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The *SRJ* invites submissions from currently enrolled graduate students from all disciplines and institutions. Submit original research, literature reviews, book reviews, critical essays, or evidence summaries, covering topics in all fields of library and information science theory, policy, application, or practice.

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May 2020

SRJ Thriving During Challenging Times

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SRJ Thriving During Challenging Times

Keywords

editorial, blockchain, health information, SJSU, LIS, information science, collection development, professional development, research, service, fake news, diversity, social media, information literacy, librarianship, global communication

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Thank you to Dr. Anthony Bernier for his passion, vision and guidance.

20 issues! Can you believe it? The *Student Research Journal (SRJ)* continues to thrive in difficult times thanks to the dedication of our team and the entire San José State University (SJSU) iSchool program and College of Graduate and Professional Education (CGPE) led by the visionary Dean Dr. Ruth Huard and Associate Dean Dr. Sandra Hirsch. The Covid-19 health crisis has thrown many information organizations and educational institutions into chaos, and *SRJ* is extremely grateful for the clear, consistent communication and support from the iSchool and SJSU. My sincerest thoughts go out to those directly impacted by the pandemic and I hope that everyone recovers and works towards being healthy soon. During this unpredictable time, research and information sharing via open access resources is even more vital than ever. *SRJ* is SJSU's only fully graduate-student run, double-blind peer-reviewed academic journal. Our focus on Library and Information Science (LIS) demonstrates the infinite variety of applications for LIS skills and avenues for professional practice. As *SRJ* looks forward to our 10th anniversary, we could not be more grateful for CGPE and SJSU's support of graduate student research and cultivating a culture of learning and growth for students through remarkable opportunities to work with peers and faculty leaders in the field. *SRJ* is proud to share this amazing issue and looks forward to continuing to thrive despite all the challenges we all currently face during this time and to be a beacon of hope to maintain momentum through sharing professional best practices and prescient research. Paraphrasing Buzz Lightyear: to infinity and beyond!

We are truly honored to publish an invited contribution from a leader in LIS research SJSU Professor Dr. Lili Lou. Lou is the Director of the SJSU iSchool's pioneering Center for Information Research and Innovation (CIRI). CIRI focuses on cultivating exemplary research in our field and with Lou's expertise and leadership CIRI's objective is to empower professionals with best practices and innovative services and seeks to benefit a global audience. Lou's contribution articulates and asserts the value of online communities to share research and enhance professional practice in the LIS field. Lou's article emphasizes the value of virtual professional communities to support researchers in overcoming boundaries, starting more conversations and expanding information sharing, visibility and impact of innovation and best practices in the field. Given the Covid-19 health crisis and the constantly changing, currently unpredictable state of educational institutions and information services in general, Lou's advocacy of online communities for LIS professionals is extremely prescient.

Author Stephanie Jackson from SJSU also speaks to an extremely relevant LIS topic for current practice and future research. Jackson's literature review of the current body of research on the African American mental health information seeking community highlights key gaps in availability and visibility of resources. Jackson's contribution to this critical discourse is again even more crucial given the current context of the pandemic and how information professionals in all sectors might be able to support essential services and increased access to mental health care for underserved and disenfranchised communities.

Author Sebastian C. Galbo of State University of New York at Buffalo provides an incredibly insightful analysis of collection development challenges in Slavic and Eastern European Countries. As information organizations and services transition to offering even more extensive online and virtual options, examining international best practices and current challenges for providing access to diverse materials in a multitude of mediums and languages emerges as a vital stepping-stone into the future of extending universal access and demonstrating the value of collections and information institutions.

Expanding this issue's focus on developing collections that embrace and encourage diversity, access and a multiplicity of information needs, author Anthony M. DiGiovanni

contributes a deeply compelling and extremely insightful article on developing collections for patrons experiencing visual impairment in both the public and academic sector. Now more than ever, LIS professionals must innovate strategies to meet the varying and specific needs of their users in creative ways that enhance, engage and expand inclusive services.

Author Kelsey Simon from Valdosta State University brings attention to another critical issue impacting LIS professional practice, specifically in the public library sector. Simon's examination of the emotional labor librarians working with the public exert draws a breath of fresh air for all of us that have worked as service professionals to acknowledge our shared stress and strain and to strategize ways to move forward and develop better practices. Simon's article reminds us that as essential services and information organizations begin to re-open being mindful and sharing out our challenges, stresses and successes can make us stronger together as LIS professionals.

Speaking of stronger together through sharing insights and innovation, author Phyllis Pistorino of SJSU contributes her excellent research and experience based look at yet another timely topic: intercultural competence. Pistorino's article specifically focuses on community college librarians, however, the vital research can be expanded to address all arenas in which LIS professionals might practice. This makes Pistorino's work all the more essential as we move forward into an increasingly global world and as we continue developing best practices that embrace diversity and foster a culture of engagement despite barriers to access, environmental stressors, and current chaotic and changing situations.

Author Mollie L. Coffey of SJSU's analysis of the deep and dark web provides extremely beneficial clarity the functionality of these two platforms. As more information services move to being primarily online and more people seek information first online, understanding the different points of access for information emerges as an essential LIS skill. Staying up to date and privy to all arenas in which information can be attained and shared, be it social media or the deep web, emerges as essential to the continuing professional development of the effective and visionary LIS professional.

Author Anna Morrissey of SJSU adds an excellent book review on an incredibly timely topic: *Fake News and Alternative Facts: Information in a Post-Truth Era* by Nicole A. Cooke (2018). Morrissey expertly outlines Cooke's primary point that critical evaluation of information is not instinctual for the majority of information users and that the role of the information professional in teaching metaliteracy skills now presents itself as essential. Morrissey sees Cooke's work as part of the LIS professional's critical toolkit and directs those seeking an even more in-depth exploration of the topic to *News Literacy: The Keys to Combating Fake News* (Whiting & Luhtala, 2018).

Enhancing this issue's incredibly relevant and immediately actionable content, author Sagan Wallace of Oregon State University provides an extremely relevant review of Ryan Dowd's 2018 *The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness: An Empathy-Driven Approach to Solving Problems, Preventing Conflicts and Serving Everyone*. Wallace recommends Dowd's work for the empathy-driven approach and advocates for more research into the psychological needs of those experiencing homelessness.

Authors Megan Price and Greta Snyder of SJSU round out our Volume 10, Issue 1 with an evidence summary on current research into blockchain technology and relevancy to LIS field. Now more than ever, staying abreast of emerging technology is crucial to evolving our profession's best practices and services in order to lead our organizations and institutions and best serve our communities.

This issue's content speaks to current issues of technology as a learning curve, access as the golden word, and that the future awaits those seeking strategies to expand, collaborate and innovate locally and globally. The impressive range of graduate student and practicing professional research published in this issue demonstrate that *SRJ* remains committed to escape velocity and sharing innovative LIS research. *SRJ* presents crucial questions to forward the LIS field. *SRJ* looks forward to celebrating our 10th anniversary with you this Spring 2021 and encourages graduate students to submit original research, literature reviews, book reviews, critical essays and evidence summaries. Our anniversary milestone will not be complete without you.

Acknowledgements

This editorial would not be complete without acknowledging my sincere gratitude for the amazing editorial team lead by the graceful and endlessly humble Managing Editor Phyllis Pistorino. Though Pistorino presents her work as effortless, this issue would not have come to fruition without Pistorino's empathetic and effective leadership and limitless dedication to *SRJ*. Pistorino enabled our wonderful editorial team to persevere during the health crisis and keep *SRJ* moving forward. Thank you and looking forward to the success of *SRJ*'s two continuing editors Brianna Limas and Justin Sana. Congratulations and infinite applause to our graduating editors Claire Goldstein, Esther Momand, Phyllis Pistorino, Terry Schiavone, and Havilah Steinman.

I couldn't write this without singing praises for Dr. Anthony Bernier, our visionary Faculty Advisor. Dr. Bernier's infinite wisdom and insight into the LIS profession and the graduate student experience are truly remarkable. Dr. Bernier's unwavering dedication to research, innovating young adult services, and student development through SJSU iSchool and in the LIS program are truly inspirational. I am forever grateful for his guidance and his proactive identification of the opportunities we face during this health crisis and the options we have to overcome the barriers of access to education, employment and information services during this challenging and unpredictable time.

A final profound thank you the Editorial Board, led by former iSchool Director Dr. Sandra Hirsh, stepping up to a beyond-deserved advancement to Associate Dean of the College CPGE, and the current interim iSchool Director Director Dr. Linda Main, Dr. Lili Lou's leadership in research, and to all the faculty and staff at the iSchool who support *SRJ* in cultivating graduate scholarship for the iSchool and SJSU. Our team is committed to our advisory board's values and the significance of contributing to scholarship in the LIS field to further professional practice. Finally, thank you to Dr. Ruth Huard, the Dean of CPGE for her advocacy of graduate student scholarship and seeing the value of LIS research.


May 2020

Online Community for Librarian Researchers: Experience of Academic Librarians

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Online Community for Librarian Researchers: Experience of Academic Librarians

Keywords

research, librarians, academic librarians, online community, community, scholarship, data, data analysis, survey, survey analysis, IMLS

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About Author

Dr. Luo received her PhD from the School of Information and Library Science at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her primary areas of teaching and research interests include information access and services in the digital age, research methods, academic librarianship, and health information services. She documents her musings about research and teaching on her blog titled "[Formalized Curiosity](#)". Lou also serves as the coordinator for the [SJSU iSchool Center for Information Research and Innovation \(CIRI\)](#).

In academic libraries, librarian research and scholarship are emphasized. As early as 1972, ACRL's "Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians" highlighted librarians' research roles in both professional interests and work responsibilities (Perkins & Slowik, 2013). Research serves to create new knowledge and therefore contribute to the growth of academic librarianship, and it is needed to "improve problem solving and decision making in the workplace, to make professional practitioners critical consumers of the research literature, and to better equip librarians to provide optimal information services to researchers in other fields" (Powell, Baker, & Mika, 2002).

Given the well-acknowledged significance of research in academic libraries, from 2014 to 2019, Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funded a program titled "Institute for Research Design in Librarianship (IRDL)". This program provides continuing education opportunities for a selected group of academic librarians to enhance their research skills and output, and to increase the scope and value of academic library research. It also seeks to increase the research confidence of participants by providing both mastery experiences and social persuasion. According to Bandura (1994), mastery experiences build confidence through success and provide an individual with the ability to persevere in the face of obstacles, which is especially important in performing difficult tasks. Social persuasion consists of structuring situations in which an individual receives encouragement and experiences success in working through challenges. The centerpiece of IRDL is a nine-day summer research workshop, where academic and research librarians develop the skills necessary to complete a research study of their design during the coming year. IRDL's learning objectives include:

- Write effective research questions and hypotheses
- Choose an appropriate research design for a library science study
- Conduct a literature review
- Explain the conceptual logic behind various data collection approaches and describe the rationale for selection of specific methods
- Identify appropriate sampling strategies for research projects
- Use and apply commonly used qualitative data collection methods
- Assess and apply different qualitative data analysis options
- Design and implement a survey
- Understand survey data analysis
- Explain various analytic options for surveys
- Understand basic principles of mixed methods research design
- Choose an appropriate research dissemination forum
- Write and disseminate an effective research report
- Access and participate in the Institute virtual community and related networks for support during the research process

Participants' collaborative learning experience during the time of IRDL reinforces the learning goals and begins to create a community of practice. In the following year, ongoing support via an online community is provided to assist IRDL participants in conducting and disseminating their research.

Curious to learn the role of online communities in helping librarian researchers connect with each other, and support each other in their research process, my colleagues and I decided to examine this online community of IRDL participants. We conducted content analysis of participants' public tweets related to IRDL as well as their posts on the private "IRDL Scholars" Facebook group page. We also administered an online survey about their perceptions of the Facebook group as a platform to meet the needs of their online community.

Most of the IRDL participants were involved in the online community. They exhibited a variety of posting behavior, suggesting the participants have different patterns of engaging in the online community – some may be more active in initiating posts, and others may feel more comfortable with just responding to what is posted; and some may prefer one social media venue over another. The discrepancies of preferences were also reflected in their responses to the online survey, where some appreciated the use of a social media platform like Facebook to host the online community, and some others felt a platform separate from social media would have been more appropriate. Given the varying behavior and preferences among individuals, when designing online communities for librarian researchers, it would be helpful to investigate what potential participants need or desire in terms of the venue, form and set-up of the online community. As the community develops, the participants' needs and desires may also evolve; thus it is important to provide a channel for them to voice their input, based on which the design of the online community can continue to improve. In their discussion of online communities' life cycle, Iriberry and Leroy's (2009) identified user-centered design and evolution as a success factor at the creation stage of an online community.

It is worth noting that the IRDL online community participation peaked in the first month after the IRDL onsite training. After that, both Facebook and Twitter posts had been dropping. This could be attributed to the fact that the community was relatively small. Iriberry et al. (2009) when discussing the growth stage of the online community life cycle, pointed out the importance of reaching a critical mass and integrating new members. But both conditions were lacking in the IRDL online community, which may have contributed to the decline in participation.

In the online survey, the majority of the respondents indicated that they both identify with what the group represents - librarian scholars who conduct and/or disseminate quality research, and have personal connections with some members of the group. According to Ren, Kraut, and Kiesler (2007) both common identity and common bond theory apply here. Common identity in the online context implies that members feel committed to the online community's purpose or topic, and common bond suggests that members feel socially or emotionally attached to particular members of the online community. On one hand, the participants have a shared identity the online community is dedicated to – librarian researcher; on the other hand, their shared IRDL experience serves as a bond that provides personal connections in the online community. When designing online communities for librarian researchers, it is important to understand members' attachment to the group when integrating new members and make design decisions accordingly. If the community is more identity based, efforts should be made on helping

newcomers navigate through information traffic, understand community norms, and engage in community conversations in meaningful ways. If the community is more bond-based, the focus needs to be on assisting newcomers in connecting with existing members, joining group interactions, and forming lasting relationships with a subset of community members (Ren et al., 2007).

In terms of the content of online posts, Facebook and Twitter had the following overlap – posts related to completing the IRDL research project, announcements about research-related resources and opportunities, posts reminiscing about the IRDL experience, and arrangements of conference attendance and meetups. These four categories provide a glimpse of the popular topics an online community for librarian researchers may be interested in. This knowledge may help online community designers better understand how to initiate and monitor discussions on relevant topics. Iriberry et al. (2009) considered content quality as one of the success factors for the growth stage of the online community life cycle, and knowing what types of content might be appealing to the community is an important first step in ensuring content quality.

Overall the participants were satisfied with different aspects of the online community on Facebook. Their satisfaction with the content of the Facebook posts was the highest, indicating that they were most satisfied with the issues or topics being discussed. Wang, Chen, and Tsai (2012) discovered that member commitment in online communities is heavily influenced by members' issue involvement. This echoes the aforementioned importance of content quality in Iriberry et al. (2009) reinforcing the need to keep community members engaged in the discussion of relevant, meaningful and interesting topics when designing online communities for librarian researchers.

Steuer's (1992) communication model describes how communication occurs not only between one individual and another, but also between individuals and the mediated environment with which they interact. Thus, in online communities, the technology interface perspective is necessary to consider. In the case of the IRDL online community, the participants reported a relatively high level of satisfaction with using Facebook as the online community platform. Still, some of them pointed out its limited functionalities such as the difficulty in archiving, searching and retrieving old posts. When designing online communities for librarian researchers, it is imperative to adopt an interface that meets all the user requirements, and yet is stable, intuitive and easy to use.

In this rapidly changing world, more and more librarians undertake their own research to meet “the need for more information for use in decision making at the managerial level, the need to keep abreast of new knowledge and procedures in this information society, and the need for continuing education and upgraded qualifications” (Jarvis, 1999). Online communities provide opportunities for librarians to interact with each other and support each other in the process of conducting and disseminating research to enhance practices. They offer a sense of camaraderie and belonging, and can help librarian researchers overcome the numerous barriers they face in their research journey. We hope to see more efforts seeking to unearth effective and efficient ways to establish and grow online

communities for librarian researchers, and more conversations about the role of online communities in assisting librarians' professional growth.

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IRDL 2014 Cohort Member	# of Tweets	# of Facebook Posts	# of Facebook Likes	# of Facebook Replies
Member A	0 (0.0%)	13 (8.2%)	17 (3.6%)	27 (5.0%)
Member B	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Member C	11 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.4%)	11 (2.1%)
Member D	24 (9.2%)	21 (13.2%)	13 (2.8%)	91 (17.0%)
Member E	21 (8.1%)	6 (3.8%)	41 (8.7%)	30 (5.6%)
Member F	3 (1.2%)	5 (3.1%)	17 (3.6%)	9 (1.7%)
Member G	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (2.5%)	2 (0.4%)
Member H	1 (0.4%)	42 (26.4%)	36 (7.6%)	126 (23.6%)
Member I	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Member J	3 (1.2%)	4 (2.5%)	19 (4.0%)	18 (3.4%)
Member K	17 (6.5%)	3 (1.9%)	9 (1.9%)	4 (0.7%)
Member L	6 (2.3%)	1 (0.6%)	8 (1.7%)	2 (0.4%)
Member M	39 (15.0%)	5 (3.1%)	26 (5.5%)	14 (2.6%)
Member N	0 (0.0%)	11 (6.9%)	16 (3.4%)	29 (5.4%)
Member O	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.9%)	33 (7.0%)	16 (3.0%)
Member P	2 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	25 (5.3%)	1 (0.2%)
Member Q	4 (1.5%)	8 (5.0%)	31 (6.6%)	32 (6.0%)
Member R	21 (8.1%)	2 (1.3%)	8 (1.7%)	4 (0.7%)
Member S	56 (21.5%)	8 (5.0%)	36 (7.6%)	50 (9.3%)
Member T	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.6%)	7 (1.5%)	4 (0.7%)
Member U	7 (2.7%)	2 (1.3%)	17 (3.6%)	6 (1.1%)
Member V	15 (5.8%)	1 (0.6%)	4 (0.8%)	14 (2.6%)
Member W	28 (10.8%)	14 (8.8%)	7 (1.5%)	18 (3.4%)
Member X	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	38 (8.1%)	7 (1.3%)
Member Y	1 (0.4%)	9 (5.7%)	49 (10.4%)	20 (3.7%)
Total	260 (100%)	159 (100%)	471 (100%)	535 (100%)

Table 1. Frequency distribution of cohort members' Facebook and Twitter posts

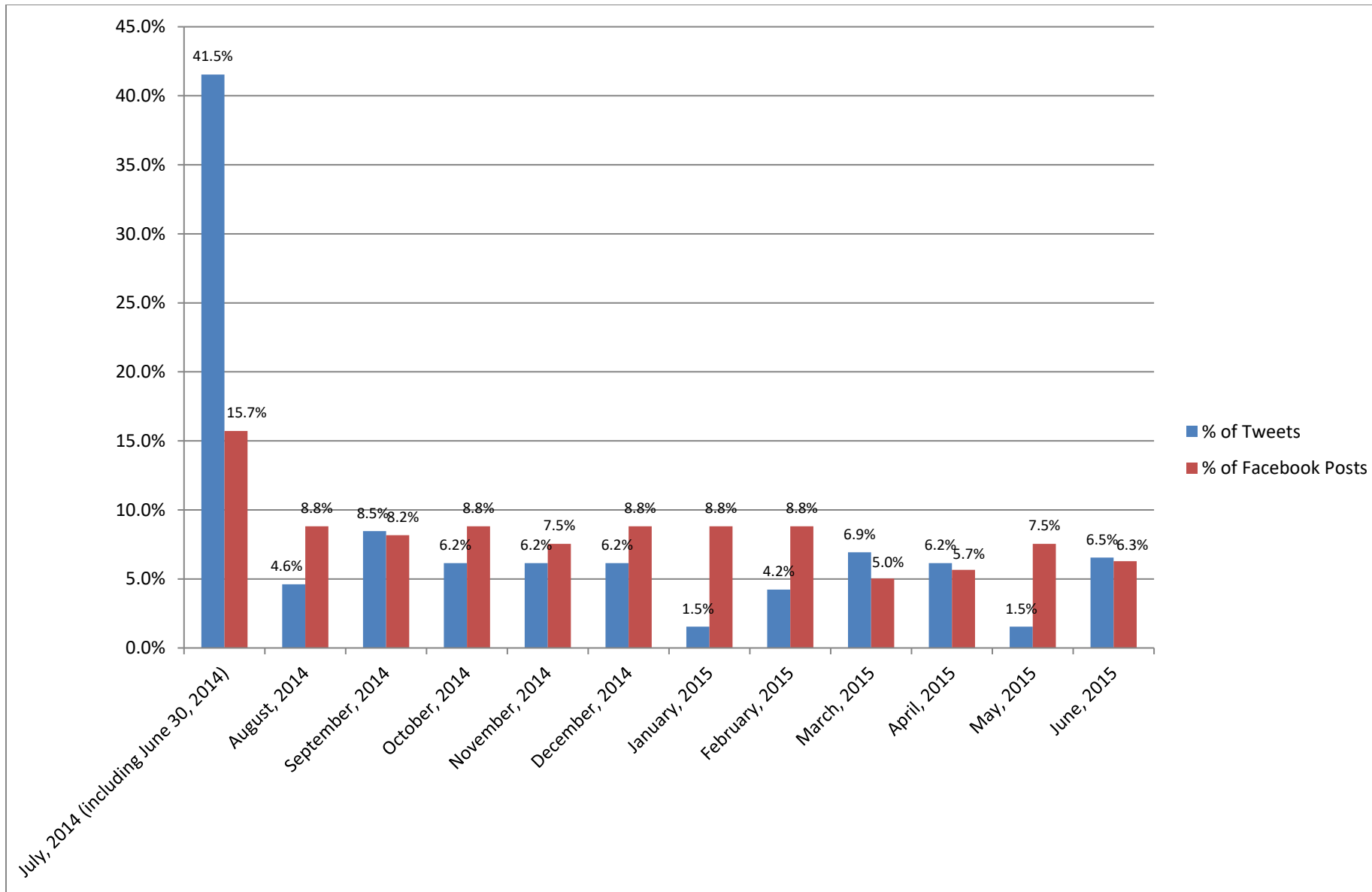


Figure 1. Monthly distribution of Facebook and Twitter posts

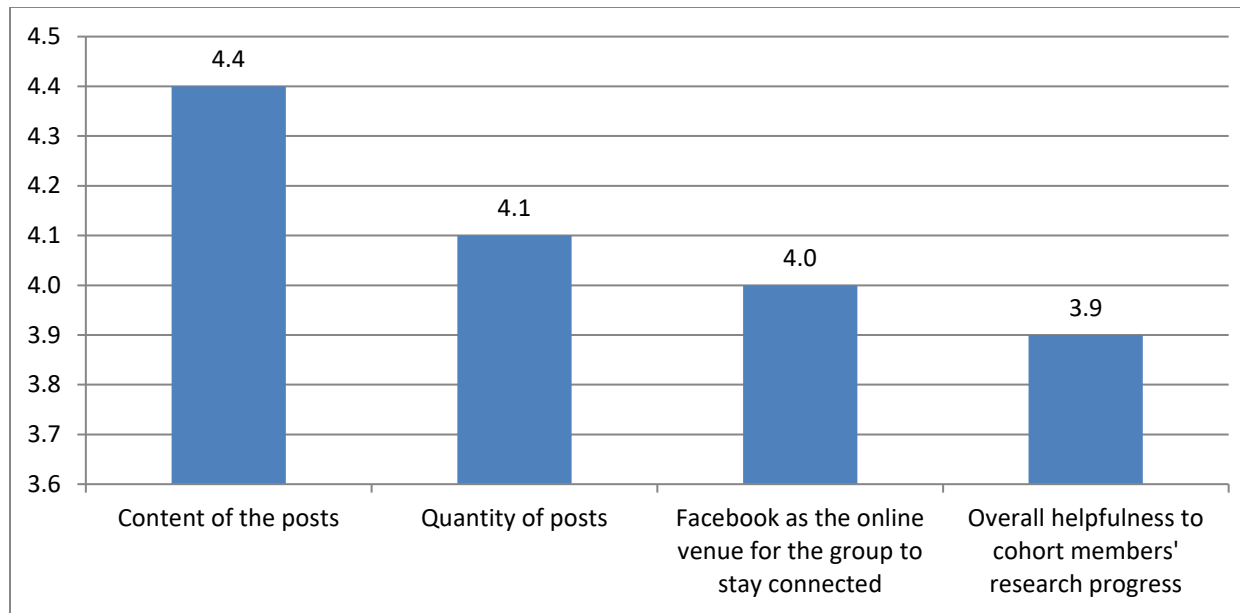


Figure 2. Cohort members' satisfaction with different aspects of the Facebook group

May 2020

African-American Mental Health Community: Information Needs, Barriers, and Gaps

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African-American Mental Health Community: Information Needs, Barriers, and Gaps

Abstract

This paper articulates the importance of African Americans regarding mental health: how they obtain information, lack of available resources, internal and external pressures of receiving help, and the gathering of their information from non-traditional sources in comparison to traditional. Historically, the community has faced stereotypical pressures, which they actively fight against to be viewed as equal. After segregation being abolished and many sources and organizations offering support for many different races, there is still an imbalance in what is offered and available for African Americans. A mix of current and dated studies and texts will be highlighted to discover findings, notate critical gaps of information, and create a discussion. Information has been gathered using databases such as National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), PsychNet, Science Direct, as well as organizations focusing on mental health like National Alliance of Mental Illnesses and Mental Health America (MHA). Through this search, smaller organizations named the Association for Black Psychologists, HBCU Center for Excellence in Behavior Health, and BlackGirlsSmile were found. The organization, BlackGrilsSmile, was created in response to the lack of available resources for African Americans and females in terms of mental health. Larger organizations like the National Alliance of Mental Illnesses have created a symposium in 2004 focusing on African Americans and mental illnesses and recovery, to close the gap. The resulting findings indicate that while there have been advances made towards creating more resources and support in mental health awareness for the African American community, it is imperative to form an understanding of what African Americans face with limited resources due to racism, discrimination, poverty, the social climate, and even the community itself.

Keywords

African Americans, Mental Health, Mental Illness, Information Community

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I would like to thank Professor Buchanan for the suggestion of submitting my paper for publication. I would like to acknowledge my colleague and friend, Liz Powell, for taking the time to edit and offer constructive criticism for the literature review inside this paper - the first I've ever created in my academic and writing career.

About Author

Stephanie has a BA in English with a concentration in Creative Writing and a minor in Music from Hollins University. She is certified to teach Piano and English as a Second Language. She was a grant researcher/writer intern at Hampton Roads Academy, and volunteered in various places including the Norfolk Botanical Garden's library before becoming employed with the Norfolk Public Library. Stephanie is currently a Library Associate II and is working towards her MLIS at San Jose State University.

Introduction

African Americans are less likely to seek professional help for mental health education and treatment, despite the availability of numerous resources. Because of this, members of the community can sometimes experience more severe forms of mental health conditions or might go undiagnosed or treated due to these unmet needs. This is partially because of barriers such as racism, discrimination, and financial restraints and also due to reliance upon traditional information seeking behaviors. Many may choose to turn towards family, church, schools, and news from potentially non-reliable sources online before focusing on professional medical support (Anderson, 2003).

African Americans seeking mental health information form a specific information community based on a shared interest and need. Durance (2001) explains information communities as those being “united by a common interest in building and increasing access to a set of dynamic, linked and varying information resources” (p.164). People suffer with mental illness for various reasons, from genetics, to environmental hardships, such as stress from the workplace, finances or relationships. Those in the African American mental health community have various options for support and information, but the information is not currently easily, reliably or accessibly shared.

A mental illness may occur in all races and all ages at different stages of life. This literature review gathers research studies and texts which focus on African Americans and their information seeking behaviors when it comes to mental health. Highlights will include the effects of poverty and racism on information seeking behaviors, as well as the overall stigma of mental illnesses within the community and how this influences information seeking behavior. This review focuses on information needs and barriers, information sources, and information gaps.

Literature Review

Information needs and the related stigma

In the current literature, several trends emerge in mental health information needs and services for African Americans: a lack of understanding due to a sense of shame, limited access due to internal and external pressures, using faith and religion as a predominant resource, and large gaps of information specific to the community. Talking about mental health or suffering from a mental illness is quieted in the African American community as other environmental stress factors have long loomed larger, in terms of the move towards equity and civil rights.

On top of this, even beyond the African American community alone, mental illness is frequently stigmatized. In the United States’ current political and social climate, mental health funding is always at a risk of being cut off, due to not being viewed as crucial as physical health. For African Americans, access to resources for mental illnesses is hard to come by, both from internal and external sources.

Polaha, Williams, Heflinger, and Studts (2015) state that “although stigma may be a leading barrier to care among rural individuals, many factors influence an individual’s decision to access mental health services” (p. 1096). External pressures

push African Americans with mental health concerns to look toward family, church, schools, and various sources of text before turning to professional medical support. These would be considered non-traditional sources of information as not coming from a well-founded medical focal point. Community stigma toward children with mental health problems and their families was a frequently endorsed perceived barrier to help-seeking (Murry, Heflinger, Suite, and Brody, 2011).

The African American community obtains pressure from others inside its own community, but many of these pressures starts in the home, with the parents. Polaha et al. (2015) mention in their study that parents of children with a mental illness used phrases like “some people might look down on me,” “my child’s teacher would treat him/her unfairly,” and “I would be worried that people in town would find out” when seeking mental health services for their children. Results showed that the more stigma parents perceived, the less willing they were to seek services for their children in traditional (mental and behavioral health services and private practices) and even in no-traditional settings (school, primary care, church, and teleconference).

Information seeking needs and behaviors

Social and cultural influences are also a leading factor in a mental illness among African Americans and specifically for African American women. In the book *In and Out of Our Right Minds: The Mental Health of African American Women*, authors Brown and Keith (2003) state “African American women have historically combined employment, childrearing, and family roles, thus increasing the likelihood of role overload and role conflict, particularly in circumstances where coping resources are limited” (p. 7). Bates (1989) theorizes in her article outlining the information seeking process of berrypicking that those who search for information won’t have a specific search term or ideas in mind, they will just find relevant pieces of information, but might miss out on a bigger picture or information that might interrogate assumptions. Erdelez (1999) believes that many gain information just by stumbling upon it. Both these theories highlight that information seeking is not always fully intentional or developed and might be more ad-hoc. When it comes to mental health or medical information this is concerning.

Information barriers including poverty and living situations

Poverty is a factor in whether African Americans seek and accept support for their mental health. There are many reasons as to why a family may live in poverty which includes, but are not limited to homelessness, multiple moves, lack of health insurance, and stress of raising a family in poverty. This in turn can affect a child’s mental state and many children might go untreated for mental health or environmental stress related issues.

In addition, living in a rural area might impact the information seeking behavior. Hartley, Korsen, Bird, and Agger’s (1998) focus their research on the different types of treatment and referral patterns for those diagnosed with depression in rural areas. Results have found that long wait times, lack of services, and reimbursement issues were among accepting referrals to mental health providers. Some referrals would be to health centers with a reputation for treating

those with serious or chronic mental illnesses. There were many incidents where referrals weren't even provided.

For African Americans, living areas may affect how easily or difficult it is to gain resources and assistance for mental health, as well as work toward recovery (Murray, Heflinger, Suite, & Brody, 2011). Angold et. al. (2002) examined psychiatric disorders and mental health services in rural African American and Caucasian youth. The parents of those selected to participate in the study, engaged in a phone questionnaire about their children's behavior problems. The subsequent research found African American and white youth were equally likely to have psychiatric disorders, but African Americans were less likely to use specialty mental health services. Lack of time, funding, transportation, and long travel distances, as well as a lack of ethnical and racial diversity in behavior health specialists can be added to the long list of information barriers.

Racism and discrimination among information seeking

An obstacle that cannot be ignored is the experience and perception of racism, be it overt or basic lack of perspective on the part of the providers for mental health services to identify the specific needs of members of the community (Anderson, 2003). Hankerson, Suite, and Bailey (2015) state that everyday forms of discrimination may be more stressful than overt acts of racial discrimination because they are repetitive and subtle. A lasting barrier between African Americans and seeking help for their mental illness dates to the medical experimentation on African Americans during slavery, which laid a foundation of mistrust toward health care providers.

Pitman's (2011) explores passive and active reactions to racism and how anger does not fit into either category. In fact, Pitman (2011) points out that the one adjective that has most often been used to describe African Americans is *angry* or some other variation on the word. Pittman's (2011) research highlighted in this article includes a survey to track from acute to chronic how African Americans perceive racial discrimination they have faced, and in correlation created a linear graph to highlight the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) anger is as a coping mechanism.

Information source through faith and religion

African American communities have a long history of ties to the church and therefore often view the church as a place of solace and comfort. As previously stated, African Americans are more likely to turn to family and the church to gain support for their mental health. African Americans have the highest church attendance rate of any ethnic group in the US and faith-based organizations are the most sought-after source of support among African Americans (Hankerson, Suite, and Baily, 2015).

Hastings, Jones and Martin (2015) concur that religion is an important factor in the everyday lives of African Americans, and as such, is a pivotal role in attending to a mental illness. One of the book's sections, dealing with a mental illness: community interventions and innovative programs for African Americans,

highlights the strong connections of African Americans and their faith. However, while seeking out a “higher” source of help to essentially, pray away their dark feelings or the sins that may have caused their mental health issue is encouraged, the stigma against mental illness remains if religion is not the sole cure (Hastings, et al., 2015). As part of the emerging changes in the African American mental health community, Mental Health Ministries was founded by Reverend Susan Gregg-Schroeder after fighting her own battles against depression (Hastings, et al., 2015). She used her struggles to create an opportunity to help break the stigma of mental illnesses in the church and faith-based organizations (Hastings, et al., 2015).

Weaknesses and gaps of information

The articles and texts in this literature review were published in a span of eighteen years, which accounts for some gaps in information. The growth of technology demands research and information to be updated at breakneck speed, so foundational texts such as Hasting, et al. have not been updated to account for this rapidly changing world of information, so much is missing in the analysis that relates to the way online resources have changed information seeking behaviors.

Mental health has seen a surge in research in the past few years, but information for mental health services specifically for African Americans may continue to be slow on the uptake. Some members of the community may not know how to access the little information available due to lack of computer skills and illiteracy, or not feeling comfortable enough just to find that one person to talk to (Stansbury, Simpson, & Martin, 2011). In addition, information is still hampered by under-representation in the clinical research. Studies are being created and show that more information is desired, but they are far and in between that specifically focus on African Americans. Finding ways to address mental health information in an appropriate manner in connection to a specific culture causes an information needs gap, which makes it difficult for practitioners to provide the best medical assistance (Mishra, Lucksted, Gioia, Barnet, & Baquet, 2008).

In 2004, the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) created the symposium “African Americans: Facing Mental Illness: Experience recovery,” to create access to information, resources and support. The symposium focused on finding new paths to recovery and held panels on Access to Culturally Competent Mental Health Services, African Americans and Suicide, Historical and Mental Health Perspectives of the African American Community, Research Updates and Culturally Proficient Treatment, and much more. As of 2019, this symposium has only been held once, reinforcing the continuing gap in time for regularly updated information to be offered.

To this point, BlackGirlsSmile founder Lauren Carson created the organization in 2010 after noticing “gaps of information she found throughout her mental health journey as a young African American female with clinical depression” (*BlackGirlsSmile*, 2012). The organizations mission and vision are to focus on African American females to receive support and resources to have mentally healthy lives. This literature review finds that identifying and developing updated strategies to address mental health information for the specific African American community is the major gap in research; as lack of recent research makes

it difficult for practitioners to provide the medical assistance and for information seekers to track down reliable medical advice (Mishra, et. al., 2008).

Methodology

I explored a variety of text and resources to gather as much information as possible on African Americans and mental health as an information community. Starting with databases, ranging to text acquired from a catalog search from my library, to seeking out other mental health related sites through NAMI and Mental Health America as a launching pad. Some of the journals I found were from *Psychiatric Services*, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, *American Journal of Public Health*, *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, *Journal of Health. Care for the Poor and Underserved*, *Community Mental Health Journal*, and *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

Most texts were found through EBSCO using San Jose State University's Martin Luther King Jr's Library online catalogue through the Library and Information Science section. I also accessed SJSU library's online catalogue to locate non-fiction and academic books, which in turn would take me to WorldCat to see if my library owned a copy or I could receive one through Inter Library Loan (ILL). I was able to gather a lot of helpful information using the following keywords: *African Americans*, *mental health*, *mental illness*, *racism*, *discrimination*, *poverty*, *privacy*, *African Americans and depression and online*, *African Americans and depression and religion*, *African Americans and depression*, *African Americans and anxiety*, *African Americans and mental health and seeking behavior*, *African Americans and mental health*, *African Americans and privacy*, *African Americans and mental health and information*. *These keywords may have been shortened, and some interchangeable, but I wanted to be as specific as possible to try and find new and relatable information. Other online searching sources included National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), PsychNet, Science Direct, and Google Scholar.*

For research on community sources, I started with Google. I used some of the same keywords in my search including: *African Americans and mental health*, *African Americans and depression*, and *African Americans and mental health and information*. I did narrow my focus on information that many would not readily find, so I decided to bypass the first two pages of sources and focused on page three and beyond to find any information that would catch my eye. This, in turn, helped me locate smaller organizations or groups that may or may not appear as easily on the first page of a search engine based on keyword use. I was able to find BlackGirlsSmile, Association for Black Psychologists, and HBCU Center for Excellence in Behavior Health.

Conclusion

The African American community faces a lot of deterrents when finding access to resources and information regarding mental health. Including general stigmatization of mental illnesses, the African American community experiences additional barriers to access, to information specifically directed to the community, and to research based on the community's specific needs.

The literature review demonstrates that additional research be undertaken to investigate the specific needs for African Americans and their mental health is needed and may result in new studies to create numerous pathways for further development. Research has not developed a clear strategy or recommendation on change in perception of information resources and tends to focus on what is currently available.

For many, mental health situations can be life changing and beyond their immediate physical health and state of mind, can lead to longer-term negative life-changes, such as involuntary psychiatric hold or arrest due to acting out from their illness, or worse. Libraries and other information-based organizations are crucial, now more than ever, as institutions for supporting the information needs and information seeking behavior of African Americans and mental health. Additional research into how African Americans experiencing mental health conditions seek information currently would benefit the creation of new community resources, organizations, information sources and online.

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Collection Development Challenges in Slavic & East European Libraries: A Literature Review

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Collection Development Challenges in Slavic & East European Libraries: A Literature Review

Abstract

The purpose of this paper (a literature review) is threefold. First, it seeks to understand the current landscape of collection development practices within the contexts of academic Slavic and Eastern Europe (SEE) collections. Second, this paper aims to grasp the challenges that impact how librarians devise collection development policies for academic SEE holdings. Third, by drawing on current field research, it investigates how SEE collections are addressing these challenges and sustaining user services. It asks, for example, what tools/resources SEE collections employ to remain vital, relevant, and accessible. Based on these three foci, this paper provides an assessment of the library and information science field's major challenges, and examines various indications of what the future holds for academic SEE collections and their user populations.

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While there are numerous perennial challenges facing Slavic librarianship today, among the foremost challenges are the “erosion of bibliographic control, the disappearance of established vendors, inadequate acquisitions budgets, and ineffective exchange programs” (Trehub, 2009, p.172). Admittedly, these are issues that vex many subspecialty library collections, even the most trafficked and well-funded holdings of academic libraries. On a deeper level, however, perhaps the most intractable challenge is a growing indifference and “erosion of confidence in the traditional mission of the humanities and the value of a liberal-arts education” (Trehub, 2009, p.173). Indeed, niche academic disciplines, such as Slavic studies, would seem to be among the first to undergo erosion. Like other disciplines of the humanities, “there is little that Slavic librarians can do to forestall the feared decline of area and language studies or the humanities in general” (Trehub, 2009, p.181). This is not so much a sigh of resignation as it is a realistic stance toward acknowledging the shifting needs, attitudes, and user preferences of student patrons with different research habits—however, much opportunity exists for Slavic librarians who wish to preserve the relevancy and rich legacy of their collections for future generations of users.

In light of these aforementioned challenges, the purpose of this paper is threefold. First, it seeks to understand the current landscape of collection development policies within the contexts of academic Slavic and Eastern Europe (SEE) collections—that is, what are the internal and external institutional factors that presently influence how SEE collection development policies are written? Second, this paper aims to grasp the challenges that impact how librarians devise collection development policies for academic SEE holdings. At the outset of this research, there seems to be countless factors that loomed intimidatingly over development efforts, especially within the contexts of SEE collections. What first comes to mind are the immediate conveniences of Google and comparably easy-to-use search engines; language translation software/applications; and the now entrenched user demand for digitally accessible content. Thus, with the ever-rising costs of providing access to expensive academic publications, what collection development practices are SEE librarians employing to maintain user access to these resources? Third, by drawing on current field research, this paper investigates how SEE collections are addressing these challenges and sustaining user services. It asks, for example, what tools/resources are SEE collections employing to remain vital, relevant, and accessible? Based on these three foci, this paper provides a comprehensive assessment of the library and information science (LIS) field’s major challenges; indications of what the future holds for academic SEE collections and their user populations; and some reflections on how future SEE collection development policies might be improved and nuanced.

This paper concludes by providing a proposed methodology for preparing informed and up-to-date collection development policies for SEE holdings. For example, the implementation of an organized interview process with SEE librarians of different academic institutions. Interviewees would be queried and prompted to discuss the present challenges facing SEE libraries and how their respective institutions are managing issues and user needs. In this way, collection development, though highly individual based on each library’s holdings, would be

a somewhat untied collaborative effort in which SEE librarians are in constant communication with one another about how to keep their collections relevant and resilient.

Historical Overview

This section presents a historical overview of SEE collections. By examining the specific history of the Library of Congress's SEE collections, this section provides general background information on how these collections came to occupy shelf space in the national library. Placing the literature review within a larger historical context provides a more informed understanding of the roles and objectives SEE collections have played throughout the development of the American academic library. Second, this review surveys American scholarship, published between 1995–2018, to articulate a current understanding of the various challenges that SEE collections face. The third section examines the resolutions, tools, and resources SEE librarians employ to address and manage these challenges.

Slavic/East European Collections in the American Library: A General History

To understand the historical development of SEE collections, it is useful to examine the evolution of Slavic material acquisition at the Library of Congress (the LC), which was slow to develop into a mature and comprehensive process over the span of a century. The history of SEE collections, specifically Russian materials, in the United States began in 1800, when the LC was founded. \$5,000 was budgeted to purchase 155 titles (spanning 728 volumes) and three maps. All materials, aside from one, were published in English. The express purpose of acquiring Slavic materials was to provide content for congressmen engaged in writing legislation, so the major collected genres during this period included history, law, and geography. Interestingly, the exclusion of foreign language materials was bolstered by Thomas Jefferson who, in a missive to the chair of the Library Committee of Congress, stated that no titles in other languages were to be admitted. Books concerning Russia grew incrementally, but the most reasonable explanation for the small stature of the collection was likely due to the fact there was no Russian population in America at that time. Based on historical record, the LC's collection development policy, though not formalized exactly the way today's policies are, dictated that no foreign language titles were to be acquired (Cannon, 2014).

During the tumult of the War of 1812, British forces burned down the LC in 1814. Jefferson sold his personal library, which included 6,487 volumes worth \$23,950, in an effort to restore the LC. Interestingly, Jefferson's library contained three Russian-language titles, three French-language titles published in Russia, and 14 English-language titles published about Russia (Cannon, 2014). Historians acknowledge that Jefferson could not read Russian, but that these volumes were given to Jefferson by American diplomats and civil servants who worked abroad, as well as political contacts who furnished books as gifts.

By 1849, the LC's catalog evidenced a nascent but growing collection of Russian-language texts; however, the dominant trend of acquiring mainly

translations or titles concerning Russian-related subjects remained entrenched (Cannon, 2014). Of course, the major impetus that drove early collection development at the LC was how funds were to be allocated. Institutional quarrelling broached the foundational question that would eventually dictate the LC's collection development philosophy (and whether it would ever prioritize the acquisition of foreign language materials): Would the LC serve only congressmen or the larger American public? This question prompted much internal cacophony concerning the scope and mission of the library. A positive turning point for the LC's foreign language holdings came in 1836, when Count Dmitrii Petrovich Buturlin, a Russian nobleman who died in Italy, offered to sell his library to the LC. The so-called Buturlin collection, which included 25,000 titles and 200 manuscripts in Italian, Greek, and Latin, was purchased. Ironically, the Count's library contained not a single Russian-language work, though its subsequent acquisition by the LC prompted librarians to continue disputing whether the LC should employ a strict collection policy aligned with the research needs of congressmen or widen its scope to become a national library (Cannon, 2014).

The first decade of the twentieth century registered the most significant institutional changes within the LC's leadership and acquisitions ideology. The long-time debate concerning whether the LC would be a parochial collection for congressmen or serve as a national library, open to the public, coalesced in the paradigm-shifting decision to hire a new library director. This director envisioned building the LC into a national library, an internationally recognized bastion of American learning and research. To build this democratic collection, the LC's leadership sought, in part, to retain educated staff with knowledge of foreign-language materials. In 1902, Alexis Babine was hired to expand the LC's international holdings. Babine is credited with successfully negotiating two historic purchases that would permanently establish the LC's Slavic collection. First, in 1904, the LC purchased the Martin Hattala Library, which held 1,500 volumes of classic works on Slavic literature and linguistics; it also contained Slavic periodicals and pamphlets (Cannon, 2014). Two years later, in 1906, Babine orchestrated the monumental purchase of the 80,000-volume Yudin Collection. The purchase of the Yudin Collection is lauded by historians as a total shattering of 'tradition and parochial practice' that spurred the growth of the LC's foreign-language materials (Cannon, 2014, p. 51). Indeed, the acquisition of the Yudin Collection aligned perfectly with the philosophy of the library's new leadership—that the LC was to grow into an open and ever-growing entity, not a resource reserved for elite politicians.

Generally, the period spanning from 1918 to 1939 is regarded as the 'golden age' of academic SEE language libraries in the United States (FERENCE, 2006). Despite the U.S Congress-imposed immigration quotas during the 1920s, the Slavic population that settled in the United States prior to the First World War established flourishing insular ethnic communities wherein small publishing houses, parishes, fraternal organizations, schools, and libraries were founded. One major Slavic community, the Slovaks (who ranked the second most populous immigrant community after the Polish) established fraternal organizations and social clubs that functioned to preserve traditional customs and the written/spoken

language (FERENCE, 2006). Thus, libraries were the cynosure of these ethnic communities, as they provided a space for study, serious discussion, and the preservation of Slavic languages. Noting the existence of these particular libraries is important because it demonstrates that the LC was not the only place that amassed Slavic-language content; instead, Slavic materials existed peripherally, too, in academic and ethnic collections.

For the purpose of brevity, this section will conclude at this point on the timeline of SEE library evolution. It is important to note, however, that the LC's collection development policy often served as the model that academic libraries would emulate. Following the end of the Second World War and as the United States moved into the latter half of the twentieth century, interest in Russian materials (and Slavic media in general) grew astronomically and became priority acquisitions.

SEE Library Collection Development: Challenges & Issues

SEE academic collections are vital parts of library holdings at American institutions of higher learning. SEE materials are especially critical at institutions that maintain specialty humanities disciplines that focus on Slavic Studies, East European, and other area/foreign-language specializations. Area studies collections serve as the institutional spine of the international programs of many American colleges and universities (Schaffner & Baird, 2003). It is perhaps no surprise, however, that despite the importance of these niche collections, that foreign-language materials have a low-use status in North American libraries (Giullian, J. & Monroe-Gulick, 2017). Usage rate is often the benchmark used to assess the overall vitality and worth of a particular collection, but low-use status is not an issue/stigma that can be easily reversed.

Indeed, there is a correlative, and understandable, fear between low-usage material and available funding for those resources—after all, why should library budgets allot funds for material that is rarely used? To answer this question, research that focuses on SEE collection development concentrates not so much on how to increase usage of SEE materials; rather, it aims to evaluate the reasons *why* low-use foreign language materials deserve continued acquisition and funding (Giullian, J. & Monroe-Gulick, 2017). A recent study spearheaded by Kansas University's International Collections librarians conducted a *Faculty, Researcher, and Graduate Student Needs Assessment Survey*, the purpose of which was to collect data that represented the research needs of area studies students and faculty. On a positive note, the survey results reported that 91% of responders emphasized the high importance of collections and content; 67% emphasized the importance of research guides and discovery tools; and 37% responded that access to an information management provider (Slavic Studies librarians) was also of high importance (Giullian, J. & Monroe-Gulick, 2017). As this research demonstrates, low-usage rates do not provide wholly representative evidence of a particular collection's overall worth. Furthermore, as library content is increasingly digitized and services are offered through web-based systems, the ability to 'privilege' the acquisition of only high-usage materials has grown tenuous (Atkinson, 2006). Even if a collection is not accessed as frequently as

English-language materials, area studies collections still serve user populations in need of their resources and the professionals who steward them.

By extension, a related challenge that continues to vex SEE collection librarians, especially those who work in high-specialty area studies, is the dilemma of developing a foreign-language collection that is culturally rich and interesting but decidedly unneeded by the vast majority of users. This is an uncommon, but unresolved, challenge for SEE collection development professionals who must weigh the intrinsic worth, but considerable expense, of building a collection of obscure foreign-language materials that will likely receive little usage. Recent scholarship considers the development of a collection that would house vernacular-language material from the North Caucasus, specifically Turkic tongues such as Kumyk, Karachai-Balkar, and Nogai (Condell, 2017). SEE librarians who promote such collections believe, with infinite sanguinity, that if a collection of obscure language were to be established, researchers would eventually come (this date unknown) to use it (Condell, 2017). These librarians, such as those based at the International & Area Studies Library of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, debate whether obscure materials have immediate value to justify acquisition investments. This camp of librarians warns that SEE collections that do not contain hard-to-obtain foreign-language materials risk becoming linguistically impoverished and simplified collections (Condell, 2017). Furthermore, SEE librarians in favor of collecting Turkic-language material (and other little-known tongues) argue that without access to this information, future scholars will lose opportunities to study cultures that would otherwise enrich related academic subjects, such as politics, history, gender studies, and literature—that is, what *could* be lost, what *might* be missed if this material is not accessible to future scholars? (Condell, 2017). Contrasting viewpoints, however, are understandable, as this type of obscure material is not only challenging to find and acquire, but rather expensive to purchase and difficult to catalogue.

Underused SEE Collections

Low-usage status is a problem for collection development policy because SEE librarians must also contend with competing technological and digital contenders that complicate the acquisition of library materials. For example, if Slavic Studies librarians know that students prefer digital journal resources, they may not develop an acquisitions policy that promotes only the obtainment of hardcopy monographs. Such major technological and digital contenders may seem obvious but are worth identifying for the purposes of understanding how SEE collection development policy is impacted today. The first major challenge is understanding the changing information behavior of user populations (Wallach, 2009). A salient and well-known preference of many younger users is the use of Google to begin research, which underscores that many patrons are not regarding libraries as the starting point of academic inquiry. Additionally, students are not spending as much time in libraries, let alone consulting bibliographic resources for locating material—instead, students, in general, are expected to spend their time working in a rare manuscript archive, preparing conference papers, and participating in academic and professional societies (Wallach, 2009).

Indeed, SEE librarians have not confronted these changes with a Luddite unwillingness to evolve with new technological advancements. These changes impact what Slavic Studies librarians called ‘Slavic information literacy (SIL)’ (Brewer, 2009). Research demonstrates that changes in information literacy have produced critical shortcomings in students’ bibliographic capabilities. For example, SEE and area studies students lack an ability to articulate specific and narrow thesis research boundaries; furthermore, students struggle to ideate and identify useful ‘keywords’ to focus search results (Wallach, 2009, p. 224). Interestingly, a major but often understated reason why SEE students may fail to fully embrace library collections is the dominant culture of higher education. This culture is informed by various economic and financial factors that pressure students to complete their studies as quickly as possible (the allure of post-graduation employment prospects, etc.) (Wallach, 2009). While these particular issues do not necessarily impact SEE collection development policies directly, they do demonstrate major distractions and lacunae in users’ information literacy habits, which cause otherwise valuable materials to go overlooked and, therefore, unused.

Compounding these new permutations in students’ research habits is a general deterioration of comprehensive bibliographic control, shrinking acquisition budgets, and vanishing material vendors (Trehub, 2009). As alluded to earlier, the proliferation of technological conveniences, such as Google, iPads, and smartphones, has led users to access vast amounts of information outside the confines of the library. This upheaval in technology has altered the means and methods with which people use to think about and access information (Cadmus, 2011). These changes in the library landscape coalesce into a major challenge for libraries.

Aside from the global impacts of major technological changes and the widespread permutation of information literacy, SEE collections also face very immediate and practical challenges. These challenges include the evaluation and preservation of Slavic materials. Echoed throughout SEE library and information science research is the need to preserve at-risk and deteriorating materials. This poses a major collection development challenge as librarians must implement preservation controls if these collections are to acquire rare/older materials in the future. Of course, SEE libraries cannot acquire more material without first taking responsibility and preserving that which they currently hold. Many Slavic collections contain poorly bound materials published on acidic paper (Schaffner & Baird, 1999). The issue of preservation is pronounced for Slavic collections because much of the material is printed on low-quality acidic paper (very typical of publications printed in East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union). This paper has the brittle consistency of periodical print (Schaffner & Baird, 1999). Historically, Russia’s economic conditions required publishers to use whatever paper materials were readily available; moreover, there was no strong concern in Russia to produce durable print material that would serve to extend the lifespans of resources (Schaffner and Baird, 1999). Lending this issue of preservation statistical weight, a study conducted at the University of Kansas’s libraries determined that only 2.26% of its Polish material is brittle, while 17.43% of the

Russian collection is rated as brittle and in need of immediate preservation (Schaffner and Baird, 1999). On a positive note, however, book production in both Poland and Russia has increased the use of acid-free paper. Statistically, since 1991, 29% of Poland-printed and over 15% of Russia-printed volumes have been published on acid-free paper (Schaffner and Baird, 1999). These changes in production suggest that material preservation will not be an eternal issue; however, SEE libraries must, in the meantime, devise an affordable and practical methodology for preserving (and digitizing) aging material.

The Diminishing Spaces of SEE Collections

Among other immediate issues facing SEE library collections include shrinking real estate to house physical materials. Diminishing space to house material impacts collection development because librarians must consider how/where newly acquired material will ‘fit’ within existing spaces. For example, the Alumni Memorial Library of St. Mary’s College in Orchard Lake, Michigan, which acquires rare and out-of-print Polonia, must store its volumes in inaccessible, hard-to-reach areas (Majewski, 2003). Worst of all, due to spatial restrictions, the collection must house its overflow materials in buildings prone to mildew and decay, which threatens to (further) compromise rare material (Majewski, 2003). This may appear to be a mundane issue that not every SEE library faces; however, the larger reality that cannot be ignored is that the library collections that serve area disciplines (such as Slavic, Polish, and Bulgarian Studies) typically operate on the most parsimonious budgets and, therefore, do not have immediate access to larger storage facilities with the necessary climate controls.

Some Polonia and Slavic collections face far trickier and intractable problems, such as institutional obscurity, despite their affiliation with a college or university (Majewski, 2003). Some American SEE collections are ‘ethnic institutions,’ meaning that there is a certain degree of ‘insularity’ that delays external networking with other academic institutions (Majewski, 2003). Unfortunately, this lack of exposure results in keeping these valuable materials hidden from scholars and students who would otherwise benefit from access. This challenge can be lessened by establishing connections and interlibrary loan networks with other research institutions; however, this can be a time-consuming and cumbersome effort, and many smaller SEE collections are employed by an already overcommitted staff. Even in the year 2020, despite all myriad digital conveniences and global connectivity, there likely remain SEE collections that are not organized under an accessible and uniform cataloguing system. For example, it was only with a grant issued under the library Services and Construction Act that the aforementioned Polonia collection of St. Mary’s College was able to transition to the OCLC System (Majewski, 2003). Again, some SEE collections remain veiled in obscurity due to a lack of trained library personnel and funds required to properly catalogue and digitally promote their holdings to the academic world—in the meantime, these materials risk moldering in inadequate storage units.

Shrinking Budgets & Vanishing Vendors

From a collection development standpoint, SEE collections face a large challenge that will most likely never quit harrying academic libraries: budget shortages (Trehub, 2009). Funding limitations fuel increasing pressure to acquire material and provide access to information in the most economic fashion possible. To address the issue, SEE collections have implemented cooperative solutions, such as resource exchange and loan networks, to keep costs at a manageable level. For example, OCLC, the Research Libraries Information Network, and the Center for Research Libraries create consortia that unite collections. Seasoned librarians, though optimistic about the efficacy of ‘library cooperation,’ such as consortia, doubt that it can ever be a cure-all solution for budget shortages (Schaffner, 1999, p. 263). This cautionary optimism stems from a general worry that large consortia will overlook (or worse, ignore) the specific needs and priorities of smaller, local collections. Moreover, there is concern that librarians may establish redundant cooperative efforts with an aim to ‘acquire local control over a project,’ which could result in ‘scarce resources being spread too thin’ (Schaffner, 1999, p. 264). For SEE consortia to be truly efficacious, there are various essential aspects on which participants need to reach concurrence (Boissé, 1995). For the purpose of this paper, it would not be worthwhile to itemize each of these aspects in detail; however, there are some that clearly influence the SEE consortia managed by the University of Kansas. These aspects include: ‘Library cooperation is easier to establish in a hitherto unexplored area; The more democratic the organization you create is, the more difficult the decision making; Your library will never be the same; Be prepared to lose some autonomy; Once established, a library cooperative never ceases to exist’ (Boissé, 1995, pgs. 90–93). These particular aspects (or what may be understood as compromises/concessions) have proved to be particularly useful during the process of establishing SEE consortia that unite academic collections.

The gradual dwindling of Slavic material vendors also poses an enormous challenge. In April 2008, the Russian Press Service (RPS) closed, which stymied librarians’ ability to purchase affordable language material. Although the closing of the RPS now seems like a long-ago misfortune, there has not been a comparable replacement, and the costs of language materials continue to increase (Trehub, 2009). In response, wealthy institutions, such as Yale University, dispatch their SEE librarians to visit East European countries to establish approval plans and material exchange programs with in-country vendors, such as those based in Estonia, Bosnia, and Latvia (Lorković, 2009). These acquisition trips serve to establish exchange programs with in-country academic and national libraries. Of course, such an arrangement is ideal for library collections whose acquisition efforts are flagging due to the high costs of material; unfortunately, though, due to the expense and luxury of such travel opportunities, it is hardly a feasible option for most budget-strangled institutions. Examples of global acquisition expeditions, however, do lend some insight into how fruitful international relationships might be established remotely (Lorković, 2009). For example, approval plans and catalogs can be exchanged to emphasize areas of collections that can be strengthened and diversified. Although this is an attractive

way to facilitate collection development, it is difficult to execute remotely—and, unignorably, it will remain an option that only elite libraries can afford.

Regarding SEE collection approval plans, recent library and information science research indicates that these plans are not necessarily indispensable keys to building comprehensive collections. In fact, professionals admonish that ‘exclusive reliance on them contribute to a limited and homogenous collection’ (Dali & Dilevko, 2005, p. 238). Therefore, to circumvent some acquisition limitations, some SEE libraries resort to alternative methods of obtaining new material. To illustrate this point, recent SEE library research has demonstrated that although many academic libraries have formal approval plans in place to develop their collections, many opt to use ‘non-approval-plan-based (NAPB)’ collecting practices. These practices, as evidenced by research, serve to facilitate the acquisition of so-called ‘grey literature’; that is, materials that fall outside of mainstream content, such as texts from remote areas and those sold by small/alternative publishing houses (Dali & Dilevko, 2005). This is an especially interesting emerging trend because, until the disintegration of communist governments, exchange programs were among the few reliable methods of obtaining SEE-language content.

Research, facilitated through a web-accessible questionnaire, surveyed the acquisition practices of 33 North American libraries and concluded that *only* six (6) libraries maintain exchange programs (Dali & Dilevko, 2005). This research also notes that 51.4% of surveyed libraries adhere to no approval plans; rather, they use an assortment of NAPB methods (Dali & Dilevko, 2005). To emphasize the significance of this change, it is worth quoting the comment of one questionnaire responder, who writes of Slavic material exchange programs unfavorably: ‘We used to send books on exchange (back in the 1960s and 1970s). We sent our [university press] catalogues to our exchange partners and asked them to choose books of equal value to the ones they were supplying us. This was very labor intensive and required good record keeping. We felt we were in fact working for the libraries in [Eastern Europe]’ (Dali & Dilevko, 2005, p. 255). International exchange programs, as a fading practice, are regarded increasingly as a method with considerably high labor costs (Hogg, 2002). As a fresh alternative, NAPB practices include a much less formalized processes of acquiring material, such as book fairs, gifts, independent book agents, and North American bookstores that sell foreign-language material (Dali & Dilevko, 2005). Evidently, SEE librarians are implementing much more flexible acquisition practices that no longer adhere to a strict approval policy. The challenge remains, however, that although there is more latitude in material acquisition methods, the cost of content remains borderline prohibitive.

In summary, many of the challenges are not wholly unique to SEE collections. Indeed, all collections, ranging from periodicals to rare manuscripts, face similarly pressing issues, such as budget shortages, preservation needs, and even weak (or lack of) consortium-like partnerships that reduce acquisition duplications and related expenditures. Importantly, these challenges are much more pronounced in collections that support area studies, as the libraries that serve these disciplines are smaller and generally considered to less important due

to low-usage rates. **Table 1** below provides a succinct overview of the major challenges facing SEE collections and articulates the far-reaching implications of these challenges.

Table 1. Major Challenges Facing SEE Collection Access, Usage, and Development	
Challenge	Ramifications
<i>Restrictive Budgets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff shortages; reduced acquisitions; reduced purchase power; cheaper solutions to issues (material preservation insufficiencies)
<i>Preservation Urgencies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brittle materials at risk to deteriorate; brittle bindings; limits user usage/mobility due to concerns about fragile condition; impacts feasibility of exchange/interlibrary loan programs
<i>Acquisition Expenses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limits acquisition of physical/digital resources; impacts faculty and student resource purchase requests; strains future development of collections and potential user engagement
<i>Institutional Insularity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limits external awareness of collection; reduces publicity and opportunities to establish collaborative networks/consortia
<i>Spatial Constraints</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forces smaller collections to house material within inadequate storage spaces (mildew, mold, humidity); poses organizational inconsistencies; complicates future acquisitions/collection expansion
<i>Changing User Habits / Information Literacy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curtails need/use of libraries' resources; weakens and oversimplifies research habits; creates gap between library professionals and students; reduces student fluency in bibliographic tools and resources
<i>User Preferences for New & Emerging Technologies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creates gap between library resources and user-preferred tools; impacts how users find, access, and consume information; users do not regard library tools as viable options
<i>Public / Institutional Perceptions of 'Low-Usage' Materials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Places a low-priority status on area studies/SEE collections from funding and development standpoints; creates viewpoints that low-usage materials deserve less attention and investment
<i>Conflicting opinions to acquire obscure foreign-language material</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential curtailment of future scholarship/research opportunities; SEE collection is not comprehensive; risks content homogeneity and simplification; lack of 'obscure' material stifles potential user curiosity

Managing & Resolving SEE Collection Development Challenges

This section presents research that proposes tools, methods, and resources that are currently employed by American SEE librarians to manage the previously described collection development challenges. That is, what measures are taken to ensure that these challenges do not compromise collection development efforts? Additionally, this section considers recent research that describes various new bibliographic controls and information literacy instruction models that are implemented to serve student users. In doing so, it draws a connection between SEE collection development and how student users access and engage with SEE materials in meaningful ways.

(Re)Connecting Users with SEE Resources

As stated earlier, SEE collections remain underused, in part, because today's students have information literacy habits that involve consulting major Internet search engines, such as Google, instead of using libraries as springboards for

initializing research. SEE librarians are aware of how information literacy habits have changed over time and, fortunately, employ practical ways to educate users how to find and access the information they need. For example, some SEE libraries promote the implementation of a simple, one-hour information literacy class that instructs student users how to navigate a library's main homepage, including JSTOR, ArtSTOR, ProQuest, and other digital bibliographic catalogs (Wallach, 2009). Although this type of instruction is by no means unique to SEE studies, it is especially important in light of the interdisciplinary nature of Slavic Studies—that is, it encompasses (and often overlaps with) many disciplines, such as history, art, literature, politics, and geography. The implementation of a one-hour class also gives SEE libraries an opportunity to address the resources available through Google Scholar, Google Books, and Google Images as an extension of the scholarly process. The importance of situating these Google sites within the context of information literacy is to discuss how to use precise keywords to conduct focused research—indeed, these skills are even more important in the world of Google because of the vast amount of information offered through its various search engines. Lecturers then end these instructional sessions by reiterating the value of SEE libraries, which serves to remind students that Google is not the only conduit through which information can be obtained (Wallach, 2009). Research also indicates the importance of information literacy seminars that instruct students how to use bibliographic resources, such as OCLC *WorldCat* and *Open WorldCat*, to conduct advanced searches. These search tools help students to perform precise searches for highly specific content without relying on Google exclusively (Husic, 2017). This type of information literacy instruction is fundamental to SEE collection development because it ensures that users are equipped with the knowledge required to fully benefit from what libraries have to offer.

To reiterate, the ever-increasing expense of purchasing foreign-language material remains a formidable challenge for SEE libraries. Rising costs, however, do not necessarily ring the death knell for SEE collections; in fact, current library and information science research demonstrates that there are many digitization projects and electronic consortia that serve to relieve the financial burden of acquisition budgets. For example, the University of Kansas library used a U.S. Department of Education Title VI Foreign Information Access (TICFIA) grant to launch a digital database containing 60 federal and regional bibliographic catalogues of Russian archives. In collaboration with Rosarkhiv, the federal Russian agency that manages the country's archives, the library used the \$255,000 grant to develop a database that now enables users to search the contents of 80,000 different archival collections (Schaffner, 2007). This project, known as the Russian Archives Database, provides a user-friendly format that allows students and faculty to search the collections of Russian archives. Before launching this project, some catalogs were inaccessible to users outside of Russia; however, since establishing this database, SEE students and researchers are able to search guides that provide a comprehensive listing of all archival content (Schaffner, 2007). This important project provides access to rare Slavic materials that have been either closed off or unavailable to academics and the general

public outside of Russian. The holdings of many of these Russian archives have remained hitherto unknown because there has not been an organized dissemination of their catalogs and, furthermore, many are limited to serving only the needs of scholars.

These types of archives also exist in the United States and could benefit from the digital representation of their catalogs. Consider, for example, the Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry based in Miami, Florida, which opens its collection only to those who schedule visits (Klähn, 2015). The Sackner Archive houses rare modernist texts, samizdat, and émigré publications, as well as conceptual art, created by Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, Polish, Serbian, and Hungarian writers and artists. This type of archive would benefit significantly if it were to upload a digital copy of its catalog. Skeptical librarians may conclude that although this program was successful in digitally merging the catalogs of thousands of Russian and American SEE archives, it does not lead to acquiring cheaper foreign-language materials. This is certainly true; however, the success of this program demonstrates that it is possible to use federal or state funds to develop a large-scale electronic resource that enhances the accessibility of hard-to-find materials (Schaffner, pg. 83). Another fortuitous byproduct of this project has been the subsequent participation of Russian archives that refused to relinquish copyrights at the outset of the project. Since observing how this project has secured the international visibility of other participating archives, these collections have now joined and uploaded their catalogs/holdings to the database (Schaffner, 2007). Although a project of this ambition and magnitude may not be feasible for every SEE library, there are opportunities to develop digitization projects that promote the longevity and richness of foreign-language collections.

These types of collaborative programs beam optimism onto the future of SEE libraries. Research continues to demonstrate that indexing, abstracting, and digitizing catalogs and bibliographies enhances exchange programs and resource sharing among institutions. Open-access catalog sharing platforms, such as the Co-operative Online Bibliographic System & Services (COBISS), Matarka29, and biblioteka, all work to help users find and access foreign-language resources from Slavic and East European countries (Lenkart, 2016). New Slavic bibliographic portals (used to archive conference proceedings and abstracts), such as *Uridicheskaia Rossiia: federal'nyi pravovoi* (Russian Federation) and *ÈSM (Ekonomika—Sociologiia—Menedzhment): federal'nyi obrazovatel'-nyi*, serve to enhance the visibility and accessibility of Slavic materials. Another fortuitous outcome of international digitization/catalog sharing efforts has been the development of interlibrary loan programs, as well the establishment of virtual SEE scholar communities (Lenkart, 2016). These virtual communities work together to sustain digitization projects, in addition to exchanging ideas and tools for SEE collection development.

Resource Sharing & Other Tools of Collaboration

Another tool that SEE librarians employ to curtail material acquisition costs is the “2CUL Slavic” resource-sharing program. Established by Columbia University Libraries and Cornell University Library in 2009, the 2CUL Slavic project merges and coordinates the resource-sharing efforts of these two major university

campuses. The primary objective of the 2CUL Slavic initiative is to build a cross-institutional relationship that allows the libraries to leverage the exchange of their collections in order to better manage the increasing costs of foreign-language materials (Davis, 2017). 2CUL Slavic “makes more materials available and accessible to the scholarly community by reducing the number of duplicate titles between the two institutions to a bare minimum” (Davis, 2017, p. 70). Eliminating duplicates by sharing materials effectively diminishes acquisition expenses. Each participating institution collects expensive language material that is of great importance to students and research faculty. Columbia University’s collection holds Mongolian, Turkmen, Georgian, Armenian, and other little-collected foreign-language materials. Historically, Cornell collects fewer languages, but still provides many expensive materials in Belarusian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Hungarian, Macedonian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovene, and Slovak (Davis, 2017). Statistical evidence demonstrates that the 2CUL Slavic arrangement is not some impossible-to-implement collection development pipedream—amazingly, a November 2015 catalog search for monographic Russian texts (2011–2015) reported that Columbia had 9,021 volumes, while Cornell had 6,441. Of their combined total of 15,462 volumes, only 279 (*less than 2%*) were duplicates. Strikingly, if users had conducted the same search in 2006–2010, predating the establishment of 2CUL Slavic, that duplication rate *escalated* to 12% (Davis, 2017). Research also notes that the 2CUL Slavic model has inspired other institutions, such as Princeton University and the New York Public Library, to develop similar resource-sharing programs between their respective SEE collections (Davis, 2017). The success of these models is undoubtedly the future of area studies collections that must contend with the ever-escalating costs of materials. By extension, the 2CUL Slavic example emphasizes that SEE libraries cannot afford to be insular entities—that if they want to remain relevant and solvent resources for users, they must adopt an outlook of collaboration and flexibility.

A SEE librarian based at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in Urbana, Illinois, notes that “The future growth of online research resources from Eastern and Southern Europe, Eurasia, and the Baltic region depends on renewed efforts to explore the intellectual production of these regions” (Lenkart, 2016, p. 224). Indeed, SEE librarians struggle to stay abreast of the many new foreign-language materials that are published annually. Research demonstrates that there are many open-access resources that SEE librarians can use to identify what these new materials are and where they can be purchased (Pendse, 2016). Various web-based tools, such as open-access resources, are being used to track and monitor new materials that may be acquired for Slavic collections. For example, SEE librarians at the University of California, Berkeley, compile lists of literary webpages to track new developments and publications in the Czech literary world. The webpages provide links to digital repositories of contemporary, Medieval, and early Czech literature. Moreover, the information provided on these webpages gives SEE librarians an understanding of the current trends in Czech book trade/industry (Pendse, 2016). SEE librarians at Berkeley consult the utility of different Czech webpages based on the following helpful

criteria: (1) content relevance; (2) content accessibility; (3) content selection; (4) content validity; and (5) helpful links to relevant information (Pendse, 2016, p. 287). These webpages, some of which are bilingual (that is, also written in English) provide valuable information for SEE collection development librarians that would otherwise be very difficult (if not impossible) to find in English-language publications.

This valuable information includes nominated and winning texts of national Czech book awards; details/bibliographies on contemporary Czech writers; book industry commentary; databases devoted to Czech poetry; book reviews; and news/media about upcoming publications (Pendse, 2016). The evident downside to these types of resources is the language barrier. Of course, librarians can use one of many Internet-based translation services to quickly interpret these webpages. This approach to development resembles the previously mentioned non-approval-plan-based (NAPB) collecting practices (Dali, 2005). By using foreign webpages to search for materials that fall outside the mainstream, SEE librarians can broaden their understanding of the international book market, as well as widen their acquisitions net. There is a firm consensus in the SEE community that the following factors, itemized in **Table 2** below, are vital to preserving the future of foreign-language collections:

Tools / Processes	Benefits
<i>Multi-institutional collaboration (i.e., exchange programs, digitization and interlibrary loan)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Saves money by reducing the purchase of duplicate materials; potentially increases usage rates; surplus funds from savings can be used to purchase rare materials or allocated for preservation purposes; also increases the pool size of SEE material; opens up collections to a larger user population, therefore heightening usage
<i>Engagement with foreign-language resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stay apprised of international book industries, markets, trends, and developments; not relied exclusively on limited English-language vendors to provide up-to-date information on new materials; provides a more informed and sophisticated understanding of foreign book markets
<i>Big-and-small collection partnerships (i.e., digital catalog archives, digitization of catalogs)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mitigates insularity; increases awareness of and accessibility to previously shuttered/underused collections; potential stimulation of scholarly interests/research; establishes a virtual community of SEE librarians/researchers; potential acquisition/collection development savings through material-exchange programs
<i>Current information literacy curricula</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensures users/students understand the range of bibliographic resources available to support research; combats trends/habits in information literacy that default to Google tools; heightens awareness of a library's resources and offerings; establishes connections among librarians, users, students, and faculty; instills advanced search skills

Collection Development Methodologies: Considerations for Future Policies

This section briefly examines three methodologies/tools that could be used to strengthen collection development efforts: (1) A material acquisitions outlook that is informed by flexible but focused non-approval-plan-based (NAPB) practices; (2) a questionnaire/survey tool to gauge users' material needs, as well as the

dominant opinions and professional outlooks of SEE librarians; and (3) establishing a collaborative, multi-institutional initiative to curtail acquisition expenditures.

The first major consideration of academic SEE collection development policy is inculcating an acquisitions outlook that is comprehensive but selective. While this may sound cliché, SEE library research focuses extensively on *what* materials to, rather than *not*, collect. It may seem perfectly axiomatic not to collect materials that one's user population does not need; however, current research does not examine how collection selection or 'weeding' is performed, or, how SEE collections restrict acquisitions based on user needs. In fact, current research leaves readers with a strong impression that SEE collections, given their focus on niche materials, regard all Slavic content of collectable value. Indeed, little research proposes the ways that SEE libraries can build collections without becoming overly homogenous or unfocused. As presented in this paper, there is a growing trend in SEE collection development for librarians to use NAPB collecting practices to obtain new materials. Although this informal type of approach inspires a more flexible acquisition method, it could also lead to the development of an unfocused collection. SEE collection development policies need to establish an acquisition practice that is focused but inclusive of materials offered outside of mainstream vendor channels. By extension, SEE collection policies also need to establish rigorous weeding protocols, especially for libraries that accept public donations and gifts.

As referenced in the literature review, the Polonia collection that experiences storage issues might mitigate the problem if weeding protocols were instituted. Admittedly, this is a difficult, and likely dreaded, activity for collections with obscure and/or rare materials; however, without careful selection and removal of content, collections risk impinging on the future acquisition of materials that users may eventually need. Just because something is *Slavic* does not mean that it must be unquestionably collected, catalogued, and available to users. As stated previously, NAPB practices have potential shortcomings, such as unfocused acquisitions, but they do add an interesting perspective to collection development. Another way SEE libraries can build relevant and resilient collections is by obtaining materials from vendors outside of approval plans. SEE development policies should encourage librarians to find materials because, as already stated, approval plans risk homogenizing and/or narrowing the scope of a collection. NAPB practices can be effective if they are focused on obtaining materials that users need. Different and interesting materials can be found through untraditional conduits, such as independent publishers, off-the-beaten-path tradeshows, or even self-published content—the challenge, however, is encouraging NAPB approaches that concentrate on user needs. By extension, collection development policies can be written to encourage the use of foreign-language webpages and resources that provide up-to-date information on literary news, authors, recent scholarship, and bibliographic data. Based on current research, SEE libraries, despite their niche positions, have enormous potential to benefit from a global network of interconnected resources and ideas for collection development. That is, not every academic library, such as the engineering or

medical sciences, can engage on such a broadly international scale. It is important that SEE collection development policies prioritize different types of international engagement with other libraries, archives, and web-based communities.

Some practical ways to implement or begin thinking about collection weeding include soliciting a questionnaire or survey among a collection's most frequent faculty/student users. The questionnaire would pose simple questions about the perceived low- and high-usage materials; types of materials that responders would like to be collected; and what content is considered outdated or of little importance. This type of questionnaire/survey could achieve a more up-to-date, sophisticated understanding of what users need, how collections can remove unwanted material, as well as strengthen ties among libraries, faculty, and students. Another type of questionnaire/survey that might be especially useful to SEE development professionals is one that probes how other SEE librarians build and maintain their libraries. The following questions/prompts, in **Table 3** below, might be considered to guide librarians' responses:

Table 3. Collection Development Questionnaire / Survey Model	
Questions / Prompts	
1	Please identify the major resources, both material and digital, comprising your institution's Slavic and Eastern European collection.
2	Please identify the most popular materials within your collection. Who are the primary users accessing these materials?
3	What are some of the foremost challenges/institutional difficulties facing Slavic and Eastern European collection development today? How is your collection working to overcome these challenges?
4	How does your institution facilitate the development of its current collection holdings? That is, does your institution issue a user questionnaire to gauge patron needs? How does it communicate with faculty and student users to determine areas of the collection that require attention or new materials?
5	What about your current collection development policy would you revise, change, or update based on your observations of patron needs? How frequently is your institution's development policy updated?
6	For academic libraries working to establish and/or expand its current Slavic and Eastern European collections, what are among the important factors to consider?
7	How closely does the Slavic and Eastern European collection collaborate with the institution's academic faculty, students, and other library departments? Why is this collaboration important? Are there areas of this collaboration that could use improvement and/or emphasis? How does this influence collection development?
8	How does the Slavic and Eastern European collection engage virtual users? How is the collection development policy written to address the needs of remote users?
9	How is the Slavic and Eastern European collection perceived amongst its constituents?
10	Within your institution, have budgetary restrictions ever impinged on improving the collection? If so, how has the collection development policy been reconceptualized to adapt to fiscal limitations while meeting user needs simultaneously?

Using the answers to these questions might provide valuable insight into how other SEE collections are currently developed and maintained by librarians. These types of questions are purposefully broad, so as to ensure that responses are as open-ended and detailed as possible. Most importantly, however, understanding how other SEE libraries function might also serve to identify potential opportunities for material-sharing initiatives or digitization efforts.

Another methodology that might be implemented to strengthen SEE collection development is, as mentioned before, a fully integrated, multi-institutional collaboration to reduce acquisition expenditures. The major benefit of this type of collaboration, especially in reference to the 2CUL Slavic initiative, is the gradual elimination of duplicate materials (and, of course, the associated cost savings). The examples cited in this review are gargantuan initiatives and it would be somewhat naïve to assume that all SEE collections can overcome their individual difficulties by simply pooling resources and establishing interlibrary loan programs. The important takeaway from these major institutional successes is that collaborative efforts, whether large or small, are always worthwhile. Consider again, for example, the aforementioned digitization of Russian archive catalogs. Although this effort evolved into a much larger project, it established, for the first time, a network of connected institutions that now benefit from sharing their respective catalog information. What it overcame, most importantly, was the self-sustained insularity of individual collections, thus introducing them to a larger world of potential users.

Conclusion

Although SEE collections remain confronted by many daunting challenges, current research demonstrates that librarians are using effective tools to keep their collections relevant and resilient. As expressed in some scholarship, a major underlying anxiety is institutional decay, that SEE libraries will succumb to the steady erosion of low-usage rates and a flagging enthusiasm for the humanities. Indeed, abundant warnings in higher education grimly intimate that area studies and other marginal disciplines will be among the first academic strongholds to fade if this enthusiasm continues to diminish. Fortunately, current library research indicates that SEE collections can survive and thrive not by winning large grants or securing massive budgets, but by embracing opportunities for creative partnership. Imperative to success is collaboration. As the above review demonstrates, research also articulates a concern that SEE and other area studies libraries must continue to evolve alongside developing technologies, diverse user needs, and evolving information literacy habits. Research is generally optimistic that SEE libraries can avoid extinction if they build collections and library support systems that meet the current day needs of users. While SEE libraries and others of their ilk may not be able to reverse wilting interest in the humanities, they can position themselves as valuable and purposeful collections that serve an important, if small, user population.

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Electronic Library Collections and Users with Visual Impairments: Challenges, Developments, and the State of Collections Policies in Academic and Public Libraries

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Electronic Library Collections and Users with Visual Impairments: Challenges, Developments, and the State of Collections Policies in Academic and Public Libraries

The digital age has allowed for the creation of electronic resources that have revolutionized information retrieval for many. However, individuals with visual impairments (VI) face unique challenges with access to electronic resources that have yet to be overcome. Rayini (2017) states that one who possesses a visual impairment is someone who is “partially-sighted or completely blind.” According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2019), approximately 2.2 billion people worldwide have a visual impairment in some capacity. This includes individuals with acute and mild cases (para. 3). Given that the current world population stands at approximately 7.7 billion, the WHO’s calculation is striking (United Nations, 2019). This is also a number that will likely continue to rise every day, whether visual impairments are congenital or degenerative. Between the complex nature of electronic resources to be interpreted via certain technologies (e.g., screen readers) and copyright laws inhibiting document reformatting, there is still difficulty when it comes to establishing truly equitable access to these resources for VI users. Therefore, an increase in awareness and action toward creating more accessible information environments is a must.

The ways in which libraries must develop increased equitable access for everyone is not only a desire or institutional mission, but in many places it is the law (Johnson, 2018, p. 128). For collections librarians, it is imperative to understand their users, and also what types of resources and formats are needed to bridge any gaps in accessibility. As a collection development policy is a librarian’s guide to procure library materials, it is important that statements of resource accessibility are present. Overall, these policies provide users with an understanding of a library’s collection scope, how the collection supports their mission, plans for maintenance, and a glimpse into an understanding of a library’s users. In order to achieve this, librarians must conduct the appropriate research in their communities, which will also reveal any measures of accessibility to be considered. Once libraries make it a part of their collection policy to address accessibility, the discussion with vendors and publishers should be ongoing in regards to how they are working to remove the aforementioned technology, format, and legal barriers. In order to address the current accessibility gaps in libraries related to collection management and electronic resources, the research for this paper has identified the challenges VI users face with access; the developments in law to increase access; the state of collection development policies in academic and public libraries, and how they approach accessibility; and current electronic formats and products libraries can select to support accessible collections.

Challenges with Access

Emerging technologies have created opportunities for libraries to offer resources to their users through electronic formats, such as e-books, audio books, and electronic journal databases. These formats have created conveniences for library users all over the world by placing information at their fingertips. In regards to VI users, developments in technology have produced tools that increase accessibility to many of these resources (e.g., screen readers and braille keyboards). However,

challenges still exist. Majinge and Mutula (2019) state that users with visual impairments are often “dependent on third parties to assist them to access electronic and print information resources” (p. 467), which leads to feelings of helplessness and frustration when their independence to access information is restricted by their disability. Furthermore, this challenge pertains largely to electronic sources accessed via the internet, such as academic databases. The ability for users to access information depends on the interface design, and whether it will allow users to apply appropriate technology to read information. Many times VI users must schedule time with an assistant to help them interpret the sources they wish to use (Majinge & Mutula, 2019).

Harpur and Loudoun (2011) state that access for VI users will also depend on the case. In other words, some users may only need materials with enlarged print, whereas individuals who are completely blind will use tools that read texts in an audio format. This further depends on the type of materials the user seeks (e.g., scholarly journals, recreational ebooks). For VI college students who need to conduct research for a class, challenges arise when reader tools fail to recognize footnotes and endnotes, as well as ignore graphs and tables. As students are often tasked with pinpointing quotes and pages for references in their papers, this can prove difficult for VI users. For non-VI users, flipping back and forth between pages, and quickly scanning up and down is a convenience. Reader tools, however, are not as sophisticated to handle this task, and many times the software can make crucial mistakes when detecting words (Harpur & Loudoun, 2011). For VI users who require enlarged print, many platforms through vendors such as Gale, EBSCO, Emerald, and Sage provide the ability for users to zoom in. In some cases this may be helpful, but for VI users that need color and contrast adjustments, the platforms do not provide the ability to do so (Mune & Agee, 2016). Sage and Safari Tech, now Safari Books Online, offer alternative text descriptions for images and tables, which provide descriptions of these document components in order for reader tools to detect them (Mune & Agee, 2016). As the aforementioned products represent a small percentage of platforms, there are questions as to why so few publishers and platforms offer equitable services to academic libraries.

Fitzpatrick (2014) states that publishers often refrain from licensing materials for equitable access, because the market does not support the need to do so. In other words, publishers do not find it cost-effective to create more accessible formats of materials in comparison to the percentage of people without print disabilities. If we consider WHO’s global estimate (2.2 billion) of people with visual impairments and the world population (7.7 billion), these publishers’ sentiments are difficult to grasp. At the same time, publishers have struggled with copyright laws, which reinforce barriers around creating more accessible formats (Fitzpatrick, 2014, pp 140, 142).

Developments in Law

In 2013, the Marrakesh Treaty was adopted by the members of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which seeks to reevaluate and

reconfigure current copyright laws in support of creating accessible formats of published materials. Since its adoption, many nations lagged in ratifying the Treaty, but as of October 2018 the European Union and the United States turned the corner in acceptance. It is important to note that before this development, the United States did have limited exceptions in its Copyright Act (Chafee Amendment), which allows for published materials to be recreated in accessible formats (Abbott, 2019). However, organizations and institutions must be approved to do so. The Marrakesh Treaty essentially works to achieve the same thing but on a world stage, and also broadens the terms of reproduction and access from “specialized formats” (e.g. specific to certain technologies) to “accessible formats.” This change addresses any format that will support efficient access and needs (United States Copyright Office, 2019). As Olwan (2017) states, the Treaty “imposes on the contracting parties the obligation to provide works in accessible format copies in favor of beneficiary persons (also authorized entities), and also allows making any necessary changes to the work for that effect” (p. 181). In other words, this is a huge development that will change the game for publishers, but most importantly for the benefit of VI users.

Currently, *Bookshare* is the largest approved leading online library that has made over 748,000 ebooks available in accessible formats, and as a result of federal funding fueled by the Chafee Amendment (Bookshare, 2019-a). About 600,000 of these titles, according to Abbott (2019), have publisher permission to be shared. The recent United States ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty will allow *Bookshare* to share another 100,000 with the other participating 63 countries, as well as import books previously unavailable. In the view of the United States, this is a great advancement. For the world as a whole this is revolutionary, as 90% of the VI population exists in developing countries (Bookshare, 2019-a). Before *Bookshare*, however, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) was a leader in assisting VI users with access.

Established in 1931, the NLS has only continued to expand and develop by offering a catalog of over 281,000 braille and audio materials in printed and downloadable formats, which can be accessed by participating libraries throughout the United States (NLS, n.d.). As of now, the NLS (n.d.) states that there are “55 regional libraries, 26 subregional libraries, and 16 advisory and outreach centers serving all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam” (para. 3) that participate in the exchange program where materials are shipped or downloaded. Similar efforts can be found in Canada with the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), which was created to support public libraries across the country (CELA, 2019). Like the NLS, CELA has roots dating back to the early 20th century with the Canadian Free Library for the Blind (1907) and the creation of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind Library over a decade later (Cicccone, 2018). It is clear that the mission to provide equitable access for reading materials for VI users has its place in history, although widespread availability of materials has been sparse. The creation of special institutions certainly shows a great effort in the development of this

process over time, but the overwhelming results to truly make things equal comes with establishing a level playing field at some point. An increase in the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty can play a crucial role in this continuing development. For now, those taking part in the effort must focus on how to build the most equitable collections possible.

State of Collection Development

It is evident that although we have come a long way in an effort to increase access, there are still challenges to work through regarding how equitable resources can be to VI users. As we continue to move along to establish a path to fully accessible resources, libraries must consider all possible measures to ensure the collections they possess are as universally accessible as possible. That being said, it is important to examine current policies of both academic and public libraries, and the state of developing collections to meet the needs of VI users.

Schmetzke et al. (2014) state that accessible information environments are best achieved when libraries adopt a policy that includes accessibility in selection criteria, includes accessibility “during the selection process,” discusses accessibility with vendors, and provides “feedback to vendors about the reasons why a product got selected or not (especially if accessibility was a factor)” (p. 172). Furthermore, librarians should consider accessibility a requirement in the licensing agreement. According to Blechner (2014), discussions with vendors should always consist of how the product will benefit the library and its patrons. This includes the discussion of vendor Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPATs). The purpose of VPATs is for vendors to publicly state the capabilities of products and efforts put forth to meet the accessibility requirements stated in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. However, according to the United States General Services Administration (n.d.), compliance applies to federal agencies or those directly associated with them. In order for vendors to conduct business with federal agencies or affiliates, they must present a VPAT either publicly or upon request. The request and use of VPATs in procurement for librarians in general should be considered, although there has been criticism around the usefulness and clarity of them. As Blechner (2014) suggests, libraries and other organizations can certainly hire qualified third parties to draft adequate VPATs to use during licensing discussions with vendors, but this option likely depends on the cost. Overall, libraries must possess a large degree of accessibility awareness; an awareness often not mentioned in collections textbooks or training material for students and practicing librarians (Schmetzke et al., 2014). This, however, leads one to question the current approaches to accessibility stated in library collections policies.

Academic Libraries

In their research, Schmetzke et al. (2014) found that out of 24 smaller academic libraries surveyed for inclusion of accessibility in their collection policies, Sonoma State University was the only school to include accessibility. Taking a look at some additional academic libraries outside of this study, it is

evident that other academic libraries have either continued or began addressing accessibility in their collections. Iowa State University (ISU) (2019-a) states in its collection development policy that it makes every effort to select and acquire electronic resources that will accommodate users with disabilities, as well as the entire campus community (para. 8). One of the most important aspects of ISU's statement is it clearly states that the selection and acquisitions process has ongoing discussion with vendors about the accessibility of electronic formats for their users. ISU's stated efforts in ongoing discussion with vendors suggests a consciousness toward negotiating license agreements. In a separate accessibility statement for the ISU digital repository, there is a link to their own approved VPAT that outlines the components of how they work to provide the most accessible web content for their users. This statement provides insight into the ISU's standards for accessibility. How this translates to the negotiation of license agreements and the procurement of library resources is not directly known, but it reinforces the accessibility awareness factor.

Montana State University (MSU) provides a similar statement in their policy, but they interestingly make it a point to include exceptions to altered formats. MSU (2019) states that it goes to lengths to ensure the most "web accessible resources" (para. 25), as well as to make information gathering and the acquisition of electronic resources a priority. Considering the recent ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty, MSU's exception in their statement reflects the issue of altering the formats of copyright material that has existed for some time. Unlike ISU, MSU's website does not appear to provide any information on their own VPAT. However, there is evidence of awareness when it comes to accessibility and negotiations with vendors during the procurement process. In 2015, former MSU librarian, Kirsten Ostergaard, wrote an article entitled *Accessibility from Scratch: One Library's Journey to Prioritize the Accessibility of Electronic Information Resources*. This article specifically addressed the issue of accessibility of electronic resources at MSU, and the approaches in moving forward. At the time, Ostergaard (2015) quoted the same accessibility statement that appears in MSU's current collection development policy updated September, 2019. However, she highlights MSU's understanding of how vendor communication impacts the procurement process for electronic resources. This includes discussing accessibility, requesting VPATs from vendors, inquiring about alternate file formats, requiring proper accessibility language in license agreements, and negotiations with vendors around converting inaccessible resources into accessible ones. According to Ostergaard (2015), MSU is also committed to improving their collection development policy when it learns of new developments in accessibility. Given that MSU's accessibility statement has not changed since at least 2015, it perhaps indicates a standstill in progress regarding altered formats.

The University of Queensland (UQ) in Australia provides a statement in their collection management policy that practically mirrors the policy from MSU, including the exception of altering formats. Unlike the MSU policy, and even ISU, it explicitly directs its efforts in securing accessible formats toward VI users

(UQ, 2019). Like the United States, Australia is one of 63 countries that ratified the Marrakesh Treaty. However, being that UQ's collection development policy was also updated in the latter part of 2019, it raises questions around what might be holding up the process of format alteration. According to Browne (2018), Australia has amended its copyright law in 2017 to redefine persons with disabilities to include those with print disabilities. Furthermore, it also allows for not-for-profit institutions (e.g., educational institutions) to create alternate formats. As there is no such thing as international copyright law, one can surmise that the most logical reason for delay is attributed to the long process of amending and restructuring copyright laws in other countries participating in the treaty. In other words, although Australians might be able to make format adjustments to resources under Australian copyright laws, restrictions still apply elsewhere. For example, in the United States, the NLS confirmed in May of 2019 that they are still waiting for legal revisions to be made in order to begin sharing accessible formats (NLS, 2019).

From the above statements, one can see the potential within academic libraries to make special considerations to the accessibility of collections when it comes to users with disabilities. However, it must be noted that the aforementioned policies were selected based on their consideration of users with disabilities. Many others considered in the research for this paper either did not specifically include users with disabilities, or only briefly mentioned their consideration of varying formats. For example, Colorado State University (n.d.) states that its libraries recognize the importance in providing resources to their users in varying formats, as well as with varying technologies when necessary. Louisiana State University Libraries' (2018) statement is quite generic, as their policy generally supports "the information needs to the campus academic community..." (para. 2). Additional research, however, can determine the role of accessibility, and the impact all of these policies have on VI users in campus communities, regardless of their current statements. As a review of academic library collection policies can provide a brief look into the state of collections and accessibility, it is dually important to see how the public library sector takes on the same task.

Public Libraries

Academic and public libraries certainly have their differences when it comes to the audience and the types of collections they build. However, an important component of successful collecting is that "accessibility should be an essential requirement when selecting e-resources" (Johnson, 2018, p. 128). In fact, the earlier principles suggested by Schmetzke et al. can be applied to public libraries as well.

The Oshawa Public Libraries (OPL) in Ontario, Canada provide a comprehensive collection development policy that lays out the goals of collection building in order to support the libraries' mission. Not only does the policy explain the need to generate a collection of formats that adheres to the needs of the community, it explicitly states that its collection goal is to include "formats to

facilitate equity of access to persons with print disabilities” (OPL, 2019, para. 4). In order to do this, the OPL seeks the ability to provide access and makes arrangements for accessible resources “where they exist in the marketplace” (OPL, 2019, para. 5), and in compliance with existing legislation. Prior to Canada’s ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty, their copyright laws already allowed for the creation of materials in accessible formats. This makes Canada one of the more progressive nations in terms of creating accessible formats. The law, however, excludes the creation of varying formats for the purpose of wide distribution and monetary profit (Ontario Council of University Libraries, n.d.). Rather than require institutions to be approved to create accessible formats, the implications in the Canadian law simply require individuals and institutions to act in support of one’s “perceptual disability” (Ontario Council of University Libraries, n.d., para. 3). In other words, the creation of accessible formats must be conducted by an individual with a visual impairment or physical disability, or by a non-profit institution acting in support of said individual

The Detroit Public Library (DPL) also provides a clear statement in its collection development policy informing users that a part of its goal is to provide “resources in special formats devised to meet the needs of the vision-impaired, the hearing-impaired, and others whose disabilities impede their ability to make optimum use of other Library resources” (DPL, n.d., para. 45). Further down the policy, the DPL notes its compliance with the United States Copyright Law Code Title 17, Sections 107 and 108, which include the ability for “transformation and reproduction of copyrighted works specifically for customers with disabilities” (DPL, n.d., para. 70). However, the lack of updates to sections of this policy (e.g., 1980, 1996) is concerning, and might explain the omission of the Chafee Amendment in its copyright statement. At the very least, it tells us about the accessibility awareness of the DPL, and its mission to provide access to VI users and other users with disabilities over time.

The Oxford County Library (OCL) in Ontario, Canada presents a somewhat different take in their policy, which states that in order to broaden the scope of the collection and also develop a larger collection for users with print disabilities, the library will take part in consortia and “accessible format initiatives” (OCL, 2018, para. 10). Although consortia are valuable collaborative efforts to enhance the information needs of communities, to be effective means establishing absolute clarity in the mission and goals, understanding the users and their needs, and ensuring the collections can be delivered and accessed (e.g., adequate technologies) in a timely manner (Johnson, 2018). It is not clear which consortia OCL has approached or plans to approach about accessibility for VI users, but its short statement suggests that the library system is paying attention.

Similar to the approach in reviewing academic library collection policies, it was also found that there is a small amount of public library policies available that explicitly present their stance on selection and users with disabilities, let alone VI users specifically. This, however, does not indicate that libraries do not have policies that adhere to laws of accessibility overall. In many cases, academic and public libraries create separate policies that address the needs of users with

disabilities that include facility access, as well as technologies that will allow them to access collections. For example, the Syracuse University Libraries include an accessibility policy that addresses assistive technologies, requests for alternate formats, and assistance services for technology use and resource retrieval (Syracuse University Libraries, n.d.). The New York Public Library addresses the needs of VI users, specifically, in their accessibility policy with a list of available technologies, resources (e.g., talking books), and workshops (New York Public Library, 2019). However, there still lies a question as to whether these policies are indeed considered in the selection process, or whether it is to be assumed. To reiterate Schmetzke et al. (2014), successful accessible information environments come with the inclusion of accessibility in the selection policy, and half of the battle is knowing what products and tools are available to achieve this.

Formats and Products

As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, technological advancements continue to enhance the efforts to improve accessible information environments. For VI users, the format of a resource is the backbone of electronic information access. These formats often come in the form of audio, but can often be converted to large print and braille. Rayini (2017) states that audio formats are among the most popular used by VI users, and usually come in the form of talking books. Historically, these formats consisted of cassettes and vinyl records, but the days of analog formats are dwindling as digital formats have been taking over.

One of the largest consortiums to tackle this change is the Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY), which was established to “develop an international standard and software to produce talking books digitally” (Rayini, 2017, p. 9). Books formatted under DAISY offer advanced navigation capabilities, which assists VI users to pinpoint certain chapters, pages, use the index, and bookmark sections to return to. To access these books, however, VI users must also have access to compatible devices that support the format.

Other formats to consider for reader tools are Electronic PUBLication (EPUB), which is often a format used for Amazon Kindle and Barnes & Noble Nook readers, and Microsoft Word document files. Although Word document files are not a prime format for most talking books, many academic sources are generated using this format (Junus, 2012). VI users seeking large print books will find that libraries do collect physical books in this format. However, many e-books will allow users to adjust the font size or zoom in for appropriate viewing. Additionally, even braille formats have entered the digital age with the use of translation software that can convert formats for braille printing, text scanning that can be translated into braille code, and Braille Refreshable Format (BRF) files. The latter format is compatible with braille reading devices (Rayini, 2017). As understanding the variety of formats is important during the selection process, knowing where to access these formats is vital to building the collection overall.

Bookshare

As previously mentioned, *Bookshare* has the largest collection of accessible books in the world. With more than 748,000 titles, the collection covers a variety of subject areas that suit the interests of VI users, such as students, working professionals, and recreational readers. In addition, this extensive library offers titles in over 34 different languages (Bookshare, 2019-a). What makes this extensive library most accessible to VI users are the formats offered in the collection. Items can be retrieved as DAISY, EPUB, BRF, and Word documents, which will support the varying needs of VI users using varying devices. *Bookshare* is free for United States schools and other organizations (e.g., public libraries). The only requirement is that users must prove their eligibility for access (Bookshare, 2019-b).

Gale In Context

Gale In Context suite is a host to several subject databases that are designed to meet the needs of a diverse population. This product contains “on-demand text and translation into 12 languages,” and is designed to accommodate VI users with low vision to complete blindness with its text-to-speech technology (Gale, 2019). Collections librarians considering this product for the collection should consult the vendor about all possible alternate formats for the VI users they are seeking to serve.

Non-VI User Specific Products

It is clear that there are not a plethora of electronic options for VI users, currently. However, there are additional products that exist, which contain features that potentially meet the needs of VI users. Products such as EBSCO and ProQuest host numerous databases that cover a variety of subject areas. However, as the features vary, collections librarians must discuss accessibility options with the vendors prior to making a purchase or marketing resources as accessible to all users. For e-books, there are many products out there that contain vast collections that cover a variety of subject interests. *Overdrive*, *Mackin*, and *Hoopla* are just a few of the products out there purchased by libraries. For VI users, *Overdrive* books can be read with better accommodations through the use of the *Adobe Digital Editions* app and applicable screen readers (Adobe, 2019). Along with discussing accessibility and features with vendors, Johnson (2018) states that collections librarians should always map out their purchases, and create a set of criteria that must be used when considering the products they wish to purchase.

Conclusion

This paper made an attempt to uncover a current state of electronic resource accessibility for VI users through an exploration of the challenges, developments, collections policies, as well as current formats and available products. It is evident that VI users are still at a disadvantage, as the amount of products and technological capabilities cannot exactly mirror the experience of users without print disabilities. Current formats for many electronic resources prevent tools

from interpreting documents the way non-VI users can, and heavy copyright laws have inhibited this development. However, the developments in law and the Marrakesh Treaty show a progression toward copyright reform across the globe. This reform will eventually remove barriers that are currently preventing libraries and vendors from offering the formats needed to create truly accessible information environments. This paper also found that academic and public libraries are currently sparse with their inclusion of accessibility for users with disabilities in their collections policies. The lack of standard regarding collection statements is concerning, despite separate accessibility policies and statements. The separation of these policies creates confusion as to whether some libraries truly consider accessibility and users with disabilities in the selection process. The current language in collections policies suggests that there is still some ambiguity around active collecting practices, as it relates to VI users. Despite the policy statements in this study that include a degree of accessibility awareness, the statements, alone, do not measure actual procurement or resource impact on VI users. In other words, although some libraries lack accessibility language in a policy, it does not necessarily indicate a lack of awareness regarding accessibility issues. A review of policy statements, however, is a starting point in raising questions around active procurement of accessible materials, and who may or may not be involved in taking action toward improving accessible information environments. Therefore, future research should examine active procurement of accessible materials for VI users, how influential policies have been in that process, and the success rate of procurement based on varying barriers. However, this study has also revealed information that provides hope for the future. Organizations like *Bookshare* have bridged gaps for VI users in the world of ebooks. Their success in providing ebooks in varying formats and languages has opened up a world of literature to VI users. At the same time, it provides us with questions of how this can translate to other electronic resources (e.g., academic journals), so one day information accessibility will not be a question for anyone.

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Emotional Labor, Stressors, and Librarians Who Work with the Public

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Emotional Labor, Stressors, and Librarians Who Work with the Public

Abstract

Service jobs require regular interaction with customers and have certain expectations of specific emotions that should be shown during transactions. This use of expected emotional displays during service transactions is called emotional labor and it is an important part of service work, but there are significant consequences for regular use. This paper reviews the literature on emotional labor, and the consequences of the repeated use of emotional labor within the service workforce. It also reviews the literature on stressors reported by librarians and job-related stress. Relationships can be seen between emotional labor, the work of librarian professionals, and stressors in the library work field. By understanding this relationship librarians can better balance their stress and avoid burnout.

Keywords

Public libraries, user-related stress, stressors, public service librarians, stress, emotional labor, surface acting, deep acting, social sharing, venting

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About Author

Kelsey Simon has over five years of experience working in public libraries in a customer service role. Her love of service is what brought her to libraries to begin with, and she continues to provide the best library services she can at her current position at Georgia State University.

Librarians often feel stress associated with their jobs, which can lead to job burnout and poor physical well-being. Several factors come into play when taking a deeper look at librarians and stress. This is especially true for librarians who work with the public, as patrons have expectations about how they should be treated and librarians are often required to display certain emotions during transactions. This use of emotional labor plays an important role in the profession of the librarian.

This paper will review the literature on emotional labor and how emotional labor impacts service workers, before taking a close look at the stress and stressors public service librarians face. By reviewing the literature, a relationship can be seen between emotional labor and job-related stress for librarians. Understanding this relationship is key to decreasing the negative emotions, health risks, and dissatisfaction that librarians who work with the public routinely report experiencing within their jobs.

Emotional Labor

What is Emotional Labor?

In most service industries, part of the job is interacting with potential customers, clients, patients, or patrons. When interacting with the public, certain socially desired emotions are expected to be expressed, such as smiling and being cheerful, or remaining calm in stressful situations. Different jobs require different emotions and expressing these expected emotions during service transactions is called emotional labor. Hochschild (1983) defines two types of emotional labor: surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting involves expressing inauthentic emotions, either through hiding felt emotions such as anger or fear when interacting with an irate patron, or through faking emotions, such as expressing happiness when one is feeling sad (Mroz & Kaleta, 2016). Surface acting can also occur beyond service transactions, such as with coworkers, and oftentimes, with supervisors.

Deep acting, on the other hand, does not deal with faking emotional displays but instead involves altering one's current emotional state. Deep acting is about transforming emotions, or one's perspective, so that the emotions one needs to express match the emotions one feels (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). For example, if a patron is upset about paying for library books lost in a house fire, a library employee would likely connect with their situation and be able to express the expected emotions out of sympathy.

Emotional labor is a part of service industry work, especially in western culture, and is doubtful to ever change. Users, whether customers, patrons, or clients, have come to expect certain emotional displays as part of their interactions with shopping, service, or other customer exchanges. The effect of constantly putting on these emotional displays is seldom considered, which contributes to the cycle of burnout and stress common in service-oriented professions.

The Impact of Emotional Labor

Hochschild (1983) speculated that emotional labor, no matter the type of acting being used, or the purpose of such acting, would have a negative impact on the one conducting the labor. Many researchers took this claim and dove deeper into Hochschild's ideas, studying the service industry and when certain types of emotional labor are being used, and the consequences of such use.

Zhang, Zhang, Lei, Yue and Zhu (2016) conducted research on sales clerks over a week, in which they were asked to fill out surveys. These surveys focused on the use of emotional labor in their work, the sleep they got between each day, and the fatigue they felt day to day. After gathering data from the survey responses, the authors found that the repeated daily use of surface acting was connected to fatigue, and not in a positive way. The findings showed that surface acting is directly connected to workers feeling more fatigued. While a solid night of rest did help relieve some of this fatigue, it was still felt the following day, especially after long periods of surface acting use.

Judge, Woolf, and Hurst's (2009) research took a closer look at personality types to see if the negative impact of using emotional labor had more to do with personality than the use of emotional labor itself. They compared extroverts to introverts, having them report on their uses of emotional labor and the impact they felt from such use. Extroverts reported feeling they used surface acting less, with deep acting coming to them more easily. The authors speculated that extroverts see themselves as more outgoing, friendly, and upbeat, thus they felt less of a need to fake these emotions regularly with customers. The research also showed that emotional labor was more difficult for introverts, who reported using surface acting more often. However, both extroverts and introverts felt emotional exhaustion and reduced job satisfaction after the use of surface acting, even if extroverts felt the negative impact less than introverts.

In another study, Grandey, Foo, Groth and Goodwin (2012) investigated the customer interactions themselves, assuming that ruder interactions would be the real cause of service workers' distress. They studied situations that required excessive use of surface acting, and found that while these situations did cause emotional exhaustion, any interaction requiring surface acting caused emotional exhaustion. For example, this included transactions that required considerable patience, or ones that were boring to the librarian, not just the ones where the customer was rude.

Overall, the research and literature points to surface acting having a negative impact on those using it regularly. Hulsheger and Schewe (2011) note that surface acting not only harms emotional well-being but also hurts job performance. Morris and Feldman (1996) note that the use of emotional labor results in "lower job satisfaction, lower self-esteem, poorer health, and more depressive symptoms" (p. 1001). Ashford and Humphrey (1993) write that service workers are regularly exhausted by providing care and support for those in need. It becomes clear from the literature on surface acting that it is indeed the use of surface acting itself and not other internal or external factors that causes a negative effect on service workers. This includes fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and lower job satisfaction.

Deep acting was discussed less within the literature reviewed. Judge, Woolf, and Hurst (2009) noted that workers using deep acting felt fewer negative repercussions because they felt the emotions appropriate to the situation, thus not needing to fake them. They even reported the use of deep acting gave them a sense of accomplishment, as they felt authentic during their interactions. Similarly, Hulsheger and Schewe's (2011) article noted that deep acting "truly alters the inner emotional state and turns negative emotion into a positive one" (p. 366). During a service interaction, a worker will actually feel the positive emotions, which can lead to positive aftereffects. Deep acting still requires a certain amount of energy, as Matteson and Miller (2013) found that deep acting caused a sense of detachment and dissatisfaction, but on a much smaller scale than with surface acting. From the literature, it can be understood that the use of deep acting is not overly positive, but it does not have the lasting distressful impact that surface acting does.

Stress and Public Service Librarians

Within libraries, a great deal of research has been focused on the stress of being a librarian, specifically the stress associated with librarians that interface regularly with the public. Stress is defined by Petek (2018) as the way a human body reacts to its environment, or its perceived response to the environment's demands. Topper (2007) identifies that librarian stress is partially caused by the discrepancy between the public's perception of what a librarian does and a librarians actual work. The general public sees a librarian's job as being unstressful, and the library environment as one that cannot create stress. On the contrary, stress is a real concern in any position, and librarians are no different. Farler and Broady-Preston (2012) note that stress is not entirely negative. There is also a positive type of stress that can help workers feel more motivated and thus give one more energy to accomplish tasks. Stress is a balance, and the complete lack of stress can result in poor job performance.

However, too much stress can have a huge impact on an employee. Topper (2007), Farler and Broady-Preston (2012), and Petek (2018) all note that too much stress can cause health problems, lower productivity, anxiety, irritability, poor work performance, cynicism toward the organization, and negative behavior toward others. Stressors are defined by Petek (2018) as any external stimulus that can cause stress. Stressors are divided into two groups, physical and emotional. Experiencing too much stress, or too many stressors, can lead to burnout.

Library Stressors

Library-related stressors come from a range of work-related issues. Topper (2007) listed a variety of possible stress sources in the library setting including short staffing, work overload, inadequate time with patrons, not enough work space, poor management, and poor interpersonal relationships. Jordan (2014) surveyed public librarians to find the most common workplace stressors. Results showed budget, co-workers, workload, management, deadlines, facilities, technology, and lack of time. Larrivee (2014) looked at the variety of stressors specifically placed on new librarians that more experienced librarians might not experience. These include relocating for a job, homesickness, and learning one's new role.

Ettarh (2018) noted two major issues that could be causing librarians to feel stress in their workplace: under-compensation and job creep. Under-compensation is when a library does not have the funding to properly pay their employees for their work. Job creep is defined as when the work an employee volunteers to do as a temporary responsibility becomes gradually viewed as part of their permanent job role. This can lead to more and more responsibilities over time, and less time to accomplish them. Ettarh was not the only one to note this issue of job role concerns and the stress that can come with them. Linden, Salo, and Jansson (2018) in their research with fifty-three Swedish public librarians noted that one of the highest reported stressors was workload overload. Twelve librarians reported feeling they were assigned more tasks without others being cancelled, while another two noted their tasks and priorities weren't clear. Jordan's (2014) results from a survey of 95 librarians showed that 63 respondents listed interruptions to work in their top ten biggest stressors, while another 55 listed deadlines, and another 50 listed excessive workload, with 47 listing lack of time to finish work. Petek's (2018) research also documented all twenty of her interviewees experiencing role ambiguity and role overload related stress. Workload related stress is a very real stressor librarians experience regularly.

Farler and Broady-Preston (2012) had many librarians leave comments on their survey indicating stress related to users, including having to control noise disturbances and students being too loud and behaving inappropriately in a library space. The librarians in Petek's (2018) research indicated similar stressors in both academic and public library settings. All interviewees in her research indicated that users were the number one stressor in their library settings. This stress came from poorly defined needs, inappropriate behavior in the library setting, or irate users. Jordan's (2014) respondents also mentioned that abusive or rude patrons were a big cause of stress. They also included unattended children who were misbehaving, with users who went beyond simple rudeness identified as causing the most stress because of the threat to staff, emotionally and physically.

Management, the culture of the workplace, and drama between coworkers were also stressors identified by Petek (2018), Farler & Broady-Preston, and Jordan's (2014) research. Poor support from management was also listed as a stressor, but not in all libraries. Overall, librarians in each research case reported similar sources of stress that included user interactions, role ambiguity, work overload, and management and co-worker related issues. Some of the responders discussed various coping mechanisms, as when looking at causes of stress, it is worth spending a moment on how librarians deal with their workplace related stress.

Coping Mechanisms

Topper (2007) researched stress in the library workplace and came to some conclusions based upon her findings. She advises some coping mechanisms and ways to balance stress in the workplace: finding more information about a situation, expressing feelings about the situation to someone not involved in it, physical exercise, and taking a break or lunch. Larrivee (2014) noted that new librarians can help balance the stress of their job by finding encouragement and support from their peers. Team building activities and workshops on stress can

also be profitable. Salyers, Watkins, Painter, & More's (2019) research indicated that librarians favored two types of coping mechanisms. First are those that seek to master something outside work, defined as, "I do things that challenge me," and second, those that seek relaxation, "I do relaxing things". Librarians who challenged themselves showed a correlation between lower emotional exhaustion and less cynicism, where those that relaxed showed less emotional exhaustion, but not less cynicism. Of Petek's (2018) 20 respondents, 10 noted that taking breaks was their go-to way for dealing with stress. Seven reported asking for help or more information on a situation, and six reported talking to colleagues or friends and family worked for them. Other things respondents listed as coping mechanisms were: taking walks, reading, listening to music, and working in the garden.

Connecting Librarian Stress with Emotional Labor

Looking at the research between librarians and stress draws special attention to three big issues: the stress created from user interactions, the stress from coworker interactions, and the stress from management. These three factors all share one thing in common: the use of emotional labor, and more specifically, the repeated use of surface acting. Matteson and Miller (2013) seem to capture the idea that organizational expectations in libraries is for librarians to exude positive attitudes "in the face of dealing with difficult patrons, insufficient staffing, decreased monetary resources, performing repetitive tasks, and staying abreast of an ever-changing technology landscape" (p. 60). Matteson, Chittock, and Mease (2015) noted that even outside organizational standards, the profession itself has set behavioral standards that librarians are supposed to follow. These include expressing, "positive emotions by showing engagement with customers, greeting people with smiles and eye contact, and communication in a receptive, cordial, and encouraging manner" (p. 85). These standards mean librarianship at its core is a profession deeply connected to emotional labor.

Matteson and Miller's (2013) work shows that emotional labor is present in library work. They conducted a survey where they asked librarians about the rules regarding displaying emotions and if they felt such rules existed. Librarians reported feeling that they were expected to express positive emotions and suppress negative ones. Shuler and Morgan (2013) raised the discussion that librarians even use emotional labor in ways other than the obvious faking of positive emotions when feeling negative ones. They discussed how librarians also must hide their boredom. Librarians often help people with mundane tasks, such as how to print a document, and while the task might be the hundredth time doing it for a librarian, it is the first occurrence for a patron. This means they are often forced to hide their boredom toward the task at hand and pretend to be fully engaged. This is another form of surface acting.

In another study, Matteson, Chittock, and Mease (2015) conducted research that took a closer look at the relationship between librarians and emotional labor. They asked librarians to submit diary entries at the end of each work day over the course of five days. Librarians were able to write out situations they faced, the emotional labor they felt they used, and the way they felt after these interactions. Of the reports, the authors noted a use of surface acting in

twenty-seven of the reported twenty-nine events, or 93% of the time. In the same research, the most reported instance of emotional labor was during negative customer interactions. The second highest reported was through interactions with colleagues, usually with instances of a colleague not doing the work required of them, or a colleague behaving poorly. This research also looked at the outcomes associated with the use of emotional labor, and negative effects were reported, from cynicism and stress, to emotional exhaustion.

Shuler and Morgan (2013) documented that the most reported instance of emotional labor use came from patron interactions. Their research showed that working with patrons upset for not getting the answers they needed or finding what they were seeking, can be a truly awful form of emotional labor for a librarian, because librarians care about their work and their goal of sharing knowledge. A patron leaving with their needs not met can feel like a failure to a librarian. Overall, it is apparent that emotional labor is present in library work, and one of, if not the top instance of emotional labor usage is during patron interactions.

How to Cope: Social Sharing

When looking at emotional labor, and the general negative effects of the regular use of surface acting, one also has to look at what McCance, Nye, Wang, Jones, and Chiu (2013) called *social sharing*. In this context, social sharing is described as talking with peers about customer interactions, more often the frustrating or negative ones. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) raised the discussion that social sharing is already something service heavy organizations are aware of. Places like banks and retail stores are designed to have a “frontstage” and a “backstage”. In the “frontstage” area, workers must act and be prepared to fulfill the organizational culture with regards to service transactions and expected emotional displays, which often means the heavy use of emotional labor. The “backstage” area is where workers can go afterwards to drop this facade, and socially share, or “vent” about poor customer interactions.

McCance, Nye, Wang, Jones, and Chiu (2013) conducted research into the impact social sharing has after negative customer interactions. They had participants separated into two groups: those that answered phone calls and offered troubleshooting help with software, and those that made the phone calls and often escalated the interactions negatively. The customer service workers were unaware that the callers were fake. Afterwards, the workers were brought together and allowed to share, or vent their frustrations about the calls they received. What McCance, et al. (2013) found was that social sharing gave those using emotional labor in their research a way to feel relieved after distressing interactions. They suggested that a socially accepting space must first be created so that sharing can occur without fear. A workplace where one might be judged for social sharing would not help with the stress caused from emotional labor but could even increase it. However, should a socially acceptable place and culture be created, their research showed that workers felt better after venting about the interactions they had and went into their next session of emotional labor use harboring fewer negative emotions.

The importance of social sharing is important to consider within libraries and library design. Just as with retail stores, libraries should have a closed off “backstage” area where librarians can share with coworkers about negative patron interactions. Managers should also strive to create an open and understanding environment that allows healthy social sharing. Implementing both of these things will decrease the negative impact of the use of surface acting within libraries.

Conclusion

What This Means for Librarians

Emotional labor is indeed present in library work. Specifically, it is most prominent in public service work where librarians interact regularly with patrons and are put in positions where they must either fake positive emotions, hide boredom, or sometimes suppress anger they feel for a patron’s seemingly hopeless situations. This is compounded by the professional standards librarians are held to both within their organizations as the result of stated display rules for emotional output, and also from within the profession itself. For example, Reference and User Services Association’s (RUSA) Behavioral Performance Guidelines for Reference and Information Providers guidelines dictate using friendly greetings and inviting conversation, and states that librarians should communicate in a “receptive, cordial, and supportive manner”. Librarians struggle with both high internal and external standards that dictate they must express positive emotional cues outwardly, no matter how they are feeling inwardly, or how a patron is treating them. It doesn’t help that, as Shuler and Morgan (2013) note, librarians can even struggle with feeling failure when they aren’t able to help patrons as they would like.

Emotional labor is seldom discussed within library work, but is obviously a core component of the profession. The research done on the stressors librarians feel reports users and colleagues as common cases of stress. This is because of the required use of emotional labor and surface acting during these interactions. This use of emotional labor should be a concern for all libraries and librarians as it can cause emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue, and lower job satisfaction. It can even lead to burnout if care is not taken.

Librarians need to have this knowledge presented to them through training or other means. Emotional labor should be something all librarians are trained about, specifically about what surface acting is, and how they are likely to use it, but also about what deep acting is, and how they might save themselves negative repercussions by resorting to deep acting when they can. However, it is apparent that being a librarian is always going to require some amount of surface acting, and librarians need to find healthy ways to cope. Managers should stand firm in creating a “backstage” area away from the prying eyes and ears of patrons. This means shutting doors to staff areas and allowing staff to share about uncomfortable and angry patron interactions. By providing proper training to librarians about emotional labor and paying special attention to creating a culture that is accepting of healthy sharing, managers can decrease the stress and burnout public service librarians experience.

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Intercultural Competence for Community College Librarians

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Intercultural Competence for Community College Librarians

Abstract

As populations grow more diverse and different cultural identities become increasingly prevalent, intercultural competence will be a requirement for successful communication and cultural harmony. Community colleges host the most diverse population of students in the United States, often considered a reflection of the communities they serve. As centers of institutional learning, libraries at community colleges have a responsibility and an opportunity to provide service grounded in the tenets of intercultural competence. These service standards are having and following a diversity policy; providing a welcoming and accessible environment; offering services and materials that match students needs and backgrounds; communicating in a way that is "culturally humble;" and lastly, hiring practices that ensure a diverse staff.

Keywords

Community College; Libraries; Intercultural Competence; Students; Information Needs

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I would like to thank Dr. Debra Buenting for her fabulous course INFO 281- Intercultural Communication and for all that I learned through her teachings and the experiences shared by my fellow students.

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Community colleges are some of the most diverse higher education institutions in the U.S. Students vary in age, ethnicity, religion, educational background, and ability. They also differ in educational pathways from other traditional higher education institutions as the student body are involved in different pursuits all on the same campus. Community colleges offer associates or transfer degrees, but also adult continuing education, ESL, and vocational training programs. Students at community colleges differ from those at other colleges or universities, so information needs also diverge among the student body.

Libraries and librarians at community colleges play a unique role in providing a spectrum of information literacy instruction, reference, and circulation of materials to meet the needs of their diverse student patrons. Community college librarians must internalize deeper sensitivity, as well as awareness and cultural competency in their interactions with the student body. While providing high-level service to student patrons, librarians should create a welcoming, approachable, and usable space where differences are respected and students feel confident to access services.

This paper will first examine the main differences between community college and other higher learning student bodies and their information needs. A discussion of the purpose of the community college library will show the emphasis on supporting current curriculum, as opposed to supporting research as at other academic libraries (Dowell, 2006). Next, the basic tenets of intercultural competence will be discussed, followed by a section detailing trends in cultural competence in the wider field of librarianship. Then the discussion will delve into the many ways in which librarians at community colleges must embrace intercultural competence as the pathway to successful reference, circulation, and literacy instruction for their multicultural patrons. Resulting from research and best practices from around the field of librarianship and higher education, a detailed five-step plan is included to help librarians at community colleges achieve intercultural competence.

Community Colleges: It's All About Students

Community and junior colleges can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th century United States, born out of necessity for educational opportunities and vocational training in smaller towns, and a growing belief that education should be accessible to everyone (Crumpton & Bird, 2013). Traditionally, community colleges were vocational or technical training centers, while junior colleges provided a bridge between high school education and universities. The Great Depression and World War II exposed an even further need for university preparation and vocational training, so the importance of community and junior colleges increased, with expansion active into the 1960s. The separate functionalities of the two systems remained largely in place until the 1990s, when funding pressure from governments caused a movement of two-year schools to adopt the community college designation, with the dual-mission of vocational training and university preparation (Crumpton & Bird, 2013).

Today, community colleges are a reflection of the communities they serve. They remain tied to the needs of their individual regions, and are therefore more affected by economic, demographic, and population trends than other secondary education institutions. As David Dowell (2006) writes in the foreword to *It's All About Student Learning*, community colleges are increasingly “becoming vehicles for lifelong learning as they approach their potential to provide education by the community, for the community, and in the community” (p. ix) In this way, community college libraries are truly all about the students and less about creating or supporting institutional research, as other academic libraries are required in order to achieve relevancy (Dowell, 2006).

Because of the diverse nature of community college students, information needs will also be unique. In traditional higher education institutions, most students will be beyond basic literacy instruction, have a rudimentary understanding of research concepts, and a grasp on the function of available resources. Information needs of a typical community college student will vary wildly because of nontraditional ages, ethnic, language, and cultural differences, as well as disparities in learning and physical ability (Crumpton & Bird, 2013). The typical community college student will not have a computer at home, have little to no computer literacy skills, such as using word processing programs or converting files, have poor information management skills, lack a quiet place to study at home, and may be coming from low-performing schools (Godin, 2006). Compounded by the cultural differences referenced above, librarianship in community college can be complicated and requires excellent communication and perceptive leadership.

Community college libraries exist to support college curriculum, so the services and collections should be designed to enhance learning (Dowell, 2006). If the collection of services and materials are to appropriately reflect the community of students, libraries must be attractive and comfortable, and librarians must strive to be approachable and in many cases, seek out opportunities to create connections. Librarians at community colleges face unique challenges in serving these diverse populations, and must be exceptionally culturally competent in order to provide equal access, engage students, and affect learning.

Intercultural Competence

What is Intercultural Competence?

Modern life is increasingly affected by intercultural mixing. The world, and specifically the United States, is currently undergoing the most extensive trend of cultural mixing in recorded history (Lustig & Koester, 2013). By 2050, population breakdowns will no longer show a majority of Christian European Americans in the U.S., and even now, people are more comfortable identifying with several cultural values and characteristics than ever before, which will continue to largely affect how we interact and communicate with each other (Lustig & Koester, 2013).

There is widespread recognition that intercultural competence is imperative for national and global economic, technological, interpersonal, and

peace concerns (Lustig & Koester, 2013). Intercultural competence can be defined as the ability of an individual to function well within a culturally diverse and global society. They need to be able to interact in “meaningful, appropriate, and effective ways with others” (Riley, Bustamante, & Edmonson, 2016, p. 35). Achieving competence in this way depends upon an individual’s ability to understand the role of culture in communication.

All communication is built on a foundation of basic characteristics. Communication is a symbolic, contextual, and transactional process by which people build shared meanings (Lustig & Koester, 2013). For example, cultures that are high-context will communicate through symbolism, understood meanings, and settings as opposed to low-context cultures that communicate through direct verbal interactions. People who are culturally competent will recognize and respect the subtle differences in various communication styles from different cultures, as well as learn to embody those styles to enhance their interactions with other individuals. This will require a person to be self-reflective and also willing to explore and celebrate the different cultural values of those around them. Gaining a deeper understanding of why or how individuals communicate will allow for greater functionality within our increasingly global society.

Librarianship and Intercultural Competence

The value of intercultural competence for librarians has been extensively analyzed and affirmed, specifically in public librarianship where multicultural patrons are the norm. A quick look at a research database will pull thousands of studies, books, and articles that illustrate the need for culturally competent library staff, and looking at the American Library Association (ALA) or other related organization’s websites will show guidelines and articles about multiculturalism in libraries. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) published a list of 11 diversity standards in 2012, noting that if libraries are to effectively serve the communities they represent, they “have to open their arms to all perspectives and experiences. That requires competency in matters of cultural pluralism that are not intuitive and must be learned, like any other essential skill” (para. 4). As noted in the standards, diversity is now more than a moral imperative, and is considered a global necessity.

According to Reed (2017), all academic librarians are teachers. Librarians who are trained in cultural competence will have the tools and power to help students from diverse backgrounds achieve educational success by providing an environment that allows the student to feel accepted. Creating surroundings where students are comfortable, not only in accessing the building and materials, but also in asking questions, is imperative in encouraging use by intercultural student patrons. Danielle and Sean Colbert-Lewis’ (2013) article in *Library Services for Multicultural Patrons* outlined two important concepts in making school libraries a place of belonging: freedom and security. Students need a safe place to learn, explore new ideas, and most importantly, expand self-development. There needs to be a connection to their everyday lives and personal identities, social constructs, and relational values. Research discussed in Boelens, Cherek, Tilke, and Bailey (2015) found similar results. According to their study, student patrons cannot begin learning until they feel “safe, seen, and valued” (para. 7), and that

learning is significantly diminished when equity and diversity topics are not addressed.

Another distinctive study approached the topic of multicultural patrons and libraries by proposing that comparing library services to hospitals could decrease “library anxiety” (Buck & Houzé, 2014). The study found that hospitals are developing healing spaces that aim to decrease anxiety in patients and increase whole healing. Their study discovered that especially among multicultural patrons, library avoidance occurs because of potential language barriers, confusing cultural patterns, and an unfamiliar, overwhelming research atmosphere. Basically, libraries cause anxiety for multicultural patrons. They suggested libraries could practice “cultural responsiveness” by approaching multicultural users as individuals instead of cultural monoliths. Library anxiety can be overall decreased by facilitation of culturally safe and free spaces. Finally, their study suggested that cultural differences should not be the focus of libraries, but rather communication, shared meanings, and cultural humility (Buck & Houzé, 2014).

Practical Application

Intercultural Competence in the Community College Library

Application of diversity standards or multicultural approaches to librarianship will vary by institution. As noted in previous sections, community colleges are unique in student population, and therefore information needs. Application of intercultural competence in community college libraries requires significant planning, foresight, and a mindset focused on student success. As explored above, students who feel valued, comfortable, and experience a sense of safety and freedom will engage more with the learning environment. Therefore, it is the responsibility of community college library staff to achieve cultural competence to serve their student needs.

There are five steps staff at these libraries can take to reach their goal of a useable and engaging atmosphere. First, the focus should be on developing and following diversity standards. Second, the actual library building should be welcoming, bright, and open, with study nooks and accessible materials. Third, materials and services should be evaluated to ensure they are meeting student and faculty needs and wants. Fourth, reference and information literacy instruction should be conducted in a “culturally humble” manner, where the librarian considers the cultural background of the student and adjusts, so that service is not a “one fits all” or monolithic approach. Fifth, and perhaps most importantly, staff should also be diverse! Below follows a further discussion of these five steps toward a culturally competent community college library.

Following diversity standards, such as those produced by ACRL (2012), will allow for cohesive and strong internal policy development, which ensures there is support for future changes or challenges. Providing guidelines to staff will also have a twofold effect: staff who may have issues with cultural differences will understand there are set behavioral expectations, while staff who may themselves be culturally diverse will feel supported. Having procedural guidelines and managing principles will also prove valuable as evidence to faculty and

college administration to ensure monetary and administrative support (Downing, MacAdam, & Nichols, 1993).

The library building and layout, which is the second step, should endeavor to lighten “library anxiety,” as referenced in Buck and Houzé’s 2014 study. This includes anything that is sensory, such as lighting, temperature, and noise levels, as well as décor, ambiance, and spatial considerations. It should account for human interactions and relationships in the learning environment; overall, the space shouldn’t scream academia, which can be intimidating for a variety of reasons. Students from cultural backgrounds that have large power-distance orientation might view an overly formal and academic atmosphere as a place where questions aren’t welcome and authority figures shouldn’t be approached (Lustig & Koester, 2013). That would be the very antithesis of what a community college library should symbolize.

The third step, circulation, including the materials and services provided by the library and staff, should reflect the needs of student patrons and consider their backgrounds for further enrichment. For example, monolingual collections that lack appropriate intercultural materials such as ethnically and culturally diverse subject matter or authors could alienate student patrons who don’t see representation. Further, students who are uncomfortable with databases or Internet resources might benefit from more analog materials and reserve copies of textbooks (Godin, 2006). Frequently changing displays that showcase materials or research resources that may appeal to a wide breadth of students will also encourage interaction with and exploration of the library as a place.

Services, such as reference and information literacy instruction, should be conducted with utmost sensitivity and respect. This fourth step deals largely in communication. These more personal interactions between student patrons and librarians are where things can get touchy and communication issues arise. For example, if a student’s primary language is a listener-responsible speaking style, as opposed to the English speaker-responsible speaking style, communication breakdowns can occur as soon as a student poses their first question: the student will expect the librarian to infer their meaning, while the English-speaking librarian will expect the student to explicitly state their query (Lustig & Koester, 2013). Another issue with reference and information literacy instruction is the assumption of librarians that academic and library jargon will translate and make sense to a student (Buck and Houzé, 2014). The culturally competent librarian will strive to use interpretive language and draw out student’s issues with investigative questions.

Finally, the fifth step is cultivating diverse staff. According to McBride and Shao (2013), students do best when they see themselves reflected on campus, and may avoid librarians, and even the library as a whole if staff are not representative of the campus population. Librarians from diverse backgrounds will have a positive impact on students and library policies, and be able to provide deeper understanding culturally, racially, and linguistically. As the ACRL (2012) standards relate, in a diverse library, patrons can find someone to relate to and gain the services they need in a way they prefer.

Conclusion

As explored, community colleges experience higher levels of diversity and multicultural student bodies as compared to other secondary education institutions. Because of this, information needs diverge not only because of ability, ethnicity, age, cultural, and linguistic differences among the population, but also because of the diverse educational pathways offered at these two-year colleges.

Intercultural competence is already a widely valued learned skill among librarianship, but community college libraries and their staff specifically can benefit from following the steps outlined in this paper. First, a diversity standard or policy will allow for institutional growth and planning. Second, the library building and layout should decrease student “library anxiety” by providing a welcoming and accessible environment. Third, the materials and services should reflect student needs and cultural backgrounds. Fourth, communication interactions in reference and information literacy instruction should be approached with a “culturally humble” attitude, with the goal being a transactional conversation. Fifth, and last, the staff at the library should reflect culturally and ethnically diverse populations so that student patrons feel able to relate and gain the services they need.

As populations grow more diverse and individuals reflect more culturally different identities, intercultural competence will be a requirement for successful communication and cultural harmony. Especially in community colleges, which are affected more heavily by demographic trends in the communities they serve, these competencies will be more than a method of survival, but also a chance for personal and societal growth. Librarians working at community colleges have a responsibility, and an opportunity, to provide excellent and lasting learning services to their diverse student patrons by embodying intercultural competence.

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Library application of Deep Web and Dark Web technologies

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Library application of Deep Web and Dark Web technologies

Abstract

The Deep Web and Dark Web are legitimate tools for use in the field of information science, adding to the discussion of patron privacy. The American Library Association policies on privacy and confidentiality combined with the advancement of internet technology necessitate that library professionals become fluent in Dark Web usability in libraries.

Keywords

Dark Web, Deep Web, privacy, Tor browser, internet, libraries

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Introduction

Intellectual freedom, privacy, and unrestricted access to information remain the core values of information professionals. Libraries function as community education centers serving diverse populations with differing information needs. Information seeking using digital platforms requires specialized skills and tools to extract applicable results. Librarians remain a vital part of this process (Prasad, 2018). As online activity grows, the proliferation of surveillance and censorship becomes an undeniable challenge to intellectual freedom. Third-party data collection and online tracking creates difficulties for those entrusted with protecting patron privacy (Pekala, 2017). Increased awareness of these practices leads some libraries to examine the layers of the internet through a lens of privacy and security. The Dark Web promises anonymity and privacy through platforms such as the Tor browser, although there are potential risks involved. While information found on the Dark Web should not be considered reliable for academic research, justification exists for valid uses of the Dark Web in libraries to ensure patron privacy.

Internet Layers

There is more to the internet than meets the eye, with its three distinct layers of depth. The Surface Web, occupying 10% of the internet, contains those websites with visible contents resulting from search engine indexing (Beckstrom & Lund, 2019). These searchable, publicly available pages can be accessed from a standard web browser and connect to other pages using hyperlinks. However, information is being overlooked that was never intended to be hidden (Devine, Egger-Sider, & Rojas, 2015). This information, invisible to regular search engines, requires persistence and specialized search tools to locate. Beyond the Surface Web exist the Deep Web and the Dark Web.

Several distinct characteristics identify the differing layers of the internet (Table 1). Inaccurate understanding of the difference between the Surface Web and the Deep Web can be remedied. The Surface Web contains several billion websites and documents with diverse subsets which can be indexed by most search engines. The next layer, the Deep Web, includes millions of databases and dynamic web pages that often reside behind paywalls or require passwords. This layer contains higher quality information than is usually found on the Surface Web (Prasad, 2018).

Table 1: Characteristics of internet layers

Surface Web	Deep Web	Dark Web
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freely accessible • Indexed by standard search engines • Mostly HTML files • Fixed content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not indexed • Proprietary databases • Dynamically generated content • Login authorization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized software/tools • Intentionally hidden data • Encrypted and anonymous • Difficult to track

The Deep Web

The Deep Web is often referred to as the Invisible Web or the Hidden Web because the web pages found here are beyond the reach of standard search engines. Deep Web sites have more focused and deeper content materials than Surface Web sites. Accessing material on the Deep Web often calls for skill, effort, and perseverance on the part of the searcher. Resources on the Deep Web frequently go undiscovered because of the user's inexperience in searching skills, otherwise known as "cognitive invisibility" (Devine & Egger-Sider, 2014). Exploring the Deep Web is significant for libraries, to expose the hidden information so that users can access resources largely ignored by popular search engines (Blandford, 2015). The need exists for information professionals to serve as digital guides in navigating information resources such as special collections and proprietary databases.

Despite its reputation, the unindexed material on the Deep Web can usually be found in ordinary databases. PubMed, LexisNexis, and Web of Science are all housed on the Deep Web. Users of these databases interact with the Deep Web regularly but may not be aware of it. 90% of traffic on the internet comes from the Deep Web (Chertoff, 2017). Current academic research relies heavily on the Deep Web, which provides an active element in improved higher education outcomes (Alyami & Assiri, 2018). Deep Web sites often contain dynamically generated pages, data intensive pages, and time-sensitive or short-lived pages.

While it is technically impossible to accurately measure the size of the Deep Web, some estimates put it at 500 times the size of the Surface Web (Weimann, 2016), while other researchers consider the Deep Web to be 5000 times larger (Chertoff, 2017). Regular search engines index less than 16% of the Surface Web and 0.03% of all the information that exists online (Weimann, 2016). The Deep Web can be accessed through databases and directories, using specialized search engines that provide more precise search results on more specific topics. These advanced search tools allow the user to modify and customize searches for improved results (Prasad, 2017). As most libraries offer access to hundreds of different databases to their users it befits the information professional to understand the Deep Web and how to utilize its features to locate accurate information. Library and information professionals are trained to find relevant resources more quickly and efficiently on the Deep Web than casual information seekers (Crockett, 2018).

The Dark Web

A very small, hard to access allocation (0.01%) of the Deep Web is called the Dark Web (Chertoff, 2017). The Dark Web operates on a deeper layer of the Internet that thrives on anonymity. These sites are not freely available to the public, with Internet Protocol addresses being hidden to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Internet Protocol (IP) addresses are numeric strings that identify devices on networks to enable them to be recognized by other systems. Dark Web pages tend to be unreliable, coming and going regularly, leaving directories peppered with dead links as websites disappear or change locations. The relative hardship in merely

finding hidden websites, as well as the strict anonymity, bolsters the Dark Web's air of mystery.

The phrase Dark Web itself gives an impression of illegality, although legitimate purposes for its use do exist. Residents of countries with high censorship, transgender individuals in repressive regions, and undocumented immigrants possess the right to information access and need privacy protection to exercise that right. The Dark Web provides all a method of protecting their personal information and privacy amid the incursion of data collection practices (Monk, Mitchell, Frank, & Davies, 2018). While the Dark Web is a place that has a somewhat dubious reputation, and indeed has gained some notoriety for actionable activities, it has uses beyond the nefarious. The evolution of the Dark Web came from a need for a secure avenue for military communications and expanded to be known as a guarantor of online privacy (U & Thampi, 2019). The same anonymity that allows blatantly illegal sites to remain viable also enables people in countries with oppressive regimes to communicate with the outside world, conducting political dissent without fear of retribution. Its significance lies not in its efficacy, but in its existence. Some social media sites, such as Facebook, have set up Dark Web versions of their websites in order to protect dissidents and others needing anonymity to connect with people. Jardine (2016) propounds the "dark web dilemma": shutting down the network will not actually stop illegal activity but will hurt people who rely on it to exercise their free expression and access to information. While some may experiment with Dark Web access for curiosity, the anonymous nature and freedom of expression become the sustaining factor in its continued use (Mirea, Wang, & Jung, 2019).

At the core of the Dark Web is an intricate array of routing that provides anonymity for users accessing it. Unlike the Surface Web and most parts of the Deep Web, the Dark Web involves special technology to access the websites hosted there. To gain admission to these anonymous sites a Tor browser must be employed. Tor is an acronym for The Onion Router. Dark Web sites run on a special server which delivers content to Tor browsers. Tor, a modified version of the Firefox browser, remains the most prominent tool of Dark Web users (Monk, et.al., 2018). It uses a set of encryption tools, services, and nodes that hide and change IP addresses and encrypt data to and from computers, protecting both the visitor and the website operator. Tor routes connections through a series of relay machines running open source software that is encrypted as it is routed. These relays form the infrastructure of the Tor network, passing information through layers of anonymizing encryption (Macrina, 2015). The United States Naval Research Laboratory developed the Tor browser as a means of protecting government communications using a secure method of routing (Weimann, 2016), and the system soon developed into a non-military project (Macrina, 2015). In 2004 the software became public and was offered as a free service to advance unconstrained access to the Internet for those who face persecution for online communication. Like many innovations, it became subverted and began to connect illegal goods and services to willing customers.

The transitory nature of most of the Dark Web content does not qualify it as a reliable information source for scholarly research. While the Dark Web is not

a sound authority for academic needs, Tor accommodates many beneficial functions. The Tor browser's ability to anonymize its users is unique in the way it protects the identities of people at risk (Bayle, Compoe, Ehrick, Hubbell, Lowe, & Ridge, 2017). Tor works with victims of domestic violence, showing them how to access the Internet safely without revealing their location and activities to their abusers (Devine, et al, 2015) and has been involved in protests in the Middle East and North Africa (Goldsborough, 2016). For these and other reasons, Tor won the Free Software Foundation's award for Projects of Social Benefit in 2010. Beginning as a military project, Tor continues to receive a large portion of its funding from the Department of Defense and the State Department (Jardine, 2018).

Discussion

Information professionals serve as exponents of information literacy and are in the forefront of a paradigm shift into information fluency. In the digital age, the ability to intuitively interpret all forms and formats of information is intrinsically linked to the knowledge of how to apply this fluency to real-world tasks and problems (Crockett, 2018). Librarians traditionally guide and provide assistance in learning and discovery to disparate, and at times marginalized, users but must adopt a new role to remain relevant amidst digital revolution. Patron privacy and user experience compete for importance to library professionals (Pekala, 2017). While intellectual freedom is codified in the American Library Association Code of Ethics and the Library Bill of Rights, information accessed online leaves users vulnerable to surveillance and exposure (Childs, 2017). Libraries unintentionally undermine user privacy with unsecured connections to their websites. Long the champions of user privacy, libraries still employ website practices at odds with their stated privacy values (O'Brien, Young, Arlitsch, & Benedict, 2018).

The ubiquity of the internet necessitates a revision of basic assumptions concerning anonymity and the web (Sarda, Natale, Sotirakopoulos, & Monaghan, 2019). Privacy has become an increasingly complex issue for library professionals. All online activity can be tracked, traced, compiled, crunched, bought and sold without authorization unless privacy tools are utilized (Coleman, 2019).

Librarians have always educated patrons in information literacy and must now also educate them on privacy literacy by focusing on understanding the risks and obligations inherent in sharing information online (Wissinger, 2017). Bridging the knowledge gaps that prevent comprehension of the usage of privacy-protection technologies are the next steps taken toward more secure data (Maceli, 2018). To further this end, the Library Freedom Project (LFP) was born (<https://libraryfreedomproject.org/>). LFP instructs library professionals on surveillance threats, confidentiality rights, and privacy tools, shifting the focus to a more privacy-centric standard. LFP offers resources for teaching library users how to safeguard their information and protect their online presence (Hennig, 2018).

Dark web browsers such as Tor are easily installed on public computers, but may run afoul of local, state, and federal regulations (Beckstrom & Lund, 2019). Bayle et.al. (2017) believe Tor to be an ideal browser for public library computers to ensure patron privacy. A risk/benefit analysis shows an even split: criminal

activity and potential malware (risks) versus protection of personal data and free access to information (benefits). Library administrators are obliged to consider providing access to Tor and other anonymous platforms as a way of broadening organizational missions. These platforms exist as a powerful tool for libraries to offer privacy protection to their users, provided that the potential risks are understood, and precautions are taken to mitigate them (Bayle, et.al., 2017). O'Brien, et.al, (2018) offer five interrelated areas for taking action:

- Implementation of secure web protocols
- User education
- Privacy policies
- Informed consent
- Risk/benefit analysis

Conclusion

Librarians play crucial roles in the global information infrastructure. The Deep and Dark Webs as tools for patron privacy and confidentiality have become a valuable resource in the digital age (Maceli, 2018). Libraries' ability to safeguard intellectual freedom has evolved through new and constantly changing information technologies. Privacy threats to patron information remain a concern in the library field. This right to privacy as advocated by the American Library Association highlights the necessity for library professionals to understand and demonstrate Dark Web technologies. Librarians can educate patrons about privacy threats and the protective measures available to mitigate them. Effectively communicating the privacy risks associated with online information discovery is key.

Exploring the Deep Web, and by association the Dark Web, requires special tools and techniques, with different means of reaching various layers of depth. Anonymity networks are also used constructively. The anonymity and security protection afforded to criminals can be used to shield those living in countries with tyrannical governments where there is a legitimate risk of prosecution, imprisonment, or death for leaking information or having dissenting opinions. The potential exists for further research into how libraries are using Dark Web technologies to protect patron privacy.

Dark web platforms share the core library values of privacy, intellectual freedom, and information access. Using and teaching the use of the Tor browser upholds these values. Consequently, privacy literacy instruction in Library and Information Science programs will be enhanced by the addition of privacy-protection technologies. Producing digital-savvy librarians creates the framework for shaping digital-savvy patrons.

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May 2020

Book Review: Fake news and alternative facts: Information literacy in a post-truth era by Nicole A. Cooke

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Keywords

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Anna Morrissey received a B.A. in Film Studies from the University of California, Irvine. She is currently an MLIS student at San Jose State University.

Cooke, N. (2018). *Fake news and alternative facts: Information literacy in a post-truth era*. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions.

Fake news played a key role in the 2016 presidential election, and since then increased attention has been paid to the subject. Librarians have long been engaged in the teaching of information literacy and critical thinking skills and this work has taken on a growing relevance in the current “post-truth” era. Cooke’s report *Fake News and Alternative Facts: Information Literacy in a Post-Truth Era*

provides a concise examination of the most recent iteration of the fake news phenomenon with a discussion of how the use of knowledge of information behavior and critical evaluation skills can combat the consequences of fake news. Cooke argues that the sheer amount of news and other information that is broadcast over the Internet requires strong literacy skills, notably the ability to critique the news. Cooke makes an urgent bid to information professionals to expand their role in fighting this problem by sharpening the information literacy skills that are taught in libraries. Cooke calls for the consideration of both the cognitive and emotional aspects of information acquisition and the need for information professionals to teach patrons how to analyze the information they produce as well as how to evaluate and think critically about the media that they consume.

This special report was inspired by a webinar Cooke presented for the American Library Association on the topic of fake news. In addition to being active in multiple professional associations, Cooke has published widely on the topic of diversity and social justice in librarianship and human information behavior. Her academic background includes an MLIS and communication work as well as a degree earned in adult education. This combination of education, in addition to her scholarship on human information behavior, is evident throughout the report and in the multi-disciplinary solution she calls for in response to the proliferation of fake news.

Cooke provides a brief introduction to learning theory, specifically elaborating on how the models discussed encompass both cognitive and affective dimensions. She highlights the four factors of learning: memory, prior knowledge, environment, and motivation (Booth, 2011) and argues that individual learning and information behavior patterns are multifaceted and that it is this complexity that makes fake news so challenging to address. Cooke goes on to discuss the primary role misinformation and disinformation play in the growth of fake news and outlines the emotional components that comprise these two subsets of information. While misinformation is certainly not a new trend, the dissemination of it online has made it harder to discern as well as more pervasive and damaging. The Internet’s role in the perpetuation of existing forms of misinformation and disinformation, as well as propaganda and yellow journalism, that form the current state of fake news is a central theme throughout the report.

In a discussion of the media landscape, Cooke presents the idea that these spaces involve users who know more about the style and use of images and information than about the content or subjects contained within it and she

highlights the problematic assumption that Internet users are sophisticated consumers of information simply because they are proficient with technological tools. Cooke calls for awareness of certain information behavior types, such as confirmation bias, filter bubbles, satisficing, and information avoidance. She furthers the notion of filter bubbles as forms of information avoidance (Case & Given, 2016) that are exacerbated by existing confirmation bias. Cooke also discusses how social media has reshaped how people share information and how this has contributed to these problematic forms of information behavior.

Cooke argues that the political economy of the news media, particularly on the Internet, incentivizes the creation of traffic over the dissemination of truth and posits that the cycle of fake news begins with hyperlocal sites. She also calls out the national media for not doing their due diligence in vetting or fact-checking information and highlights the harm of iterative journalism, which occurs when media personalities report on what they've heard instead of what they have discovered directly, within the context of the current media landscape.

Critical thinking is an active process that requires analyzing all the dimensions of things and then using that resultant knowledge in a process to determine what is most important (hooks, 2010). This type of thinking has traditionally been discouraged by a formal education system that teaches children to accept information without question (hooks, 2010). In contrast to this practice, Cooke posits that information users must continually question the information presented to them and calls for critical media consumption via multiple literacy instruction. Cooke argues that critical evaluation of information is not instinctive and that media consumers must be taught this skill. Information professionals have long been committed to fostering information literacy; due to the proliferation of fake news on the Internet, digital literacy skills must now be considered and incorporated into this vital work. In this report, Cooke suggests metaliteracy as a prescription for the malady of fake news. Metaliterate learners engage in critical thinking about, and evaluation of, media but are also active authors of information, and thus are best equipped to confront fake news.

The report begins with real-life examples of headlines and takes on a participatory workshop style by asking the reader whether they are true or false. This exercise is followed by questions to consider in accessing these headlines. In the conclusion, Cooke reiterates the importance of metaliteracy skills in the fight against fake news, as well as misinformation and disinformation. The headlines from the introduction are revisited and the question of whether each is true or false is answered with the source of the headline provided. She also provides a quick list of tips for evaluating information geared towards information professionals as well as a sample lesson plan based on an actual workshop on the subject. Additionally, Cooke points the reader to a Pinterest site she cultivated to supplement the report and facilitate lesson plans on the topic of fake news.

Cooke centers the discussion of fake news around the 2016 presidential election. Concrete examples from this event, which would serve to illustrate the various points presented by Cooke, would have been a worthwhile addition to some of the sections on misinformation, disinformation, and the emotional dimensions of information behavior. Given the brief nature of the report, Cooke

succeeds at introducing some foundational concepts that support the understanding of how fake news has become a phenomenon. Cooke also does an adequate job of supporting her conclusions. Those looking for something beyond a cursory treatment of the topic, however, need to look elsewhere. This is not a critique lodged against Cooke's scholarship but of the length and format of the work. There is certainly room within the scholarly literature for works of all lengths and depth on the dynamic and emerging topic of fake news.

Cooke's report provides a basic introduction to key concepts for information professionals seeking guidance in how to support their patrons' critical engagement with the information they consume. It appears to best function as a part of a critical toolkit that should include other resources that delve further into the concepts that contribute to fake news and also provide examples of instructional materials and strategies to employ in the battle against fake news. *News Literacy: The Keys to Combating Fake News* (Whiting & Luhtala, 2018) is a longer, more in-depth work that includes multiple lesson plans. This complementary work is an ideal pairing with Cooke's report, in service of building that necessary toolkit.

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May 2020

Review of The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness: An Empathy-Driven Approach to Solving Problems, Preventing Conflicts, and Serving Everyone

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Review of The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness: An Empathy-Driven Approach to Solving Problems, Preventing Conflicts, and Serving Everyone

Keywords

empathy-driven librarianship, homeless patrons, information poverty, library management, library policy

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I would like to thank my colleagues at the Oregon State University Libraries and Press for their support and enthusiasm while I balance my studies and work.

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Sagan Wallace is the Library Experience and Access Department Evening Supervisor, coordinating projects and facilitate communication between day and night shifts to better serve our patrons. They are the current chair of the Resource Sharing and Fulfillment Team with the Orbis Cascade Alliance. Sagan is in the process of obtaining a Master of Library and Information Science through San Jose State University, and has a bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Concordia University.

Dowd, R. J. (2018). *The librarian's guide to homelessness: An empathy-driven approach to solving problems, preventing conflicts, and serving everyone*. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions.

Ryan Dowd's 2018 book *The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness: An Empathy-Driven Approach to Solving Problems, Preventing Conflicts, and Serving Everyone* is an in-depth but readable call to compassion for librarians faced with any sort of public interaction. Librarians report increases in negative encounters with homeless patrons directly or between patrons, frustration over these interactions, and a growing sense of helplessness (Wong, 2009). Some libraries choose to increase security ("Charleston County," 2019), hire social workers (Cathcart, 2008), or change their staffing model and policies to be either more or less restrictive (Collins, Howard, and Miraflor, 2009; Landgraf, 1991).

Much of the literature available for librarians is written from the perspective that homeless patrons are a problem. Dowd's book stands apart from the field in its identification of homeless individuals as valued library patrons rather than nuisances to be dealt with. Dowd draws on his experience as the executive director of a Chicago homeless shelter to give librarians the tools needed to practice "empathy-driven enforcement," a system Dowd claims will reduce problems with homeless patrons by 80 percent (p. xiii).

Dowd begins by refuting a selection of myths about homelessness, such as "most homeless people are unemployed" and "most homeless people have mental illnesses." He then discusses the culture of homeless individuals compared to that of librarians, pointing out that most librarians come from a middle class background, while most homeless patrons come from a poverty class background. When librarians try to enforce middle class mores on a poverty class group of people, conflicts can arise. As the final piece of Dowd's foundation, he discusses the science of empathy, explaining how our need for social acceptance can be used to reduce friction with homeless patrons, or worsen it.

Part Two of Dowd's book puts his foundation into practice. Dowd details a list of practical tools the librarian can use to help enforce compliance with library policies, broken down into Head, Body and Word tools. Head tools are the conceptual shifts a librarian must embrace in order to effectively use the Body and Word tools. Body tools are ways to interact with homeless patrons in a safe and empathetic way. Word tools are ways to speak calmly with your patrons while enforcing library policies - and what not to say.

Finally, Dowd covers examples of how to handle common situations with homeless patrons, including body odor, sleeping in the library and mental illnesses. Each scenario lists the specific steps a librarian can take to respond to the issue, complete with example scripts. While prescriptive, Dowd includes the reasoning behind each step he suggests so the librarian can be fully informed as to why they are responding in this way.

Dowd's book is a solid introduction to a new practice of librarianship. However, a few of his arguments are based on tenuous pop psychology. For example, a Body tool which Dowd titles 'the Marijuana plant' recommends "stand[ing] confidently. The research says that if your posture is confident, your

mind becomes confident” (p. 90). This ‘power pose’ psychology, popularized by Amy Cuddy in her 2012 TED Talk, has failed in replication studies (Cesario & Johnson, 2017). Cesario and Johnson’s research indicates that maintaining a power pose can actually be detrimental to the low-status individuals who often receive this advice, as they found no correlation between holding a power pose and succeeding at negotiation tasks. They write,

failing repeatedly when you expect to succeed . . . may decrease motivation and increase uncertainty regarding the connection between one’s actions and outcomes. Indeed, one might expect this negative outcome to be most likely for low-status individuals, who are more likely to lack the skills needed for success. (Cesario & Johnson, 2017, p. 787)

In addition, Dowd does not discuss the potential impacts of calling an ambulance. Ambulance rides, where not covered by local taxes, can be overwhelmingly costly, and that burden can fall directly on the homeless patron (Culhane, 2008; Yearwood, 2019). Dowd instructs librarians to call for an ambulance when a patron has a seizure; however, per the CDC this is only necessary in a few cases (“Seizure First Aid”, 2019). A simple addition to the book might be to include checking for medical tags, such as the type worn by people diagnosed with epilepsy, before calling an ambulance for a person having a seizure.

Dowd’s work is already having an impact on local communities through online and in-person trainings. Despite some potential flaws in the interpretation of psychology research, this is an easily recommended text. It is engaging, well-organized, and provides librarians with a long list of tools they can use whether they work at a front-line service point or if they are creating library policies. Most importantly, the concept of empathy-driven enforcement can be adapted to serve many vulnerable populations.

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May 2020

Research Publications in Web of Science shift from Bitcoin to Blockchain, with Focus on Computer Science, Engineering, Telecommunications, and Business Economics

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Abstract

Objective – To collect, characterize and analyze blockchain-related research publications found in the Web of Science database.

Design – Bibliometric study.

Setting – A science, social science, arts, and humanities citation index.

Subjects – Over 90 million records.

Methods – The authors developed five research questions to be answered in the study:

1. What is the distribution of Blockchain publications and citations over the recent years?
2. Which research areas have been mostly investigated in Blockchain based on the number of publications?
3. What are the most influential papers in Blockchain according to the number of citations?
4. What are the most popular publication venues for Blockchain papers?
5. What are the topmost supportive funding agencies of Blockchain papers?

To begin the process, the authors then selected Web of Science (WoS) as an appropriate search engine for beginning the search process, based on its reputation in the field, quality and quantity of publications, and search features. The authors identified and selected search vocabulary to include “Blockchain,” “bitcoin,” “cryptocurrency,” “ethereum,” and “smart contract.” The search was conducted on a single day, after which the authors performed a descriptive analysis of the results as they related to the five initial questions.

Main Results – Findings show there has been a steep, close to 400%, increase of blockchain-related papers published between 2013 and 2017, and a parallel increase in citations on WoS. Of the 25 research areas covered in WoS publications, the top four fields focusing on blockchain were Computer Science,

Engineering, Telecommunications, and Business Economics, with Library and Information Science (LIS) as the ninth most researched. The citations also follow this pattern. The most influential paper, based on number of citations was “Blockchains and Smart Contracts for the Internet of Things,” written by Konstantinos Christidis and Michael Devetsikiotis, and five of the top ten most cited papers were on research conducted in the USA. The most popular publications featuring articles on blockchain are *Lecture Notes in Computer Science* and *IEEE Access*. Finally, the study finds that the funding agencies most engaged with blockchain research are two research institutes in China, National Natural Science Foundation of China and National Key Research and Development Program of China, followed by the National Science Foundation in the USA.

Conclusion – While these findings identify current focus areas of blockchain research as related to economics and computer science, they also identify the wide range of other possible areas in the social sciences and humanities, including LIS. Notably, the LIS field has already begun its investigations into the use of Blockchain to facilitate library services such as interlibrary loan, and in archival practices such as certifying provenance.

The study identifies fields where Blockchain research has already begun to take hold, opening publication opportunities for authors and identifying which publications might yield the most citations for their own work, and assists authors, researchers and practicing professionals in identifying those organizations most willing to fund further blockchain research, exploration and implementation. Identification of key articles can provide authors with a starting point, when seeking key or influential works in their own fields to develop research, grant, and project proposals.

Commentary

The authors refer to the recent Miao and Yang (2018) bibliometric study, where Scopus was used as the database, and whose findings mimic the authors. The Miao and Yang (2018) study also found an increasing trend in blockchain research publication since 2016, and similarly identified the top ten papers published, selected and based on the number of publications on the subject. The authors also referred to the Zeng and Ni study (2018), which identified two additional databases, Ei Compendex and China National Knowledge Infrastructure, that produced different results. These studies, conducted using varied search engines and databases, provide future blockchain researchers with a wide array of data to support their work.

When the study is evaluated against Glynn’s (2006) EBL Critical Appraisal Checklist criteria, it appears valid: Article inclusion and exclusion criteria are definitively outlined; the data collection methods were clearly articulated, and the results section effectively summarized potential applications

and areas for further research. The methodology utilized was appropriate for the study and was stated in a way that would allow for replication, with two similar studies cited within the article. Finally, the outcomes of the study are clearly stated and discussed in relation to the data collection process.

To improve this study, the authors could more clearly indicate their reasons for decisions made during the study:

- How did the authors determine the initial 6 terms used in the query string?
- During data analysis, how did the authors determine which papers to include and exclude from the study?
- How, specifically, did this study build upon or align to the results found in the Miao and Yang and Zeng and Ni studies?

If the authors had provided a more detailed comparison table of their study's findings in relation to the other findings, this would enable future researchers to easily analyze and compare a greater amount of data.

This study may be useful for any LIS professional seeking funding and publication opportunities in blockchain-related research. The data provided by Dabbagh et al. offers a view of current research offerings and provides direction for applicable funding and publication sources. Dabbagh et al. also highlight the gap in research outside of the top four areas.

As the research trend continues to move away from a specific focus on Bitcoin, and toward its underlying technology, blockchain, this study catalyzes additional research opportunities and areas of real-world application. As the study's authors suggest, this work provides a stepping-stone for a future, even larger bibliometric study, that could identify additional trends and provide further insight into this quickly growing area.

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