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Information Retrieval: Managing Information Overload

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About Author

Adrienne Mathewson is Editor-in-Chief of the iSchool Student Research Journal.

I'm proud to announce that the iSchool Student Research Journal (SRJ) has now published the first issue of Volume 5. Since the first published volume in July of 2011, scholars have found value in the articles published in the journal; our downloads have passed the 32,000 mark as of May, 2015. Readers from around the world continue to read and cite the work of our authors on a daily basis.

As well, members of SRJ's Editorial Team contribute to the Library & Science Information profession in many other ways. Former content editor, Jim Hicks, was awarded the iSchool Thesis of the Year: "IMPACTS OF SCHOLARSHIP AND PUBLICATION ON ENTRY-LEVEL HIRING: PUBLIC SERVICE APPLICANTS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN THE UNITED STATES." Hicks was involved in SRJ since its start in 2011 until his graduation this year, despite the fact that all his work was done from Japan.

Despite an almost complete turnover in team members in January, which required thorough training in order to maintain the high quality of the journal's peer review process, we pulled together another quality issue under the guidance of our new Managing Editor, Janet Casey.

Along with Janet Casey, four new content editors : Melissa Anderson, Rebecca Padrick, Josh Smith, and Camille Peters and a new copy editor, Laurel Diskin, joined the team. Lawrence Mak, Alicia Zuniga and Kristin Clark, returning team members, used their experience to help bring forth this issue, as well.

Although, only one paper passed through the rigorous peer review process, we were fortunate to receive an interesting and topical essay from Dr. Virginia M. Tucker, which contributes to the ongoing discussion on LIS research.

One of the key concepts of the LIS profession is that of information retrieval. Not only must we continue research, we must provide ways to retrieve that information, not only for professional purposes but personal purposes.

The effective use of databases is critical to managing the information overload we face daily. The sheer volume of information available to researchers and the public is overwhelming, and without accurate ways to catalog and maintain information, essential information is lost and inaccurate information is reproduced as many rely on simple keyword searching rather than using specific search techniques.

Dr. Tucker, in her essay, "Sharpening the Saw: Lessons from expert searchers" provides important lessons on "locating relevant scholarly articles for a literature review" (p. 1). She focuses on threshold concepts and strategic areas for improving search results. Using her experiences as an instructor on searching techniques, she provides a brief overview of searching concepts such as use operators and limiters, controlled vocabulary, pearl growing and citation searching.

The paper “Patient Access to Electronic Health Records: Strengths, weaknesses and what’s needed to move forward”, written by Alicia Zuniga, discusses the need for digitizing personal health records in order to provide easier access by patients to their health records. This paper discusses three models of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and the need for improving the adoption of digital records in the health industry.

I thank everybody who contributed to this issue and, in particular, Dr. Tucker, who agreed to write an essay on short notice and during a particularly busy time for instructors. Thank you to Dr. Bernier, our Faculty Advisor, who continues to give of his time and expert knowledge to the continued success of SRJ. As well, I sincerely thank our Editorial Board members, faculty and iSchool administrators for their continued support of iSchool’s Student Research Journal.