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Know Thy Staff: An Interview with an ILL Specialist

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Know Thy Staff: An Interview with an ILL Specialist

By Ryan Reed '20

Hailing from Dayton, Chris Tangeman, Roesch Library's resident interlibrary loan borrowing expert, recently gave me some insight into a transatlantic journey that eventually brought him to the University of Dayton Libraries. After finishing his master's in library and information science at Kent State University, Chris joined his wife in Florence, Italy. There, Chris took a job assisting in a catalog updating project at a Harvard University postdoctoral research library that had grown from the collections of an art historian and connoisseur who had lived there in the Tuscan hills. Thus began his journey in the exciting world of library cataloging.

Working mostly independently with the books, which spanned from the 15th century to the present, Tangeman also spent time sipping coffee and enjoying family-style lunches with the fantastic and diverse staff. Although it was difficult, Chris and his wife decided to return to the United States to begin a family.

Having become familiar with the system of cataloging and the processes in Italy, Chris began to think he could make a career out of cataloging in the United States. Upon interviewing at multiple institutions, he found he was lacking some of the required credentials for cataloging, but he had just what it took to manage the interlibrary loan system — ILL for short — at the University of Dayton.

When undergraduates, graduate students or faculty members conduct research, they may encounter articles or books that our University or [OhioLINK](#) does not have access to. Stumped researchers then turn to Chris and his researching and database navigating skills. Through ILL, Chris can locate literature and put in a request for it to be

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sent to our library. Over his five years working here, Chris has developed an amazing system for finding articles, books and various sources that even our most experienced faculty members cannot find. But he assures me that he does not want anyone to feel embarrassed or inferior about their researching skills — he just wants them to recognize that he “is amazing,” and all he does all day is look for articles so he is probably better at it than they are. Clearly, his search proficiency is as sharp as his wit; in 2017, Chris processed more than 4,000 requests, so he has a lot of practice.

While he and I both are resistant to the changes that technology has brought to the library world, Chris especially has felt the evolution of the field even in the past five years he has worked in Roesch Library. He has seen print journal holdings at universities drop precipitously as electronic journals become more prevalent, which has challenged Chris to evolve his own researching strategies.

Chris thoroughly enjoys his job here, seeing each request as a sort of puzzle to solve. Every day, Chris gets to engage in what he has heard called “forensic bibliographic reconstruction.”* We are all certainly thankful we have a talented ILL expert here at Roesch Library.

— *Ryan Reed is a junior history major and Roesch Library Knowledge Hub student employee.*

* Dec. 19, 2018: In classic forensic bibliographic reconstruction style, Tangeman now has the source of this term: In a May 2015 entry on the *Ubiquitous Librarian* blog of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Brian Mathews, associate dean for learning and outreach at Virginia Tech, attributed the term to Tara Patterson, a library manager in circulation, document delivery and interlibrary loan at George Washington University. [Read it here.](#)

field, a former UD librarian honors his mentor in Roesch Library with a future gift in his estate plan.

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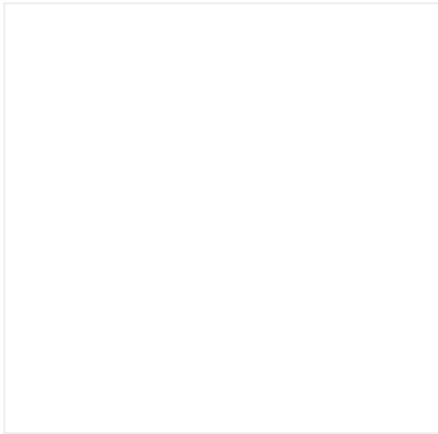
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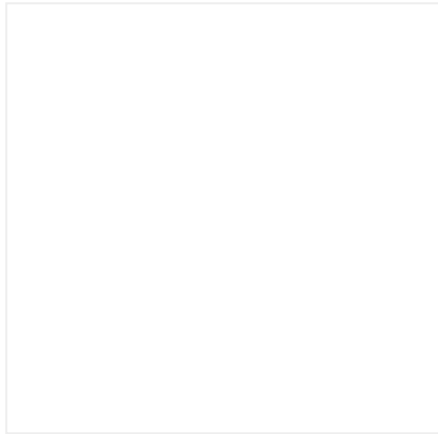
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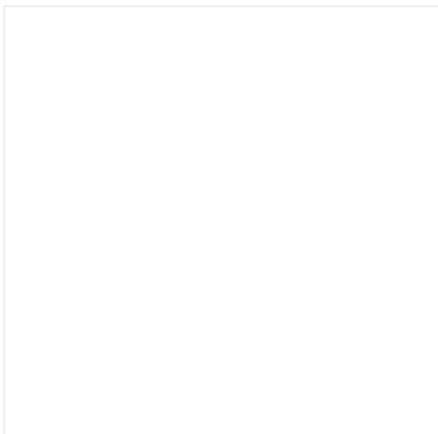
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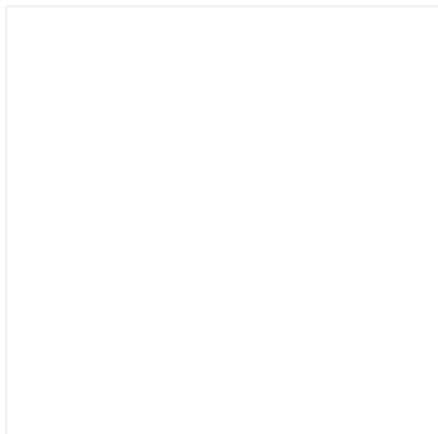
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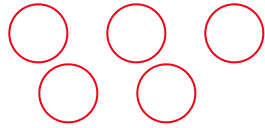
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