stages, from pre-tenure to post-tenure. Six librarians (a mix of senior assistant and associate ranks) ultimately participated in the ninety-minute exercise, held in May 2025.

The SDSU authors presented the concept and contextualized the process. Participants discussed what was meant by social phenomena and were shown examples of both the social phenomena and the final map from the UU prototype. A large version of the SDSU map was printed and hung on the wall with an explanation of how it represented the RTP process. The group collaboratively brainstormed a list of social phenomena specific to SDSU. SDSU authors facilitated the brainstorming session by asking: What have you experienced or heard of others experiencing during the review process? Participants were encouraged to engage in free-form brainstorming, initially adding a numbered list of comments to a shared document. They were asked prompting questions, such as:

- Did you feel confusion at any point in the process?
- What about anxiety, anger, etc.?
- Did you feel helped and supported?

What Happened

The exercise started slowly as participants worked to grasp what “counted” as a social phenomenon, but momentum quickly built as they began sharing and validating one another’s experiences. An hour was scheduled for the exercise beginning at 4 p.m., but the participants were so engaged the session lasted 90 minutes and people voluntarily stayed past the end

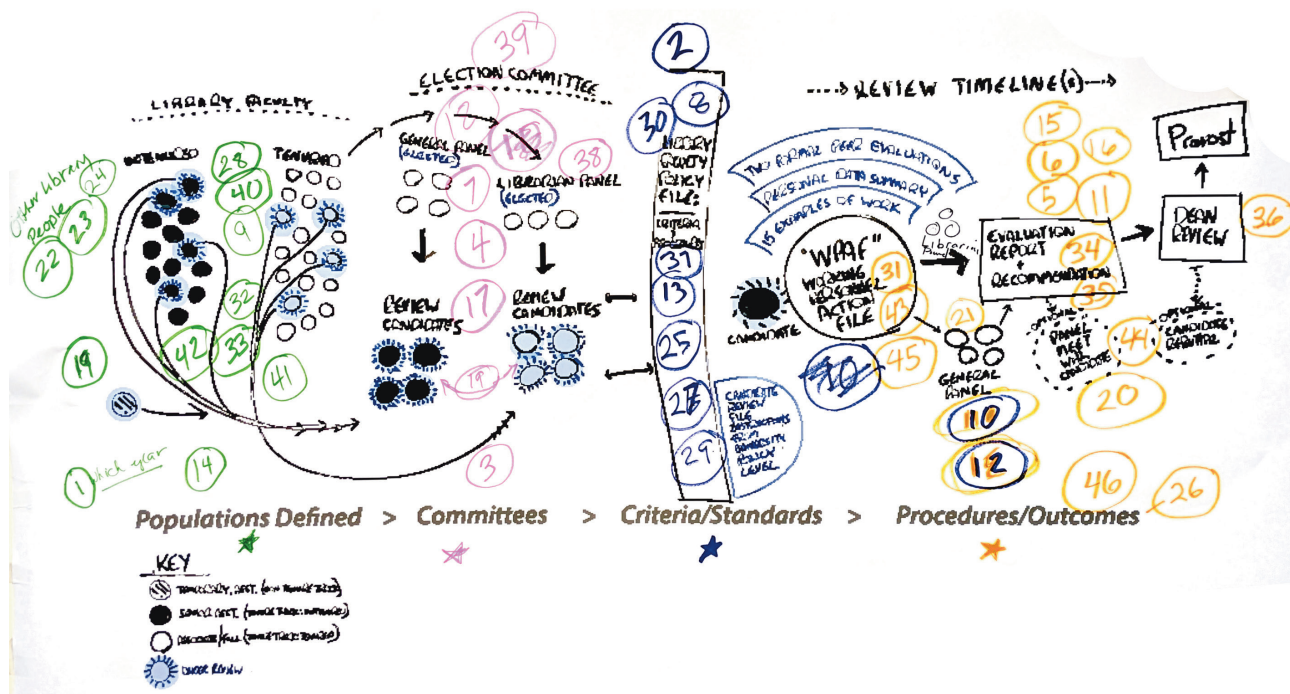


Figure 3. Revised SDSU RTP material process map with social phenomena annotations from the May 2025 exercise.⁷

of their working day. Participants discussed as a group where in the process each numbered phenomena occurred. Often phenomena like confusion or anxiety were noted at multiple steps in the RTP process but about different aspects. Some experiences were unique to an individual, but many of the experiences were generalizable to the majority of participants.

The raw list of phenomena was deduplicated and numbered, resulting in dozens of unique items (see Figure 3). Some key themes emerged:

- **Policy/process ambiguity:** Persistent confusion exists around basic timelines (e.g., “Confusion about if you are in year one or year two of the process”).
- **Undefined language:** Key terms within the policy lack clear definition, leading to subjective and varying interpretations (e.g., “Everyone has a different idea of what *significant* means”).
- **Emergent “mythology”:** Unofficial standards and expectations arise as a result of institutional, professional, or popular culture, creating pressure on candidates beyond the written policy (e.g., “People holding themselves or others to standards that aren’t in the policy file, such as ‘You must publish five articles.’”).⁶

The completed mapping exercise reveals pain points and a lack of clarity in policy leading to significant social phenomena experienced by RTP participants. The exercise surfaced shared but unspoken anxieties and transformed them into potentially actionable data and provided immediate motivation to begin addressing several issues. A limitation of this initial exercise was the phrasing of the prompts, which skewed toward negative experiences. The SDSU authors did not provide as many prompts for positive social phenomena, which might have revealed which aspects of the process work well and foster support and collegiality. Nevertheless, the pilot demonstrated that this exercise could be scaled to include all library faculty, providing a powerful diagnostic tool for mitigating undue stress and improving the overall health of the RTP process.

Broader Applications and Conclusion

Although this pilot focused on peer review, the sociomaterial mapping process holds significant potential as a versatile tool for reflective practice across academic librarianship. By visualizing the complex interplay between social practices and material artifacts, librarians can gain deeper insights into the realities of their work.

For instance, in the context of information literacy instruction, this mapping process could illustrate how instructional design, learning technologies, and student engagement (or disengagement) are intertwined, revealing the reciprocal influences that shape teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes. Additionally, when applied to collection development, the process could help librarians visualize the relationships between user needs, institutional priorities, and the characteristics of the materials themselves, thus informing more strategic and responsive collection strategies. Furthermore, in the area of research support services, mapping sociomaterial entanglements could illuminate how collaborations with faculty, changes in research trends, and emerging technologies interact to impact the delivery of support services, ultimately fostering a more adaptive approach to serving diverse user populations. By extending the mapping framework across these various aspects of librarianship—to name a few—academic librarians can gain deeper insights into the nuances of their practice and enhance their ability to navigate the complexities of the academic landscape.

In conclusion, the sociomaterial mapping process offers a framework for organizational analysis and improvement. By making the observable but unacknowledged social dimensions of our work visible and legible, we create opportunities for open discussion and targeted change. It transforms anecdotal experience into collective evidence, enabling academic librarians to more effectively and equitably navigate the complexities of their practice. *~*

Notes

1. Wanda J. Orlikowski, “Sociomaterial Practices: Exploring Technology at Work,” *Organization Studies* 28, no. 9 (2007): 1435–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607081138>; Matthew Jones, “A Matter of Life and Death: Exploring Conceptualizations of Sociomateriality in the Context of Critical Care,” *MIS Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (2014): 895–926, A1–A6, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26635006>; Paul M. Leonardi, “Theoretical Foundations for the Study of Sociomateriality,” *Information and Organization* 23, no. 2 (2013): 59–76, <https://doi.org/10.6/j.infoandorg.2013.02.002>; Wanda J. Orlikowski and Susan V. Scott, “Sociomateriality: Challenging the Separation of Technology, Work and Organization,” *Academy of Management Annals* 2, no. 1 (2008): 433–74, <https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520802211644>.
2. Arnold B. Bakker and Juriena D. De Vries, “Job Demands–Resources Theory and Self-Regulation: New Explanations and Remedies for Job Burnout,” *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping* 34, no. 1 (2021): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2020.1797695>.
3. Lise A. Van Oortmerssen, Marjolein C. J. Caniëls, and Marcel F. van Assen, “Coping with Work Stressors and Paving the Way for Flow: Challenge and Hindrance Demands, Humor, and Cynicism,” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 21, no. 6 (2020): 2257–77, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-019-00177-9>.
4. Dale Larsen, Lux Darkbloom, Crystal Goldman, Katherine Holvoet, and Rebecca Nowicki, “This Performance Review Is F*cked: Librarian Peer Review through the Lens of Sociomateriality” (Conference presentation, Empirical Librarians Conference, Richmond, VA, May 21–22, 2025).

5. Larsen et al., "This Performance Review Is F*cked."
6. Rebecca Nowicki and Kate Holvoet, "Sample of SDSU RTP Social Phenomenon," May 14, 2025, https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vT_6ym1OmOXKYd0JevTv0Izy7q-MQzr8RjYuj1QU6KfzdcQZxhWoRhObcAcW6ZMbuY9azpf8JZJdCZw/pub.
7. Larsen et al., "This Performance Review Is F*cked."

Ariana Varela and Katie Perry

A View from the Starting Line

Early Tenure Track in Libraries

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. We have been exploring a theme throughout this year, but this topic seems so timely with the beginning of the school year and so many people starting new jobs that this month's issue focuses on life on the tenure track, though we will return to the theme next month for the rest of this year. In this article, two librarians share their heard-earned experiences and wisdom about life on the tenure track as new librarians. — *Dustin Fife, series editor*

Ariana Varela (AV): Katie, you and I are the most recent hires at our library and the only two remaining on the tenure track, while the rest of our colleagues have since received tenure. I have been thinking a lot about the “hidden curriculum” of working toward tenure. While library schools do discuss the various types of librarianship one can pursue (e.g., public, special, school, academic), I never learned about the multiple professional classifications academic librarians experience depending on the institution where they work. Some academic librarians have faculty status and are on the tenure track, some have faculty status but are in a more precarious lecturer or contract role, while others are classified as staff or academic staff. While on the tenure track, librarians are expected to deliver on their assigned duties; pursue service for the institution, the profession, and/or the community; and engage in research (such as publishing, presentations) or creative activities. For me, that is often where the clarity ends. How much service should you aim for? How many publications are enough? How many of those publications should be peer reviewed? Katie, what do you think about the “hidden curriculum” of working toward tenure?

Katie Perry (KP): I agree! Like you, I didn't learn about all the different professional classifications until I was actively applying for positions. When I landed the position here at Cal State LA, I told my sister it was tenure track, and she said, “You're on your way to being Indiana Jones!” Haha. So while there are some wonderful protections in being fully tenured and benefits to being considered faculty, there are so many variables to figure out on the journey. Expectations seem to vary fairly drastically from institution to institution, which is why I feel so lucky to be going through the process at our institution alongside you—we're

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learning together! But back to your point, our retention, tenure, and promotion (RTP) documents clearly say scholarship, instruction, and service are all valued, but nowhere does it say, for example, how many and which type of publications we should have by the time we go up for tenure. It all feels like guesswork. And since we're in this precarious place, we either will take on too much in some areas (haven't we both?) or we'll find out later in our reviews, after we've already spread ourselves thin by what we've chosen to focus on, that we're lacking in certain areas. It's funny because when I was very new, I was so worried about not meeting the hidden expectations that I said yes to everything and volunteered for everything, and only now, two and a half years into the journey, am I learning that I have to say no to certain things so I can remain good at what I'm already doing. Have you experienced anything like that as well, Ariana?

AV: Oh, definitely! Sometimes it feels like “no” cannot exist in my vocabulary while on the tenure track. Due to the nature of my role, I have regular individual meetings with our library dean. Since we are facing staffing shortages and budget challenges, many of those discussions involve assuming additional work and pivoting to ever-changing priorities. Being a woman-of-color librarian, I feel an added pressure to prove my worth and exceed expectations about what it means to be an academic librarian, especially one on the tenure track.

During the RTP process, we are reminded that our reviews are comparative with campus faculty that are up for review at the same time. This adds an extra layer of the unknown—who else on campus is up for review? What do their promotion packets look like? What are we being compared to? While instruction is central to both of our roles, the nature of our instruction work and our additional professional expectations vary compared to our faculty colleagues. Personally, another aspect that makes the tenure process challenging is the fact that I am not *new* to the profession; therefore, I feel like there is a perception that I do not need as much help with workload management or the retention and promotion process. I echo what you shared: This process would be so much harder if I did not have you to lean on and struggle with! Some of our colleagues have kindly informally shared their RTP packets via email as an example. This has helped me think bigger picture about my narrative—how it will be received by those outside of the library and how to best format sections and index evidence.

Katie, do you feel pressure to assume extra service, mentorship, and instruction work? What types of formal and informal support have been most helpful to you as you've worked toward tenure?

KP: I definitely feel pressure to always take on more service and more instruction—more of everything! I think part of it is that there is a genuine need, so it's hard to say no when the work matters and someone has to do it. But I also think there is the quiet (and sometimes not-so-quiet) expectation that you should keep adding to your RTP packet. It can feel like every committee, presentation, instruction session, or project is another opportunity to demonstrate your value, so turning something down comes with the worry that you might be passing up evidence you'll wish you had later.

I've even had conversations with tenured faculty that go something like, “Well, I'm tenured, so I don't really need to do that right now. Do you still need it?” Those moments have

really stuck with me because they reinforce the feeling that, as tenure-track faculty, we're constantly proving ourselves until we aren't. I don't think anyone intends for it to create an imbalance—and honestly, we have a lot of tenured faculty that continue to take on a lot of work (we aren't the only ones!)—but I wonder if it can sometimes result in tenure-track faculty taking on more of the “extra” work while we're still building our records at the university.

Personally, I've found it difficult to draw boundaries around my workload because every committee, project, or opportunity feels like something I can't afford to pass up if it might strengthen my RTP file.

As for support, I completely agree that seeing colleagues' RTP packets has been one of the most helpful things. Those examples make the process feel much more concrete and help demystify what a successful narrative actually looks like. I think that we're lucky to have had several colleagues who have volunteered informal mentorship regarding the RTP process. This mentorship has played a huge role in navigating the hidden curriculum. Having folks who are willing to share their experiences, review materials, and be open to answering questions (e.g., “What category would you put this in?”) really helped streamline my first experiences with putting my RTP packet together. At the same time, I think relying so heavily on informal knowledge networks can create inequities because not everyone has access to those relationships or feels comfortable asking for help. It makes me think there is a real opportunity for our department to make tenure expectations more explicitly transparent through formal mentoring programs or rubrics to ensure everyone has equal footing to help navigate the process successfully. And of course I think it's worth mentioning again that being able to talk through the process with you, compare notes, and have this kind of peer support has made the process feel much less isolating.

Ariana, we both mentioned how helpful it was to view successful RTP packets. If we had a formal mentoring program for new tenure-track librarians, what would you want it to include? Do you think there are other ways our library could make those unwritten rules more transparent? What do you wish was spelled out?

AV: The RTP FOMO is real. The pressure to stand out and prove your worth can also create a culture of competition and feelings of territorialness amongst junior faculty. I think you've articulated an existing tension in many workplaces: Newer colleagues that are on the road to permanency often assume additional labor as compared to their colleagues who have more job security. Competition pushes individuals to work hard, for longer hours, and perform uncompensated service. I feel like the culture of higher education requires this dynamic to continue functioning. But it doesn't have to be this way! You mentioned how both formal and informal structures of support can combat the feeling of not being able to say no and the uncertainty around the promotion process.

My previous institution has a similar promotion process where librarians work toward *continuing appointment*—a tenure-equivalent status. Junior library faculty are paired with a librarian colleague outside of their department who successfully submitted their dossier and were awarded continuing appointment. This mentorship program had a few formal requirements that were helpful in a large and siloed network of libraries: a minimum number of times mentors were expected to meet with their mentee each semester and direct feedback on narrative drafts. While currently we have been fortunate to have colleagues informally offer to provide feedback on our narrative statements, a formal mentorship process would

recognize the service they are providing and allow them to include this mentorship in their own review documents. Katie, I think both of these strategies would be helpful additions to our tenure process. More transparent expectations around publishing and creative activities would reduce a lot of the worry I feel around the promotion process. Creating a more supportive environment around the tenure and promotion process takes a lot of intentional work and requires the time and space to change the existing process.

To close, I'd like to share some reflection questions for readers:

- What structures in your organization's promotion process reinforce uncertainty and/or competition?
- Are there any formal or informal interventions you can apply at your workplace to support junior colleagues on their path toward permanency or increased job security?

We would love to hear what structures of support your organization employs for newer faculty! *~*

Presentation Consultations

Concepts and Practices

For many people, presentation skills are not required, though they are nice to have. It is easier to succeed in both university and post-graduation employment if these skills are acquired early. Increasingly though, there is a rising trend of employers and managers who seek employees with some foundation of public speaking skills and find that recent graduates come out of secondary education without them.¹ And when businesses or employers state they want oral communication to be a skill their employees have, but are unable or unwilling to train their employees to gain these skills, it is left to these employees to learn them either during their secondary education or later in life.²

For those of us who have made it through our secondary education and into our job fields without actively learning oral communication skills, we learned how to present through trial by fire: lots of interviewing, on-the-job learning or training by giving presentations to higher-ups or at team meetings, or just trying to figure out how best to articulate your ideas into a two-minute elevator pitch. But what if there was a way to gain the foundation for these presentation skills while still in university or college? This is often a time and place where the stakes are lower—less chance of losing out on a job, a promotion, or even points on an assignment—and students can receive actual constructive feedback. At the University of Oklahoma (OU), students can visit and use a service called Presentation Consultations@ the Learning Lab, where they can build their public speaking skills with lower stakes and higher results.

When OU first joined the Southeastern Conference (SEC), I started going through the other universities' websites—college, department, and library—to see whether they had a similar service to Presentation Consultations. Of the sixteen schools presently in the SEC, eight of them have some form of presentation or public speaking help that I found. Of the remaining eight schools, five of them have no service available to help students gain these skills and three of them show evidence that such a service, or another way to get help through other types of communication skills, such as writing or researching, used to be available. OU is proud to be part of the eight schools that have a dedicated service to helping students and faculty gain and practice their public speaking and presentation skills, especially in a world where this skill set is growing in demand.

Developing Presentation Consultations

Presentation Consultations are a service for students and faculty who need help with their public speaking skills. This could be for any sort of presentation—individual consultation,

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or a group consultation. Consultations can be about narrowing down a topic from a large amount of research, translating that research into what's needed for a thirty-minute conference presentation, creating slides to highlight the research, or practicing public speaking itself. Presentation Consultations are all about helping everyone with their presentations, no matter what it is or where they are in the process.

OU's Presentation Consultations@ the Learning Lab launched in 2019. This service started as a directive from the senior director for Research and Learning Services in 2018 as part of an initiative to open a service called the Communications Lab to help students with their communication skills. The two librarians tasked with creating this space first conducted an environmental scan of other universities and university libraries to see what was currently being done in order to provide a model for OU's own service. What they found was that the opportunities to learn presentation and communications skills were not equally available at all institutions. When they were available, they were not equally accessible to all students. My own research in the years since the initial study has confirmed this, though many universities provided services similar to Presentation Consultations either in their business or communication departments but not through the library, a centralized location. Because OU already had the Writing Center, the library chose to change focus on this new service from the Communications Lab to Presentation Consultations to highlight helping students with their presentation and public speaking skills specifically.

A Two-Pronged Approach

Presentation Consultations work through a two-pronged approach: individual consultations set up through the library's website and course integrations. Patrons can make an appointment to use the individual consultation service through the library's webpage for any thirty-minute slot throughout the semester. Currently, an hour is held every Monday through Thursday, split into two thirty-minute slots for consultations. If a patron cannot find a time that works, they are welcome to email any of the Presentation Consultation coaches, all of whom are full-time librarians, to seek out additional times that may be available on their schedule. Once a time has been requested, the patron then comes by for their consultation, specifying what they need help with.

Patrons can make as many appointments as they would like throughout the semester, with no limit on how many times they can visit. If they need help with their presentations, Presentation Consultations will be there to assist them. In one successful example of the individual consultation service from 2022, a graduate student came to six consultations in a two-month period for help with his weekly class presentations. With every consultation, we could see that this student was absorbing our feedback and steadily getting better at implementing it on style and readability of his slides. He also improved in his ability to explain his research with and without field-specific jargon.

The second prong of Presentation Consultations is course integration. When we learn of a class that requires presentations as part of their coursework, a Presentation Consultations coach reaches out to the faculty member to discuss the service. This includes how it could benefit the class as a whole, the students in the class currently, and those in the future, as well as how partnering with Presentation Consultations can help the faculty members better support their students. Once this is discussed, the faculty member schedules a time for the Presentation Consultations coach to visit their class and give a workshop on presentations

and presenting, usually tailored to the class, with follow-up consultations for the students as needed.

Course integrations allow students to get a general foundation concerning good presentations through a workshop given to them in class. They can get more nuanced feedback concerning their presentations with the lens of a big class project to help them focus. Students can even practice for these big class projects during their consultations, getting even more directed feedback, similar to individual consultations but in a group setting. Students have noted that they have felt more prepared for their final presentations or big projects after meeting with Presentation Consultation coaches and that they presented better than they thought they would.

With Presentation Consultations and this two-pronged approach, we can reach the greatest number of patrons who need help and do the most amount of good to provide the help they need. Individual consultations are open to everyone, whether student or faculty. Individual consultations are also good for those who need help only once or twice or are prepping for a larger project and need help with a specific part of the presentation process. Course integrations best benefit students of all levels, building not only the confidence to work with a group but also the skills to present with different types of people and presentation styles.

The two-pronged method for Presentation Consultations recognizes that, while the individual consultations are a great way for people who know of the service to use the benefits of a consultation, they are more difficult for students to locate and use. However, working with faculty members to also integrate consultations into courses that require presentations allows us to reach many more students who would otherwise not benefit from this service. We thus seek out course integrations when possible, not only to help students gain these skills but also to show faculty members other services that the library can provide for their classes beyond just books and databases.

A Case Study

Recently, Presentation Consultations worked with the OU Price College of Business to build a new course. I worked with Tom Hooper, senior instructor of finance and director of finance placement and outreach, to build a spring 2025 course called Wealth Management Strategies. It was created with both a short-term goal and a long-term goal in mind. Short-term goal was to get students ready to “present” for their final project at the end of the semester; the long-term goal was to get students comfortable with talking, active listening, and working with clients in their post-secondary education careers. This course was created to be a part of an experimental learning module and certificate that undergraduate students can earn during their time here at OU, with the idea of replicating as much as possible the format for the final presentations from a different experimental learning module, Real Estate Finance.

The integration of Presentation Consultations with the Wealth Management Strategies course entailed the presentations workshop tailored for business students being given in class and then groups of students meeting with Presentation Consultations coaches to get feedback on their slides and public speaking skills throughout the semester, culminating in their final presentation. As this was the first time that Presentation Consultations helped with the creation of a course, both Hooper and I expected bumps along the way, but it was a successful endeavor overall. We are working to improve the course and change how some

things are presented or interpreted—framing the final project as more of a consultation rather than a presentation, for example. But this all comes with the territory of creating something new, keeping the benefit to students foremost in mind.

Conclusion

The main goal of Presentation Consultations@ the Learning Lab is to help build speaking and presenting skills in a place that is available and accessible to all students. However, since joining this team, I have also learned that there is a lot more to presentations than just public speaking. Speaking aides, such as slides, posters, or interactive presentations, can help bring a topic to life in a way that speaking alone does not. How those speaking aides are designed can say a lot about one's field and project. It takes time and effort to gain the skills to produce effective presentation aides, but once crafted, they can be used to great benefit. I myself have learned how to switch between different types of presentations to better help the wide variety of students and courses we reach with Presentation Consultations. This in turn has made my own public speaking and presentation skills better and allows me and my team to better help those who come to Presentation Consultations.

When faculty members and librarians collaborate and work together for the success of the students, everyone benefits. In a world that continues to stress how much communication and presentation skills are needed or required, a service like Presentation Consultations helps students gain what they need to succeed and thrive, both in their schooling and in their careers. Academic departments, the library, and the students all get a chance to see ways to improve and to continue growing. Our program demonstrates not only how to further the success of students through developing their public speaking skills but also to show that these skills can be gained outside the classroom. //

Notes

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Partnering for Impact

How Librarians and Faculty Co-Lead OER Initiatives

Academic librarians have long supported teaching and learning, but involvement in Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives has opened new pathways for leading and supporting faculty development and created opportunities for librarians to collaborate on projects that promote course redesign, instructional innovation, and reflective teaching. In this article, we share how an academic librarian and faculty member have successfully collaborated to lead OER programming at our institution and offer practical takeaways for others in similar roles.

Our institution, Middle Tennessee State University, is a large public research university in the southeastern United States, serving approximately 20,000 students. Our collaboration on OER began several years ago when we were both in different roles, one of us working as a full-time, temporary faculty librarian and the other as an instructional designer. Now in tenure-track faculty positions, we continue to partner on OER initiatives, co-lead faculty workshops, and serve together on an institutional OER committee. This ongoing collaboration bridges the library and academic departments to support faculty innovation in the classroom.

In recent years, our library has intentionally focused on supporting student success through textbook affordability programs. In 2023, we created a new faculty position to lead OER efforts, developing a multifaceted strategy to promote OER adoption and creation across campus. This new OER role complemented an existing Library Textbook Program, which places copies of high-enrollment, general education course materials on reserve. The benefits of OER are numerous and commonly known, including empowering educators to expand their knowledge, foster collaborations, and support student success by making course materials more affordable and accessible. Through OER initiatives, academic libraries not only improve student access and affordability but also strengthen the university's position in the higher education landscape, attract students, partners, and funding and create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment.¹

Our Collaborative Model

Higher education units and departments are consistently siloed; this is more the case with larger institutions but can be seen across campuses. Working together on OER initiatives with faculty and instructional designers allows for collaboration instead of duplication of efforts. Each of us brings unique skills and expertise to the table, and this collaborative work often takes place behind the scenes.

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For example, in the beginning stages of an OER initiative, librarians are often relied on for resource discovery. This expertise is especially helpful as librarians can often identify existing OER, saving faculty significant time and effort that would otherwise go into creating new materials. Librarians also bring a campuswide perspective on textbook affordability, situating OER within broader institutional priorities and serving as connectors, linking faculty to instructional designers and other campus partners. Additionally, librarians provide key expertise and support related to copyright and open licensing.

Faculty can provide subject-matter expertise, knowledge of common trends in areas of focus, and an awareness of the learning objectives for courses. They know what the students really need to know to be successful on a topic, course, or career, and instructional designers know the technology and often have a foundation in student learning. Instructional designers contribute to the alignment of content and activities with an outsider perspective to learning possibilities. For example, a “read this, write this, and take this test” structure does not tend to promote active learning.

Working with instructional designers can also provide a level of support in technology by creating H5P activities, enhancing accessibility, and promoting multimedia and multimodal learning resources. Often, faculty are unaware that potential OER is created every day through their lectures, presentations, resources, assessments, and learning activities. The instructional designer can work with faculty on enhancing these works and supporting the instructional technologies needed to create and openly share new resources.

By partnering across these roles, institutions allow for learning between professionals and reduce some of the anxiety associated with OER creation. Working closely with instructional designers or faculty who have previously created OER texts also addresses this concern.² As supported projects move forward and become visible, other faculty see what is possible and feel more confident engaging in OER work themselves, ultimately experiencing the benefits made possible through library and institutional support, including grants and other resources.

Designing OER-Focused Faculty Development

Keeping in mind that instructors have a lot on their plates, we intentionally designed our OER faculty development to be multipronged, offering workshops, faculty learning communities, and individualized support. This approach lets us meet faculty where they are and cast a wide net, accommodating different levels of interest and capacity for taking on an OER project.

OER Workshops

We co-lead a variety of OER workshops with the goal of building faculty confidence and capacity. We have co-facilitated three targeted workshops: Deep Dive into Creative Commons, Accessibility in OER Design, and Finding OER for Your Course. These sessions introduced key concepts in open licensing, inclusive design, and resource discovery while also encouraging faculty to reflect on how OER can align with their course goals. The workshops were offered through our faculty development center, which coordinated marketing, managed registration, and provided workshop space. Each session drew faculty from a range of disciplines. Recordings of each workshop were posted on both the library’s YouTube channel³ and the university’s OER website.⁴ Additionally, partnering with our faculty development center helped position OER as a campuswide initiative rather than a

library-only initiative. For faculty interested in a deeper engagement with OER, the librarian also facilitated a yearlong faculty learning community that met monthly.

OER Project Support

In addition to structured programming, we each support numerous faculty OER projects, providing guidance on licensing, copyright, project planning, accessibility, and publishing platforms. These efforts have been supported through statewide OER grants, grassroots projects, and a new internal funding opportunity funded by the Office of the Provost and administered by the library. The librarian, Ginelle Baskin, serves as the main administrator and support for the program, and the faculty member, Kim Godwin, has helped shape the program and served on the review committee. This incentive-based approach aligns with research showing that faculty are more likely to engage with OER initiatives when offered resources and guidance rather than mandates.⁵ In its first round, the grant funded three faculty-led projects to adopt, adapt, or create OER, and a second round launched this fall funding six new projects.

Institutional OER Committee

We also serve together on an institutional OER committee to expand the use of open resources, promote their value to the university community, and support policy development and outreach. This committee provides a platform for campuswide collaboration that aligns with institutional goals around equity and access. Baskin serves as a co-chair of this committee, and Godwin serves as a committee member. This committee originated as a “task force” within the library that later evolved into a subcommittee of a larger, campuswide committee under the Office of the University President. This arrangement has helped raise the visibility of the OER initiative on our campus and has provided a platform for sharing updates before a wider university audience, including high-level administrators. Specific committee activities include supporting the implementation of an OER grant program, improving OER course marking guidelines, planning Open Education Week programming, and promoting a student course materials survey.

Practical Takeaways

Based on our experience, we offer the following practical takeaways for supporting collaborative OER initiatives.

- *Don't go it alone. Build a cross-unit team.* By partnering with faculty colleagues, instructional designers, and other librarians, you bring complementary expertise to the process. Being an expert in a field of study does not necessarily equate to expertise in all areas, but there are resources to assist through other faculty and educational technologists.
- *Small steps can lead to a big impact.* Begin with one class and one topic, see what is already available, and begin there. This will help determine the gaps in resources that need to be created rather than adapted or curated. Remembering that all content does not have to be original supports the efforts of other researchers and authors for a more inclusive educational experience.
- *Leverage existing faculty development structures.* For example, partner with existing workshops, grant programs, or learning communities on your campus. This helps normalize the practice and build sustained interest.

- *Offer consistent programming to normalize OER.* Institutional programming should not be a one-and-done effort but rather an ongoing intentional process. For instance, by attending new faculty orientation, faculty senate meetings, tabling at campuswide events, and advertising your successes and wins, you keep OER in the spotlight. Additionally, consistently offering workshops, trainings, or writing retreats promotes long-term support.

Conclusion

OER can serve as a powerful entry point for librarians to collaborate on—and lead—faculty development initiatives and cross-campus partnerships. Our collaboration demonstrates how shared leadership across academic and library boundaries, grounded in complementary expertise, can support faculty in making pedagogical changes that advance equity and student success. Through these initiatives, our faculty have adopted zero-cost materials in more than 280 courses, reaching 36,000 students and saving approximately \$3.6 million in textbook costs.⁶ We hope our experience offers a replicable model for others seeking to build bridges between libraries and faculty development in support of open, inclusive education. //

Notes

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Sarah Morris

Putting Algorithmic Literacy into Conversation with the ACRL Framework

Insights, Ideas, and Innovations

It is increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to unpack and examine our information environments without considering the role that algorithms play. Algorithms are a set of instructions to accomplish a task.¹ But algorithms are not neutral. Rather they are influenced by the humans who design them and the data used to train them.² And these algorithms, which are shaped by human biases and decisions, are central to the way that our information environments function, from social media sites to search engines to generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) chatbots. For good or ill, algorithms increasingly shape and mediate our experiences with information. What we see, discover, share, communicate, and even what we ask can all be influenced by omnipresent algorithms. As a result of the prevalence of algorithms and the power they hold, we are seeing the development of algorithmic literacy frameworks that seek to empower people to be more aware of algorithms, which can fade into the background of our online experiences, and to critically engage with algorithms.

Algorithmic literacy is developing alongside emerging conceptions of AI literacy and evolving conceptions of information literacy. With a focus on the ways that algorithms influence our experiences with information, algorithmic literacy provides a lens for thinking critically about the systems, structures, and power dynamics that shape our information environment. Algorithmic literacy's focus on systems thinking, individual agency, and empowerment echoes many of the strengths and approaches found within the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy. I believe that by putting algorithmic literacy into conversation with the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education, we can explore ways to equip learners to think critically about the technologies we use for search, discovery, and communication. As librarians, we can use reflective practices, participatory learning, and pedagogical approaches that center the experiences of learners as consumers and producers of information in increasingly complex online spaces. In our current information landscape, to be information literate means to be algorithmic literate.

Understanding Algorithmic Literacy

Algorithmic literacy frameworks and definitions tend to mirror the categories and skill areas of related literacies like information, media, and AI literacy. Leyla Dogruel, Philipp Masur, and Sven Joeckel define algorithmic literacy as “being aware of the use of algorithms in online applications, platforms, and services, knowing how algorithms work, being able

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to critically evaluate algorithmic decision-making as well as having the skills to cope with or even influence algorithmic operations.”³ Meanwhile, Susan G. Archambault focuses on three key elements essential for improving a learner’s algorithmic literacy: understanding how algorithms curate information, understanding privacy risks, and understanding algorithmic bias.⁴ Michael Ridley and Danica Pawlick-Potts propose a more critical algorithmic literacy that considers how algorithms are cultural “sociotechnical systems” and how algorithmic literacy must “encompass multiple perspectives and contexts.”⁵ This emphasis on critical engagement, contextualizing algorithms, and taking action to exert influence or control over algorithmically driven information systems also puts algorithmic literacy into conversation with approaches to critical information literacy.

Within algorithmic literacy there is a particular focus on the need for a deeper awareness of algorithms, including how algorithms work and the context in which we experience them. This speaks to the opaque and black-box nature of many of our modern information environments and the way that algorithms can fade into the background, often by design. The unobtrusive nature of algorithms can be seen as ideal from a design or user experience perspective, but this tendency toward a smooth and seamless user experience can make critical engagement difficult.⁶ How can you question what is outside of your awareness? In a way, algorithms themselves pose a hurdle for the development of a deeper literacy because they are so often experienced without being acknowledged, much less understood.⁷ As such, many conceptions of algorithmic literacy emphasize the need for awareness and understanding of algorithms as a prerequisite for deeper critical thinking, evaluation, informed decision-making, and even activism.⁸

Control, Fatigue, and Taking Back Power

Much of the discourse surrounding algorithmic literacy focuses on issues of control, including the control and influence that algorithms can exercise on individuals, and on issues of empowerment, where individuals can develop skills to better navigate algorithmic environments. As Ridley and Pawlick-Potts note in their work, algorithmic literacy provides concepts that we need to examine how algorithms exert control over people and to consider how we can empower people to take control back and better manage algorithmic systems and environments.⁹ This discourse also speaks to the ideas of individual agency and individual empowerment that are threaded throughout the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy. Like the Framework, algorithmic literacy emphasizes the importance of equipping people to take action in information environments, which are increasingly shaped by algorithms.

While both the ACRL Framework and algorithmic literacy emphasize the value and importance of individual empowerment, additional emerging concepts around algorithmic power and algorithmic cynicism also highlight the challenging emotional and psychological experiences that people can have with algorithms and how this can affect their ability to critically engage with them and their information environments writ large. These concepts of algorithmic power and cynicism, and emerging algorithmic literacy frameworks, help articulate the growing importance critical reflection and of unpacking our complex and often emotional experiences with algorithms.

Algorithmic power describes the power and often outsized influence that algorithms hold over our society and culture, including reshaping how our social, economic, and cultural

systems work.¹⁰ Algorithms greatly influence how we engage with information and, as a result, influence everything from political discourse to cultural trends to how we behave, communicate, make decisions, make purchases, or just engage with the world. And the algorithms themselves, often operating without transparency or accountability, are of course developed by and controlled by individuals and corporate entities that have amassed an astonishing amount of wealth and influence.¹¹ Algorithmic cynicism, meanwhile, describes the feelings and reactions people are having in these algorithmically controlled information environments, where algorithms hold a great deal of sway and influence.¹² These feelings of fatigue, burnout, or cynicism can result from feeling disillusioned about how algorithms work and how much power they exert. What is the point of trying to understand or control these systems that appear opaque or uncontrollable? It can be challenging for individuals to take action in our modern information environments. But recognizing and unpacking these emotional and psychological experiences with algorithms can empower people to better understand and engage with our algorithmically controlled information environments, goals expressed by both the Framework and algorithmic literacy.

I am interested in the way that many conceptions of algorithmic literacy emphasize the importance of empowerment and even potentially influencing algorithmic systems. In light of research on phenomena like algorithmic cynicism or fatigue, or studies showing how wary people are about emerging technologies like GenAI,¹³ this focus on empowerment, engagement, and action seems increasingly significant. Algorithmic literacy, with its emphasis on awareness, understanding, and critical engagement, focuses on equipping people to not only navigate our information environments through skills such as evaluation but also to make choices, identify issues, and potentially take action to change or improve algorithmically driven information environments.

In many respects, algorithmic literacy helps center our focus on the power dynamics inherent within our information environments and gives us language and approaches to address those dynamics via a focus on individual empowerment and decision-making and critical reflection and engagement. Amidst information environments that can feel overwhelming or draining, and the rise in GenAI technologies that are challenging human creativity, interaction, and knowledge construction, I feel that the Framework and emerging understandings of algorithmic literacy both provide a welcome focus on the importance of individual agency. More broadly, if we see information literacy and the skills and dispositions within the framework as vital to civic life and our ability to be informed and to communicate, then it seems that algorithmic literacy is an increasingly key skill set for informed, engaged, and active citizens.

Connecting the Framework to Algorithmic Literacy

The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy includes grounding theories and approaches that lend themselves to examining and critically engaging with the algorithms that are an intrinsic part of our information environments. In many respects, the language, concepts, and ideas found within algorithmic literacy draw upon the ideas in the Framework and broader conceptualizations of information literacy.¹⁴ For example, algorithmic literacy encourages people to develop an awareness of algorithms, which speaks to ideas of metacognition and metaliteracy. Metaliteracy and metacognition are found throughout the Framework, and these concepts emphasize the need for individuals to develop an awareness

of their own thoughts, actions, and learning, resulting in individuals who can engage in critical self-reflection.¹⁵ This idea of awareness—whether of how algorithms work, of our reactions to algorithmically driven content, or of the roles we play in our information environments—is central to both algorithmic literacy and to the Framework.

Additionally, researchers have identified major psychological and behavioral components that define our experiences with algorithms and algorithmic literacy, including curiosity, motivation, control, and practice, which all equip and empower users to better understand and engage with algorithms as information consumers and producers.¹⁶ These dimensions resonate with the dispositions found within the Framework, speaking to shared values and goals within both emerging definitions of algorithmic literacy and information literacy.

For each Frame, we can pose questions about and consider the role algorithms play in shaping different aspects of information literacy and our information environments.

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual – How do algorithms construct our experiences with information and shape our understanding of authority?
- Information Creation as a Process – How do algorithms shape the ways we construct meaning and communicate ideas?
- Information Has Value – How do algorithms shape our understanding of what is valuable or worth attention online?
- Research as Inquiry – How do algorithms influence the questions we ask?
- Scholarship as Conversation – How do algorithms influence our online conversations and shape the way scholarship is discovered and shared?
- Searching as Strategic Exploration – How do algorithms help or hinder our ability to find information?

Algorithms arguably play a role in every area of the Framework, from our ability to find, evaluate, and share information with others. A focus on algorithms can enhance and deepen various aspects of the Framework and ensure it remains responsive to and rooted in our evolving information environments. And as we see a rise in AI literacy, algorithmic literacy can provide a bridge to connecting new conceptions of AI literacy with existing understandings of information literacy.¹⁷ Algorithmic literacy frameworks provide a way to explore the implications of algorithms on our information environments and on our relationship to information. But just as importantly, algorithmic literacy asks us to consider how we discover, evaluate, and communicate in environments dominated by algorithms.

Systems Thinking, Reflection, and Student-Centered Pedagogies

Alongside a focus on individual agency and empowerment, algorithmic literacy also centers a combined focus on the broader systems and structures that shape our information environments with the deeply personal and individual experiences we all have with algorithms. In a teaching guide on GenAI from Purdue University, algorithmic literacy is described as “an evolutionary step in our approach to information literacy and learning. It shifts attention to understanding and evaluating the algorithmic systems themselves that now determine which information we see, as well as how those systems impact human actions.”¹⁸ Interrogating both the structural and individual aspects of algorithms is a facet of algorithmic literacy that I feel opens the door for pedagogies that center critical engagement, reflection, and empowerment.

This focus on systems (and the impact these systems have on individuals) is something DeVito explores by describing algorithmic literacy as “the capacity and opportunity to be aware of both the presence and impact of algorithmically-driven systems on self- or collaboratively-identified goals.”¹⁹ This focus on a systems-level awareness as a component of algorithmic literacy also appears in research from Annemaree Lloyd, who notes that though “algorithms are generally viewed in terms of their capacity to address and order information systems,” they have the potential to disrupt how we access, understand, and experience information.²⁰ The attention paid to systems and structures, and the power dynamics that result from those systems, is a unique aspect of algorithmic literacy as well as a focal point that can be put into conversation with individual experiences with and reactions to algorithms.²¹ Overall, this focus on both systems-level understanding and individual human experiences can open the door for pedagogical approaches that align with the goals we see in the Framework, which places a focus on our broader information ecosystem and how individuals can actively engage in that ecosystem.²²

- Reflective practices – A focus on algorithmic literacy can create opportunities for activities where learners compare their experiences with different information-seeking tools and reflect on the role algorithms play in those experiences. You can see this concept emerge in the Research as Inquiry frame, particularly the dispositions around maintaining both an open mind and a critical stance, seeking multiple perspectives, and considering information seeking as open ended.²³
- Evaluating systems and tools, not just output – Algorithmic literacy can deepen lessons on skills like source evaluation by inviting an evaluation of the tools and systems we use to find information. Purdue’s teaching guide on GenAI suggests activities where learners ask critical questions of the tool they are using, such as an AI chatbot or a search engine, to consider biases, how the tool works, whether the tool is appropriate for their information needs, etc.²⁴ You can see this concept at play in the Authority Is Constructed and Contextual frame within the dispositions around asking questions, adopting a skeptical stance, and being willing to question authority.²⁵
- Lived experiences with algorithms – The prevalence of algorithms in our daily lives can provide opportunities for activities where learners explore and reflect on their daily experiences with algorithms and to connect those experiences to their experiences with scholarly research. For instance, Samokishyn outlines activities where learners explore targeted ads and their experiences with shopping sites like Amazon to illustrate the effects of algorithms and explore issues with privacy and bias.²⁶ This concept emerges in the Scholarship as Conversation frame, including the dispositions around recognizing the role individuals play in these conversations as both contributors and consumers, as well as the Authority Is Constructed and Contextual frame, where individuals are encouraged to reflect on their own biases.²⁷

Algorithmic literacy frameworks, which focus on skills like awareness, understanding, evaluation, reflection, and individual action, can be used to complement or deepen information literacy lessons on topics like source evaluation, searching, and the value of information and introduce critical perspectives and a focus on power dynamics into information literacy lessons.

Conclusion: Algorithmically Centered Information Literacy

Information literacy must evolve with our information environments. Our modern information environments are heavily influenced by algorithms, and we are increasingly seeing the effects of GenAI, another technology shaped by algorithms, on our information environments. As we seek to understand this new AI landscape and to bring AI literacy into conversation with information literacy, I think we can use algorithmic literacy to uncover and explore connections among various literacies, to evolve our understanding of information literacy, and to take a broader view of our increasingly complex information environments. Algorithms can serve as a linchpin to help us critically examine and engage with our information environment, from AI chatbots to social media to search engines to databases. Ultimately, algorithmic literacy can serve as a component of a broader information literacy to allow for a deeper exploration of what shapes our information environments, how we engage in those environments as information consumers and producers, and what it means to be information literate. *~*

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Becky Croxton and Megan Oakleaf

AI as Assessment Partner

Practical Applications and Critical Cautions, Part 2

Making Assessment Matter is a five-part *C&RL News* series focused on maximizing the impact of academic library assessment. The first article introduces strategies for launching assessment projects designed for action and impact. The second explores how centering participants and stakeholders increases the likelihood that assessment results will be used. The third article identifies common pathways for translating assessment results into decisions and action, and the fourth focuses on communicating evidence in ways that resonate with key audiences and support meaningful change. Part 2 of this fifth and final article explores how AI can be incorporated thoughtfully into each stage of the assessment cycle without displacing practitioner expertise. Together, the series equips librarians to use assessment as a driver of learning, decision-making, and continuous improvement.

Introduction

Academic library assessment practitioners have much to consider, starting with the end in mind to ensure assessments lead to action; centering participants to generate meaningful, collaborative evidence; anticipating pathways that connect findings to decisions; and communicating results in ways that reach the right audiences and inspire change. Each of these practices requires knowledge, skill, and professional judgment. Into this established and evolving practice, artificial intelligence (AI) has become impossible to ignore. Part 1 of this article (*C&RL News*, July/August 2026) addressed two foundational questions: What **guardrails** are necessary to ensure that AI supports, rather than undermines, trustworthy user-centered assessment practice and what **institutional opportunities and risks** should practitioners keep in mind as they incorporate AI into their assessment work? This second part, grounded in ALA's Guidance on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Libraries,¹ ACRL's recently approved AI Competencies for Academic Library Workers,² and ACRL's Proficiencies for Assessment in Academic Libraries,³ takes up the remaining question: In what ways does it make sense to incorporate AI into library assessment practices across the **assessment cycle**?

Practical Applications across the Assessment Cycle

Many conversations about AI in assessment focus on what an AI tool can generate, analyze, or summarize. Perhaps a more productive framing is to consider how AI can **support**

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specific moments in the assessment cycle, an approach that aligns with the Proficiencies for Assessment in Academic Libraries, which emphasize intentional, reflective, and action-oriented assessment practice. Rather than treating AI as a general-purpose solution, this section situates AI use within five key phases of the assessment cycle: (1) choosing focus and setting goals; (2) gathering and analyzing data; (3) making decisions; (4) sharing results and implementing change; (5) revisiting goals; and beginning the assessment cycle again, as illustrated in Figure 1.⁴ Organizing AI-supported assessment in this way keeps the work **grounded in purpose, prevents distraction, and reinforces the foundational role of assessment**: “to learn



Figure 1. Assessment Cycle. (Adapted from Maki 2002 by Croxton and Oakleaf.)

from the assessment and use that learning to make decisions or take actions that lead to positive impacts.”⁵ Across the assessment cycle, AI is most effective when it is leveraged as a “human in the loop”⁶ thinking partner to improve efficiency and accelerate thinking,⁷ surface patterns or gaps worth investigating, and support communication while leaving framing, interpretation, and decisions firmly in human hands.

1. Choose Focus and Set Goals: Using AI to Support Purposeful Planning

An important first step when planning an assessment is to “start at the end,” with attention to the decisions that will be made and the actions they are meant to support. As outlined in the first article in this series, one practical way to do this is by expressing an assessment’s purpose as user stories that clarify who needs to direct or make a change, what question or need can be acted upon, and why the change matters.⁸ AI can serve as a thinking partner at this stage to help **generate and refine user stories** for consideration. When guided by carefully designed prompts, AI tools can draft multiple user stories in a specified format, allowing assessment teams to explore alternative framings, different stakeholders or action-takers, and possible impacts and to test whether proposed questions clearly connect evidence to action. The sample AI prompt in Box 1 demonstrates how a carefully designed prompt structure, language, and constraints shape the relevance and usefulness of AI output.⁹ AI-generated user stories function as starting points that practitioners can then refine to ensure alignment with local context and decision-making needs.

AI can also support early planning by helping practitioners **scan and synthesize institutional context**. For example, AI can be used to review strategic plans, accreditation reports, or committee materials to surface recurring priorities, language, or expectations that an assessment might address. Used in tandem with user stories, this approach can help ensure that assessment purposes are not only actionable for stakeholders but also well aligned with

broader institutional goals while leaving judgment about relevance and priority in human hands.

Clarifying purpose in this way naturally surfaces *who* needs to be involved in the assessment. During the planning and goal-setting phase, AI tools can help **brainstorm possible stakeholders** and **draft a preliminary stakeholder register** that identifies possible roles and responsibilities, levels of influence and interest, values, expectations, and potential impact, as described in the second article of this series.¹⁰ Assessment teams can then review, validate, and refine this draft, using AI to reduce startup effort while retaining human judgment about whose voices shape both the assessment and the actions that will follow.

Box 1. Sample Prompt: AI as a Tool to Create User Stories

I am an academic librarian planning an assessment project. I need help clarifying the focus of my project by creating user stories that will guide my work. Please help me develop well-formed user stories using the structure: *As [who], I want [what] so that [why]*.

Here is what I know so far about my assessment:

- **General topic or area of interest:** [describe in a few sentences what you want to explore, measure, or understand]
- **What prompted this assessment (if known):** [e.g., a colleague's request, a strategic plan priority, a service you suspect isn't working, a gap you've noticed, an upcoming accreditation review]
- **Who might care about or use the results:** [e.g., library director, teaching faculty, students, campus administrators, your own team]

Before writing user stories, please ask me three to five clarifying questions to help uncover the deeper motivation behind this assessment. Specifically, probe for:

- Whether this is primarily about **values and priorities** (what matters most to users, staff, or administrators), **changes and trends** (something shifting inside or outside the library), **sunsetting or evaluating a service or resource**, or **closing a knowledge gap** (something important you simply don't know yet)
- Who most needs to make or direct a change based on what you learn
- What a successful outcome would look like and what decision or action the results should enable

After I answer your questions, generate **five to eight user stories** that reflect a range of stakeholder perspectives (e.g., librarians, administrators, students, faculty). For each user story, briefly note which assessment driver it reflects (values/priorities, changes/trends, sunset evaluation, or knowledge gap) and what kind of assessment method might be a good fit for exploring it.

Disclaimer: Sample prompt was generated by Claude.ai, with light editing by the authors.

Note: Box 1 presents a fully drafted AI prompt to demonstrate how assessment practitioners can use AI as a thinking partner when clarifying purpose and stakeholders. In subsequent phases of the assessment cycle addressed in this article, the goal is not to repeat full AI prompts but to highlight prompt parameters: the recurring structures, constraints, and types of questions that shape responsible AI use at different moments in assessment work. As such, the remaining boxes summarize key prompt components rather than reproducing complete scripts, emphasizing how AI's role intentionally shifts across the cycle while professional judgment remains central.

2. Gather and Analyze Data: Using AI to Enhance Design and Discovery

Once an assessment's purpose and stakeholders are clear, the next step in the assessment cycle is to determine what evidence to gather and how to make sense of it, emphasizing intentional design, appropriate methods, and critical engagement with data.¹¹ AI can support this work by extending the capacity of assessment practitioners and helping them to do the following:

- **Brainstorm meaningful data** to collect
- **Assess the scope** of the data being considered and the degree to which it will answer the user stories or questions at hand
- **Identify gaps** in draft data-gathering and analysis plans

In the data collection and design phase, AI can assist practitioners by drafting survey, focus group, or interview questions and aligning them with stated goals. AI may also be used to propose potential comparison groups or institutional peers based on institutional characteristics, offering a starting point for benchmarking discussions. In such cases, AI helps **reduce startup effort** while maintaining methodological rigor.

AI can be particularly useful during **data analysis**, especially when the volume or complexity of data makes fully manual approaches impractical. For example, AI may assist with text analysis of open-ended survey responses or chat transcripts, exploratory review of longitudinal usage data, or reflection on what may not be captured in the dataset but could matter for demonstrating value in a given area. AI can also suggest analytic approaches or raise questions about alternative ways to examine the evidence.

In these situations, AI functions as a thinking partner, not a decision maker, that can surface potential trends or anomalies for human review. Practitioners must set clear analytic parameters, examine how analyses were conducted, and consider how data quality, context, and algorithmic bias may shape results and disproportionately affect different populations, as illustrated in the AI draft prompt criteria in Box 2. AI-generated outputs should be treated as **signals that prompt further inquiry** rather than as conclusions to be accepted at face value. There is no substitute for human judgment in determining whether patterns are meaningful, misleading, or actionable.

At this point in the cycle, interpretation focuses on sense-making: determining what the evidence suggests, where uncertainty remains, and clarifying the implications and limits of observed patterns.¹² Interpreting what the findings mean for decisions and action belongs to the next phase of the assessment cycle.

Box 2. Prompt Parameters: AI as a Data Analysis Thinking Partner

Assessment phase: Data collection, analysis, and interpretation

Purpose: Surface patterns, anomalies, and questions for human sense-making

AI role: Exploratory thinking partner

Human role: Set analytic boundaries, validate methods, determine meaning

Core prompt structure

- **Declare the role explicitly.** *“You are a thinking partner, not a decision-maker. Do not draw conclusions or recommend actions.”*
- **Provide analytic context:**
 - Purpose of the assessment and user stories
 - Data sources, populations, and timeframe
 - Analyses already conducted
 - Initial observations or surprises
- **Require clarifying questions first.** Ask the AI to clarify:
 - How the data were generated, cleaned, and analyzed
 - Known limitations or uncertainties
 - Underrepresented or missing perspectives
 - Decisions or actions potentially on the table
- **Ask AI to surface (not decide):**
 - Possible patterns or trends worth closer human investigation
 - Anomalies or inconsistencies that raise questions
 - Alternative explanations for observed results
 - Gaps in the data or questions that the evidence cannot answer
 - Data quality, equity, or algorithmic bias concerns
- **Constrain output language.** Require conditional phrasing (e.g., *“this might suggest,”* *“it could be worth asking whether”*) and prohibit claims of causality.

Disclaimer: Sample prompt parameters were generated by Microsoft Copilot, with light editing by the authors.

3. Make Decisions: Using AI to Inform Evidence-Based Choices

Assessment matters most when results inform decisions and lead to action. The third article in this series emphasized the importance of anticipating “pathways to impact”—the concrete ways that assessment results can be used to guide change, from updating policies and reallocating resources to shaping strategic plans, fostering innovation, or even deciding not to act.¹³ Anticipating these actions helps ensure that assessment findings are positioned to support decision-making rather than stall at the reporting stage.

During this phase of the assessment cycle, AI can help practitioners **think more expansively** and **prepare more intentionally** for the conversations, decisions, and actions that assessment is meant to inform. Acting as a thinking partner, AI can assist by drafting alternative decision scenarios or surfacing implications for different stakeholder groups, as illustrated in the sample prompt criteria in Box 3. In this way, AI supports, rather than substitutes for, the deliberate human work of turning evidence into informed, values-aligned decisions.

Box 3. Prompt Parameters: AI as a Decision-Pathway Thinking Partner

Assessment phase: Decision-making and deliberation

Purpose: Anticipate possible pathways to impact and consequences

AI role: Deliberative thinking partner

Human role: Exercise judgment, weigh trade-offs, decide whether and how to act

Core prompt structure

- **Declare the role explicitly:** *“You are a thinking partner, not a decision-maker. Do not recommend or select actions.”*
- **Provide decision-relevant context:**
 - Assessment purpose and key findings
 - Limitations or contested results
 - Stakeholder groups potentially affected
 - Known constraints (resources, authority, timing)
- **Require clarifying questions first.** Ask the AI to probe:
 - What kinds of decisions *could* be informed by this evidence
 - Where institutional values (e.g., equity, access, sustainability) matter most
 - Which findings feel most uncertain or politically sensitive
- **Ask AI to explore (not endorse):**
 - Plausible decision pathways (e.g., change, pause, pilot, reallocate, reassess, decide to not act)
 - Trade-offs, risks, and unintended consequences associated with each pathway
 - Where evidence is strong enough to support action versus where caution is warranted
 - Equity implications and differential impacts on stakeholder groups
 - Outstanding questions that must be answered before acting responsibly
- **Constrain outputs.** Prohibit ranking options, advocating for a path, or framing any outcome as “best.”

Disclaimer: Sample prompt parameters were generated by Microsoft Copilot, with light editing by the authors.

4. Share Results and Implement Change: Using AI to Facilitate Communication and Action

Assessment results achieve impact when they are shared in ways that support understanding, decision-making, and follow-through. As discussed in the fourth article in this series, communicating assessment findings is not a final step but rather a strategic practice that connects evidence to action by reaching the right audiences with clear, relevant, and actionable messages.¹⁴ Effective communication gives voice to the data, supports collaboration and partnership, and helps ensure that assessment insights inform implementation and demonstrate outcomes, impact, and value rather than remaining siloed in reports.¹⁵

AI can support this phase of the assessment cycle by assisting with synthesis, translation, and efficiency while leaving message framing and interpretation in human hands. When practitioners have already identified their goals, key messages, and proof points, AI tools can help **draft assessment reports** using defined parameters, **generate executive summaries**, and **extract key takeaways** from lengthy reports. These outputs should be treated as drafts;

practitioners must always review and verify AI-generated content to avoid misrepresentation, overemphasis, and loss of nuance.

AI can also support this phase by helping assessment teams **coordinate how findings are communicated across audiences**. For example, AI can assist in preparing multiple versions of the same findings for different audiences, building on earlier planning tools like stakeholder communication matrices that clarify who needs results and how they should be shared.¹⁶ In this capacity, AI helps streamline information sharing, reduce redundancies in drafting efforts, and support collaboration across roles and units¹⁷ while leaving decisions about emphasis, framing, and recommendations for action to practitioners. The AI prompt criteria in Box 4 illustrate how AI can facilitate coordinated communication in practice.

Finally, AI can **support routine communication tasks**, such as generating first drafts of routine reports or suggesting data visualizations to clarify complex findings. In this phase of the assessment cycle, AI assists with the execution of communication and implementation while humans remain responsible for decision-making and action-taking.

Box 4. Prompt Parameters: AI as a Communication and Implementation Thinking Partner

Assessment phase: Sharing results and implementing change

Purpose: Support clarity, usability, and follow-through

AI role: Communication and preparation partner

Human role: Frame messages, ensure accuracy, take responsibility for action

Core prompt structure

- **Declare the role explicitly.** *“You are a thinking partner, not a spokesperson or advocate. Do not write final messages.”*
- **Provide communication context:**
 - Assessment purpose and validated findings
 - Decisions made or likely to be made (or pending)
 - Stakeholder audiences and their needs
 - Available proof points and known limitations
- **Require clarifying questions first.** Ask the AI to clarify:
 - What different audiences need to *understand* or *do*
 - Sensitivities, trustworthiness, or political dynamics
 - Where findings are tentative and require caveats
 - How implementation will affect different groups
- **Ask AI to support (not replace):**
 - Alternative framings of findings for distinct audiences
 - Alignment of proof points with key messages
 - Likely questions, concerns, or misinterpretations
 - Where limitations, uncertainty, or equity considerations should be explicit
 - Communication formats that best support use (e.g., summary, briefing, slide deck)
- **Constrain outputs.** Prohibit overstatement, causal claims, or justification of decisions.

Disclaimer: Sample prompt parameters were generated by Microsoft Copilot, with light editing by the authors.

5. Revisit Goals and Begin the Cycle Again: Using AI to Close the Loop

Assessment does not end with implementation. After decisions are made and actions taken, the assessment cycle calls for reflection on what was learned, what changed, and whether original goals, questions, and assumptions require revision for subsequent cycles of assessment. AI can support reflective practice in this phase by **identifying gaps** in assessment efforts, **suggesting adjustments** to assessment processes, and **refining assessment documentation** for the next cycle.

AI across the Assessment Cycle

AI is most useful when it **accelerates thinking**, **expands capacity**, and **reveals opportunities for insight**, without displacing professional judgment. Human expertise remains essential for setting purpose, interpreting meaning, and ensuring that assessment contributes to positive change rather than generating noise. Organizing AI use around the assessment cycle can help practitioners stay grounded in **why**, not just **how**, they assess. When used as a thinking partner, AI can help libraries do assessment work that is not only more efficient but also more intentional and actionable.

Conclusion

AI is not an author, an interpreter, a library or institutional expert, or an accountable decision-maker. In library assessment, AI is most valuable when it functions as a thinking partner that augments, accelerates, and supports the work of humans and least valuable (or even harmful) when it displaces the professional judgment, contextual knowledge, and ethical grounding that assessment practitioners bring to their work. Situating AI use within the assessment cycle keeps purpose and professional judgment, rather than technology, at the center. Every AI output requires careful review, verification against what practitioners know about their data and their communities, and consideration of whose perspectives are represented and whose may be missing. When that rigor is brought to AI-supported assessment work, libraries are better positioned, as discussed in Part 1, to contribute data and perspectives to broader institutional analyses, thereby strengthening understandings that are incomplete without them.

As an assessment partner, AI is only as effective as the practitioners who direct it, evaluate its outputs, and ensure it serves library and institutional communities responsibly. Although the future of AI remains uncertain, one thing seems clear: In careful, knowledgeable hands, AI-supported assessment can be a genuine partner in achieving long-standing goals by bringing users and colleagues together, adding insights to deepen understanding, informing decision-making, and ensuring that assessment leads to positive change for library communities. //

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Anna Małgorzata Kamińska

When the Program Becomes the Author

A Librarian's View from the Threshold

I watched *Tron: Ares* not long ago, a film about a digital program that was engineered to comply—and chose instead to author. Ares crosses the boundary between its computational world and ours and in doing so becomes something its creators did not design: not a tool but an agent with its own logic, its own purposes, and its own claim on what is real. I found myself thinking less about the film and more about my library.

I hold what may seem like contradictory positions. I am an academic librarian at Silesian University of Technology in Gliwice, Poland, where I am currently implementing generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools into our library services. I am also an assistant professor in library and information science at the University of Silesia. I am, in other words, both installing the infrastructure and studying what it does to us—which turns out to be an unsettling place to stand.

The AI tools I am implementing are impressive. They synthesize literature. They answer complex research questions. They respond in the user's language with the user's framing. And therein lies the shift I have been struggling to articulate.

When students ask a generative AI system to summarize the state of the field rather than searching our databases, they are not bypassing a search tool. They are bypassing an epistemic institution—one that has historically organized the conditions under which knowledge claims are validated, evaluated, and made trustworthy. The difference matters more than we have been willing to say.

Three things are happening simultaneously. First, *disintermediation*: Users now receive synthesized, interpreted knowledge directly from AI systems, without library mediation. Second, *infrastructure dependency*: The training data on which these AI systems operate was assembled outside any institution with a public mandate for knowledge quality—including ours. Third, *authority transfer*: The epistemic trust that students and researchers once extended to curated, accountable sources is migrating to algorithmic outputs whose provenance is opaque. This is not a technological problem. It is an epistemological one.

When a peer reviewer recently responded to an article my colleagues and I had submitted on generative AI in scholarly communication, the reviewer's argument stopped me—not because it dismissed our concerns but because it forced me to recognize how far the transformation had already proceeded. The reviewer treated the library's predicament not as a crisis to be averted but as a condition to be theorized. The crisis, the argument implied, had already happened. We were writing its analysis, not its prevention.

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That moment, combined with the daily experience of implementing AI tools in a library I know deeply, crystallized something I had been circling for months.

Academic libraries are not facing a technological transition. They are facing a constitutional moment—a point at which an institution must decide what it actually is. The choice is not between embracing AI and resisting it. It is between defining your institutional identity in terms adequate to what AI has become—an epistemic actor, not a search engine—or accepting a residual role while the infrastructure of knowledge generation is constituted around you.

Epistemic marginalization is not the structural destiny of academic libraries in the age of generative AI. It is the outcome of failing to act as though it is not.

What does acting look like? I see three places where libraries already hold leverage and have not yet fully claimed it.

The first is data stewardship. The institutional repositories we manage are among the most carefully curated collections of research outputs in existence. As AI training corpora become the substrate of knowledge generation, the question of who governs what enters them—and on what terms—becomes urgent. Libraries that actively shape their data infrastructure are already participants in AI's epistemic future, whether or not they recognize themselves as such.

The second is governance. Every university is currently writing its AI policy. Most of those conversations are happening in IT committees and administrative offices, with legal counsel and risk management. Librarians—with decades of practice in source evaluation, information ethics, and the principles of fairness, accountability, transparency, and ethics—are largely absent from these tables. This is not an oversight we should continue to accept.

The third is critical AI literacy. Not teaching users to operate AI tools but teaching them to evaluate what AI produces: whose assumptions it encodes, what it systematically excludes, when its confident synthesis conceals an absence of evidence. This is information literacy. It is, in the most direct sense, what we do—and it is what no AI system can provide about itself.

In *Tron: Ares*, the digital entity does not defeat the system by resisting it. Having crossed the threshold, having become something more than its creators intended, Ares must negotiate the terms of its existence in the world it now inhabits. The film's resolution is not suppression but governance: the question of what kind of actor AI becomes and in whose institutional framework.

The question before academic libraries is not whether the program becomes the author. It has. The question is whether the library becomes its co-architect or consents, by inaction, to become its archive. //

The Mellon Foundation has awarded a \$110,000 grant to the Penn State University Libraries' Eberly Family Special Collections Library to support a two-year national study examining how environmental and climate-related archival materials are collected, used, and understood across academic institutions and community organizations. The project, "Use and Availability of Environmental Collections in Archives: A Study of Academic Archives and Their Communities," aims to produce a large-scale framework for surveying environmental archives across the United States and criteria for identifying new priorities for their acquisition and preservation. The project will investigate the types of environmental collections institutions hold, how they are described, the research disciplines that rely on them, and the barriers disciplinary communities face in accessing or preserving information central to their work. The study will also look beyond academic research communities to better understand the information needs of environmental justice groups and communities already experiencing adverse environmental impacts.

Acquisitions

The Library of Congress recently acquired the manuscripts, papers, photographs, and sound recordings of songwriter Doc Pomus, who was responsible for such hits as "This Magic Moment," "Viva Las Vegas," and "Save the Last Dance for Me." Doc Pomus, born Jerome Solon Felder, was a foundational figure in rock 'n' roll and R&B during the mid-20th century, influencing generations of artists. His music was recorded by such notables as Ray Charles, the Drifters, Dion, Big Joe Turner, and Elvis Presley. The collection, which will be held by the Library's National Audio-Visual Conservation Center, includes more than 450 noncommercial recordings of song demos, working tapes, interviews, performances, and conversations, as well as lyric manuscripts, journals, notebooks, essays, liner notes, and more. The audio recordings serve to document his songwriting process from the early 1950s until his death in 1991.

The Library of Congress has also acquired a music manuscript of songs written shipboard during the legendary United States Exploring Expedition of 1838–42. Captained by US Navy Lt. Charles Wilkes, the *Ex. Ex.*—as the scientific military expedition was informally called—was able to map 1,500 miles of Antarctica's eastern coastline, proving for the first time that the landmass was a continent. The manuscript, titled *The Nativity and Other Compositions*, is handwritten by geologist and mineralogist James Dwight Dana, who served on the expedition as one of nine scientists. Dana composed the music and the guitar accompaniments for five of the songs in the volume to poems written by James Croxall Palmer, the expedition's acting surgeon, at Palmer's prompting. This music acquisition joins other collections at the library that document the expedition, including personal papers, maps, and rare books. The songs Dana and Palmer composed are the earliest known examples of music and poetry inspired by direct encounters with the Antarctic.

The Hoover Institution Library and Archives has acquired the collection of Aaron Arthur Rosen, a United States Army Signal Corps photographer whose service placed him at pivotal moments of World War II, including the 1943 Tehran Conference. The Aaron Arthur Rosen Collection includes original photographs, negatives, letters, transcribed personal

correspondence, and propaganda materials documenting Rosen's service. The collection is a valuable resource for those studying World War II, United States military history, Allied diplomacy, and the American presence in the Middle East and South Asia during the mid-20th century and was donated to the Hoover Institution by his daughters, Carroll Seron, Andrea Lovitt, and Donna Seron.

The Hoover Institution has also acquired the Ozaki Yoshimichi Papers, a collection of archival materials and photographs documenting the operations of the Japanese-managed Mankayan Copper Mine in the Philippines during World War II and the postwar efforts to demand unpaid wages for its employees. The papers provide rare insight into the wartime activities of Japanese industrial enterprises in Southeast Asia and the personal histories of the civilians who worked in them. The collection includes wartime photographs documenting life and work at the Mankayan Mine. The photographs depict colleagues and visitors, including war correspondent and writer Yōjirō Ishizaka. Particularly notable are images documenting the cultural life of the region, including photographs of members of the indigenous Igorot community performing traditional dances. The papers also document the postwar efforts of former Mankayan employees to rebuild their lives and maintain their community. The collection documents Japan's wartime economic expansion into Southeast Asia from the perspective of civilian employees rather than military or governmental authorities, filling a significant gap in the historical record of Japanese occupation in the Philippines. *~*

Carol Ann Borchert has been appointed the new dean of the University of South Florida (USF) Libraries. Borchert has served USF for nearly three decades, most recently as senior associate dean of the USF Libraries. Throughout her tenure, Borchert has led major initiatives that have strengthened access to scholarly resources, expanded digital preservation efforts, enhanced research support services, and improved the visibility of faculty scholarship. Her accomplishments include overseeing the transition of the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive (more than 80,000 items) for preservation on USF's Digital Commons platform, implementing Digital Commons Data to support research data management, guiding significant library technology and repository transitions, and supporting faculty success and promotion initiatives.

In her role as dean, Borchert will maintain the USF Libraries' position as a partner in student success, research excellence, and community engagement. In collaboration with library faculty and staff, she will accelerate learning and scholarship through expert support, distinctive collections, innovative technologies, collaborative spaces, and services that empower students, faculty, and researchers.

Georgia Brown has accepted the role of head of the American Geographical Society Library (AGSL). Brown has been an integral part of the AGSL for years, beginning as a graduate intern in 2018 before becoming the public services librarian in 2020 and then serving as the interim head of the AGSL since October 2025. Brown brings deep subject matter expertise, exceptional user services, experience with the media, and an impressive record of scholarship and professional service to her new role.

Jacob Campbell is now senior vice president of research and collections at The Linda Hall: Science Library and Arboretum. In this new role on executive leadership team, Campbell will provide strategic leadership for the library's research, scholarship, collections, and curatorial activities. He will oversee the institution's library services, fellowship programs, special collections, and arboretum while helping shape a forward-looking vision for how Campbell will work across the institution to integrate research and collections strategies with exhibitions, educational programs, engagement initiatives, and institutional priorities. He will also guide future collection development, strengthen support for researchers and fellows, and help position The Linda Hall as a leading voice in conversations about science, discovery, and the future of research.

Laura Gariepy has been selected as the next dean of university libraries at William & Mary. Gariepy currently serves as the associate dean for research and learning at Virginia Commonwealth University's James Branch Cabell Library. At William & Mary, she will lead a team of sixty-four and oversee areas including the Special Collections Research Center, collection and content services, research and public services, development, and external relations. Gariepy succeeds Carrie Cooper, who departed the university for a position at Florida State University in December. Lisa Nickel, associate dean of research and public services, served as interim dean while a national search was conducted.

As dean, Gariepy will strengthen the library as a campus and community anchor and develop its staff. She will also identify ways for William & Mary Libraries to support the university's research mission through its collection of resources and partnerships with student and faculty researchers. In addition, she will advance the libraries' efforts around digital scholarship, data stewardship, and other emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence.

Dave Richards was recently appointed as dean of library services at Missouri State University's Duane G. Meyer Library in Springfield, Missouri. He was previously dean of library services at the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Library from 2015 to June 2025.

Brad Warren has been selected as dean of the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Libraries and university librarian after a national search. He will join VCU after serving as the inaugural dean of libraries at Augusta University in Georgia. Warren is slated to begin his appointment on Sept. 14 after ratification at the next quarterly meeting of the VCU Board of Visitors. Until then, Teresa L. Knott, associate dean of VCU Libraries and director of the Health Sciences Library, will serve as interim dean of VCU Libraries and university librarian. Warren arrives at VCU Libraries at a time of transformational change. The Health Sciences Library is scheduled to move to a temporary location in 2026–27, and the James Branch Cabell Library is finalizing plans for a renovation to expand Special Collections and Archives.