Hello LIRT members —

I am writing this the night before the election and there is so much uncertainty in the world, and this is on top of an active global pandemic. Stress abounds, and it is hard to focus on much else. But I have found grounding in people.

Though I have been teaching through Zoom, I am still feeling the wonderful satisfaction of helping students, particularly as they navigate uncertainties about how to do research from afar. Our last LIRT Steering Committee meeting was also a bright spot. We are an organization of caring, open colleagues who volunteer our time to help each other, enrich each other, and provide a home for people who care about instruction in libraries of all kinds.

I hope that for you LIRT is also a place where you find professional grounding. After our summer retreat we outlined three clear goals that we will be discussing more in the Steering Committee:

- Intentionally recruit members to diversify our membership and bring new perspectives, ideas, and interests to LIRT.
- Create a task force to produce recommendations for increasing diversity/valuing diversity in LIRT.
- Increase social media engagement to highlight the work that our committees produce and are engaged in as well as the individuals who make up our membership.

If you are looking for some footing, I invite you to reach out about working on some of these goals. Let us live our values and put our hands out to pull others along. Let us celebrate each other’s work. Let us thrive through strength in diversity.

I do not know what tomorrow or the next week holds, but I do know that I am proud to work with colleagues across the nation who bring passion to our profession. I hope that we will see you at our LIRT member meeting and discussion forum at ALA Midwinter. Thank you for being part of what makes LIRT a vibrant organization.

Jen Hunter
From the Editor

As 2020 winds down, I am not sad to see it go. This may be a year for the history books, but it has certainly been a struggle in so many ways.

Looking back over the last few months, I want to remember some positive takeaways from the time, and I hope you can do the same. Here are a few of mine:

♦ I am much more comfortable teaching online synchronous class sessions than I was a year ago.
♦ I have seen a great deal of compassion this semester from faculty and students for one another, and that warms my heart.
♦ In some ways, I know more about some of my colleagues than I did before – since I’ve now “met” many of their pets and heard about their stay-at-home hobbies.
♦ I now know I am able to adapt to change – so much change! – and roll with the punches and keep going.

In this issue of LIRT News several of our instruction colleagues have shared a bit of their wisdom:

♦ Nan Carmack provides suggestions for helping volunteer tutors brush up on the technology skills needed for virtual instruction.
♦ Jennie Archer describes her library’s partnership and process of educating patrons on her campus about civic engagement through letter writing.
♦ Billie Peterson-Lugo delves into what digital transformation is and how to tell where your library is on the journey to digital transformation in Tech Talk.

Please enjoy this issue, and I hope the new year finds you and your family safe and healthy,

Sherri Brown,
LIRT News Editor
My name is Mitch Fontenot, and I am Humanities and Social Sciences Librarian/Outreach at Louisiana State University Library for the past 16 years, the same amount of time I have been a proud member of LIRT! I am currently serving as co-chair of the LIRT membership committee with Carla James-Jackson, who was interviewed in the last issue of LIRT News.

What brought you to LIRT?

I love LIRT! I joined when I made a mid-career change 16 years ago to academic librarianship. I had been a law librarian for the prior 15 years, and it has been quite a ride!

What do you like about LIRT and what would you like to see?

LIRT’s membership is great with 1700 members with a heavy emphasis on schools and colleges. I would like to see more membership and programs at the public, state, special, etc. libraries levels. We have a great membership, so let’s start bringing greater diversity to the membership rolls and programs.

I would also like to see future interviews with members of LIRT who are not school or college librarians to expand upon this perspective.

What are you looking forward to?

I am looking forward to having all of us back together live, hopefully in Chicago next June. Virtual hugs to all!
Alexandra Rivera (Alex) is the Student Success and Community Engagement Librarian at the University of Michigan Library. As the ALA Executive Board Liaison to LIRT, we thought our members would like to know a bit more about Ms. Rivera. Here is what she shared with us:

I joined ALA in 2000 and am in my first year on the Executive Board (EB) and my third term on ALA Council as a councilor at-large. I have worked in both academic and public libraries. In my current position, I provide instruction to primarily undergraduate students, direct a peer education program, and collaborate closely with K-12 schools, campus engagement initiatives, and community groups. I came to ALA as a Spectrum Scholar while I was a library staff member. I am a longtime member of ACRL, including chairing the University Libraries Section. I am also a longtime member of REFORMA (the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking) and currently serve as the Vice-President of the Joint Council of Librarians of Color, Inc. – ALA’s most recent National Association of Librarians of Color. The values that drive my work are grounded in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I am delighted to be your EB representative and look forward to learning more about LIRT and how I can best support it. There are many different ways I can engage with you. I am available as a resource to you and your members for your questions and concerns and as an open and reciprocal conduit between your unit and the EB.

Here are the official Board Liaison responsibilities (from the ALA Executive Board Manual):

* Facilitate communication with ALA membership units and external organizations;
* Provide pertinent information to unit leaders on new initiatives and emerging issues;
* Help identify member issues and concerns;
* Provide a single Board "contact point" for membership units and external organizations; and
* Make the Board members more accessible, available, and visible to their constituents.

"A Board liaison can be helpful to a group by listening to its concerns and, where appropriate, by suggesting strategies or approaches to achieve objectives. The liaison should also be able to assist in interpreting current or emerging areas of concern, and may direct member leaders to the Executive Director or other staff that can help resolve problems. The liaison must use judgment in accepting tasks and assignments as a member of the group, keeping in mind both time constraints and possible conflicts of interest in later Board decisions."

I look forward to being your liaison for the 2020-2021 ALA governance year and working with you and your unit during these interesting times.

Find out more about Alex at [https://lib.umich.edu/users/alexriv](https://lib.umich.edu/users/alexriv).
Midwinter 2021 Discussion Forum

Pivot, Nimble, Sprint: Learning with a Curve During a Crisis
Sunday January 24, 2021
1:15 PM – 2:15 PM CT

2020 has been quite a year! Join us for a discussion about how the past year has altered your plans for how you learn. Did you attend virtual conferences? Take online classes? Talk with colleagues? Step back to focus on family? Dive into the literature? Put your own learning on the backburner? We’ve all been thrown into a new experience and we hope this discussion forum is a space for sharing, supporting, and decompressing. We will start with an introduction, assign people to breakout rooms for small conversations, and then share out to the group. We will also have a shared Google doc where people can put their thoughts, suggestions, and resources.

Watch the ALA Midwinter Virtual website for more details.

Have you created an instruction program or developed a unique classroom strategy? Please share your experiences with LIRT!

Send your articles to Sherri Brown (slb4kt@virginia.edu)
Letters for Legislators: Breaking Down Barriers to Civic Engagement

Jennie Archer

In 2018, Concordia College’s Carl B. Ylvisaker Library, in Moorhead, MN partnered with Concordia’s Student Government Association to host a letter writing campaign, Letters for Legislators: Writing as Civic Engagement, in order to promote the connections between civic engagement and information literacy. Letters for Legislators began as a passive program in the library lobby, later evolved into a workshop, and has the potential to be an easily adaptable recurring program.

The Passive Program
Because the Carl B.’s online passive programs have low engagement, I wanted Letters for Legislators to be tangible. The Letters for Legislators program consisted of a table with signage explaining the program and a QR code linked to a LibGuide, paper and envelopes, and a drop box for completed letters. The library provided postage for submitted letters, and the paper and envelopes provided were plain white so it was clear that patrons were writing as individuals and not on behalf of the college.

The Letters for Legislators LibGuide includes information about contacting representatives, becoming an informed constituent, and following letter writing etiquette. Rather than listing contact information for specific officials, the guide includes resources like the League of Women Voters: Find Your Elected Officials site and USA.gov, which provide information about officials at the local, state, and federal levels.

During the week of the program, I saw several patrons taking paper and envelopes or scanning the QR code for the LibGuide. The guide was viewed 77 times that week, and our Student Government partners told me they heard positive feedback from students. However, no one submitted completed letters for us to mail.

The Workshop
I was excited that patrons were visiting the LibGuide and viewed the event positively, but I was disappointed that no one submitted a letter, so I adapted the passive program into a workshop for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Concordia is in session for MLK Day, but instead of attending classes, students, faculty, and staff attend MLK Day programming, which includes campus speakers and concurrent workshops.

The workshop did not require much additional planning. During the workshop I showed attendees examples of the resources available on the LibGuide and how they might use those resources to reach out to elected officials. Attendees were the most interested in the League of Women Voters: Find Your Elected Officials site and GovTrack. I also referred to the 2017 New Yorker article, “What Calling Congress Achieves,” to provide context for why attendees should contact their representatives and strategies for contacting them. Seventeen people attended the three sessions offered throughout the day, which is a high turnout for us. One attendee asked for paper and an envelope, but no one used the work time at the end of the workshop to write a letter.

Lessons Learned
There are pros and cons to offering Letters for Legislators as a passive program and a workshop. Sequence and persistence are key. Since many of our patrons have not contacted their elected officials before, it was not realistic to expect them to write a letter during the workshop or read a LibGuide to learn about the process on their own. However,
offering a workshop to expose attendees to the information and then offering a passive program would give them time to think, conduct research, and write at their own pace.

After the initial planning, the passive program and workshop require few if any resources and little staff time, which makes it easy to offer them regularly or on an ongoing basis. Initially, I thought access to letter writing supplies might be a barrier for our patrons, but workshop attendees explained that access to information was a bigger barrier for them. With that in mind, I’ve continued promoting Letters for Legislators and the LibGuide through social media posts, and of this writing, it has nearly 600 views, which is high compared to our other guides that aren’t tied to a specific class.

The Letters for Legislators passive program and workshop are easily adaptable for different situations and mediums. While election programming is a natural fit, Letters for Legislators would work well for any political observance from Constitution Day to the 4th of July. It could also be used to encourage patrons to advocate for libraries during National Library Week, or as a ready-made, pop up program in response to events like COVID-19 or the Black Lives Matter protests that may spark patrons’ interest in reaching out to their elected officials. As libraries adapt to COVID-19 precautions, Letters for Legislators could easily be offered as a virtual workshop or passive program, and opportunities to collaborate with campus or community partners are nearly endless. Potential partners include local elected officials, groups affected by upcoming legislation, or faculty members. I was surprised to learn that psychology, education, dietetics/nutrition, and nursing faculty regularly assign students to write to elected officials about issues affecting their fields. First-year writing students also regularly write advocacy letters to practice persuasion and writing to a specific audience.

These days, patrons have many reasons to reach out to their elected officials, but many of them do not know where to start. Libraries can provide them with the information they need to make their voices heard. By explaining how to contact elected officials, follow letter writing etiquette, and locate information about legislation and causes patrons care about, Letters for Legislators has begun breaking down barriers that can stand between citizens and civic engagement.

Reference
https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/03/06/what-calling-congress-achieves

Author note: Jennie Archer is the First-Year Experience Librarian at the Carl B. Ylvisaker Library at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. She is also one of the tri-chairs of the library’s Outreach Committee. Contact: jarcher@cord.edu
Smooth Transitions: Developing Information Literacy in the In-Between Places

Transitions can be full of excitement, but also anxiety. Faced with these transitions, a person may sometimes struggle to find their balance within a new environment. How are librarians collaborating across institutions (public, school, and academic libraries) to help alleviate this anxiety by teaching information literacy concepts that reach beyond the classroom and into the real world? While most conversations tend to focus on the transition between high school and academia, there are many other types of transitions that a learner can experience. This panel, rescheduled from ALA 2020, will discuss how public, academic, and school libraries work together to support the development of information literacy skills for learners of all ages, and how to connect with other librarians interested in this topic.

Watch the ALA conference website and upcoming 2021 *LIRT News* issues for more details.
2021
LIRT Librarian Recognition Award

Call for Nominations

We are pleased to invite nominations for the 2021 LIRT Librarian Recognition Award. The Librarian Recognition Award is given in acknowledgement of a librarian’s contribution to the development, advancement, and support of information literacy and/or instruction in any type of library. Self-nominations are welcome.

The award will be judged based on the following:

- Contributions to library literature on topics related to instruction/information literacy. These contributions can consist of both formal and informal publications (peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, blog postings, newsletter contributions, etc.). Non-traditional forms of publishing will be considered.
- Key role in the creation of an instruction/information literacy program or project that has shown potential for wide-spread sharing and replication.
- Impactful participation within local, regional, national, and/or international level professional organizations that are devoted to the support and promotion of library instruction and information literacy in any type of library.

Nomination Materials

To nominate a librarian for the LIRT Librarian Recognition Award, please submit a nomination packet that includes:

- Completed nomination sheet (available on LIRT Awards website)
- Letter from the nominator addressing the award criteria (see rubric on LIRT Awards website), providing concrete examples
- 3 letters of support
- Resume or CV for the individual being nominated

Other supporting materials that show the individual’s contributions to information literacy and instruction are welcome. Electronic submission of nomination materials is expected. Further information regarding the award and the selection process can be found on the LIRT Awards website: http://www.ala.org/rt/lirt/awards

Deadline

Send all LIRT Librarian Recognition Award nomination materials by January 15, 2021 to:

Rebecca Davis
rebecca.davis@simmons.edu

The award winner will be notified following the ALA Midwinter Conference, no later than February 15, 2021.

The award will be presented at the 2021 ALA Annual Conference. Award winners will receive a $1,000 cash award, a plaque, and a $500 travel stipend to be used toward attending the ALA Annual Conference. Awards are sponsored by the Library Instruction Round Table.

If you have any questions, please contact the LIRT Awards Committee Chair, Emilia Marcyk (marcyk@msu.edu).
2021

LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award

Call for Nominations

We are pleased to invite nominations for the 2021 LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award. The Innovation in Instruction Award is given in recognition of a library’s contributions to the development, advancement, and support of information literacy and/or instruction in any type of library. Self-nominations are welcome.

The award will be given to a library that has done one (or more) of the following:

- Revamped its public instruction program in response to a new technology, an assessment report, etc.
- Initiated a public program that utilizes best practices of instruction in combination with new methods of delivery.
- Created an original type of instruction, e.g., team-taught interdisciplinary research sessions, a novel form of outreach, etc.
- Practice(s) will be prioritized over scholarship with preference for innovative practices that are low-cost and can be easily reproduced elsewhere.

Nomination Materials

To nominate a library for the LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award, please submit a nomination packet that includes the following:

- Completed nomination sheet (available on LIRT Awards website)
- Letter from the nominator addressing the award criteria (see rubric on LIRT Awards website), providing concrete examples
- 3 letters of support

Other supporting materials that show the library’s contributions to information literacy and instruction are encouraged. Only one member of the library nomination group needs to be a librarian. Electronic submission of nomination materials is expected. Further information regarding the award and the selection process can be found on the LIRT Awards website: http://www.ala.org/rt/lirt/awards

Deadline

Send all LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award nomination materials by January 15, 2021 to:

Emilia Marcyk
marcyk@msu.edu

The award winner will be notified following the ALA Midwinter Conference, no later than February 15, 2021. The award will be presented at the 2021 ALA Annual Conference. Award winners will receive a $1,000 cash award, a plaque, and a $500 travel stipend to be used toward attending the ALA Annual Conference. Awards are sponsored by the Library Instruction Round Table.

If you have any questions, please contact the LIRT Awards Committee Chair: Emilia Marcyk (marcyk@msu.edu).
Enhancing Tutor Technology Skills for Virtual Instruction

Nan B. Carmack, Ed.D., M.L.I.S.

Many adult literacy programs rely on volunteers to provide one-on-one instruction to students for basic education, GED preparation, and English Language Learning (Pro Literacy, 2020). Volunteers report fears and challenges of trying to teach virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic and with technology prior to the pandemic (Carmack, 2020). Yet, digital literacy is critical in equipping adult learners to navigate 21st-century life, from accessing government services to managing personal finances and completing job applications. To allay these fears and help their students gain digital literacy, tutors would be well-served to brush up on their own technology skills. However, as one tutor put it, “I don’t know what I don’t know!”

Assessing one’s knowledge (gaps) is easily accomplished by working through Northstar Digital Literacy Assessments, a Literacy Minnesota project (Literacy Minnesota, 2020). The assessments are free and feature both written and verbal instructions for each section. Three different sections – Essential Computer Skills, Essential Software Skills, and Using Technology in Daily Life – include multiple assessments on a variety of topics. Upon completion of an assessment, suggestions are made for areas in which the learner needs to grow. Tutors can then use their own skills in developing a learning plan for themselves.

Free technology education sources are plentiful. Northstar offers free units supporting the same assessment categories but once completed, what next? There are additional resources for free instruction including GCF LearnFree.org, a service of the Goodwill Community Foundation (Goodwill Community Foundation, 2020). GCFLearnFree presents more complex topics, including deeper dives into MS Office products, search engine usage, information literacy, and online safety. Tutors may also want to check out offerings beyond the technology module, including life skills, numeracy, etc. for student usage. Public libraries also often offer additional learning platforms including Universal Class and Learning Express Library, each of which explores topics in an asynchronous, self-paced modular platform. Tutors can explore the offerings of their public library to find out what is available to them.

Tutors may also consider technology education as an opportunity for co-learning with their students, strengthening their relationship as well as demonstrating to students that everyone has room to learn. Certainly, some students may have more digital skills than their tutor and may enjoy having the roles reversed in assisting their tutor’s technology learning. One caveat: tutors need to understand that device fluency (i.e., the ability to manipulate and navigate a phone or tablet) does not mean their students have computer or information literacy skills, and they should have students participate in assessments as well.

Librarians who have a literacy program as part of their institution, have tutors that use their spaces, or have a collaborative partnership with a local literacy program, are encouraged to share this information and resource access while providing encouragement and support along their learning path. Potential avenues for sharing include the creation of pathfinders or LibGuides to share; webinars for the tutor community demonstrating the tools; linking tools on the library website; as well as one-on-one assistance. As advocates for lifelong learning and as digital guides, librarians have the opportunity to support the vital role volunteer tutors have in our communities.
Enhancing Tutor Technology Skills for Virtual Instruction, continued

References


Author Note
Dr. Carmack is the Director of Library Development and Networking at the Library of Virginia, supporting all public libraries in their role as community educators. Carmack is also an adjunct professor in the MLIS program Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. Contact: nan.carmack@lva.virginia.gov
Tech Talk

By Billie Peterson-Lugo, Baylor University
billie_peterson@baylor.edu

Dear Tech Talk—Another catch phrase has surfaced on my radar — digital transformation. It’s not totally clear to me what digital transformation is. Perhaps libraries have already achieved this transformation or perhaps not? Any enlightenment would be appreciated. – Disconcerted Ignorance of Digital Transformation

Dear DIDT—Yes, digital transformation (abbreviated Dx by EDUCAUSE and DT by others) is a phrase that is appearing quite frequently, more so in some disciplines than others. In fact, for some, digital transformation has moved well beyond a catch phrase into the realm of a sea change or paradigm shift. A broad search of the literature on the phrase digital transformation yields quite a bit of information across disciplines such as business, computer science, education, and information technology. Interestingly enough, perhaps one of the earliest references in the library literature appeared in the Library of Congress Information Bulletin when Lamolinara (1996) included digital transformation in a title that summarized a presentation made by then Librarian of Congress Dr. James H. Billington during a “Transformation of the Public Library in the 21st Century” meeting.

Like all seemingly new concepts, beginning with a definition might work well. The definitions abound – from commercial firms like Citrix, RedHat, and Salesforce that want to sell the services and products that will enable digital transformation in business settings, to non-profit organizations like EDUCAUSE that believe digital transformation is essential for the long term survival of higher education institutions (HEIs).

Lester (2017) suggests that the “consulting firm CapGemini, in collaboration with the MIT Center for Digital Business, is credited with coining the term ‘digital transformation’ in late 2011,” which is: “the use of technology to radically improve performance or reach of enterprises” (Capgemini Consulting & MIT Center for Digital Business, 2011).

In their systematic review covering nearly 40 years of literature on digital transformation in HEIs, Benavides et al. (2020) provide a list of definitions culled from that literature (p. 8). EDUCAUSE also provides some definitions, such as: “Digital transformation (Dx) is a series of deep and coordinated culture, workforce, and technology shifts that enable new educational and operating models and transform an institution’s operations, strategic directions, and value proposition” (Grajek & Reinitz, 2019).

However, throughout the literature and the definitions, common characteristics of digital transformation emerge:

- A comprehensive, strategic initiative across the institution
- Breaking down institutional silos, in part meaning that information technology (IT) personnel must be true collaborators, with technology initiatives examined from a holistic perspective
Tech Talk, continued

- Enhancing user experiences is key – where users could be both customers and employees
- Rethinking practices and processes, rather than adjusting technology to fit legacy practices and processes
- Examining technology with an open mind to identify if/how technology can enable achievement of missions and goals
- Acknowledging that mobility is ubiquitous
- On-going – digital transformation is a journey, not a destination
- Growing out of digital disruption

Some would argue that libraries and librarians have spearheaded digital transformation since the late 1960s with the development of the MARC standard and the ERIC and MEDLINE databases. From this starting point, librarians began to transform card catalogs into online catalogs; they performed mediated searches in a variety of databases until the advent of CD-ROM technology that enabled end-user searching; they jumped on the acquisition of internet-based databases that enabled research from outside library facilities and likewise started investing significant amounts of money acquiring resources with full-text journal content, followed by the acquisition of e-books. Early on, they developed websites and online tools to provide access to this growing amount of digital information; they provided instruction – both in-person and later online – to help researchers find and evaluate information in an increasingly digital world; they developed initiatives to replace print theses and dissertations with openly available electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs), as well as other digitization initiatives that resulted in online access to “hidden” materials in special collections. They adopted new library services platforms that enabled the discovery of information across all the library’s digital content, and they’ve used social media to connect with users and chat services to provide research assistance. But do these activities over the past 50 years represent true digital transformation? Perhaps not quite.

In his 2015 presentation on digital transformation, Wilcox provides the following “scorecard” for libraries, indicating that perhaps libraries have not yet reached the point of digital transformation:

What does this mean for libraries?

Digitisation Yes
Access to digital items Yes
OPAC Yes
Free access to technology Yes
Inclusive practices Yes
Gathering of usage data Yes
Use of social media channels Yes/No
Cross-channel promotion No
CRM software No
Internet of Things No
Digital transformation strategy No

(Wilcox, 2015. Reusable License)
Admittedly, much has changed since 2015, and some of the noes may now be yeses, but Wilcox may still believe that few, if any, libraries have yet to attain that final pinnacle – digital transformation strategy.

Perhaps more telling, is this statement and image from Brooks and McCormack (2020): “Many people mistake digital transformation for other applications of information technology to work and personal life: digitization (of analog information) and digitalization (of processes).” But it is clear from the image below that true digital transformation provides a level of complexity that goes well beyond simple digitization or digitalization.

Examine this image, one can discern that libraries and librarians have clearly moved along the continuum regarding digitization and digitalization. For example, libraries transitioned from card catalogs to online catalogs – but in the beginning, the representation of the displayed data replicated that of a card in a card catalog. Little thought was given to how the display could be reimagined until the emergence of HTML and hyperlinking. Now many libraries have made the leap from a traditional integrated library system to a library services platform. Most who have gone through this transition will readily tell you that this change has forced them to rethink their daily activities, their workflows, their processes and procedures – in short – rethink everything about their job responsibilities. This level of change in library systems starts to look like digital transformation.

Regarding ETDs, e-journals, and e-books, once again, the traditional analog format has been replicated in the digital world, even though many technology options exist that can override the standard linear approach found in traditional print works. With ETDs the digital native graduate students will drive new approaches for presenting their research, but they will also have to convince the establishment in their departments and disciplines of the validity of their research representations. Likewise, e-journal and e-book publishers must be open to and provide options for the publication of research using more novel approaches. At this time, one could argue that JoVE, a peer-reviewed scientific video journal (https://www.jove.com/), leads the way in providing a highly interactive approach for the presentation of research in an online journal. For e-books, Shaw (2020) suggests:

Digital Transformation in Context

(Brooks & McCormack, 2020. Licensed under a Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 4.0 International License)
freedom from print liberates content from two-dimensional layouts, linear paths, and turning pages. Adaptive design, with responsive elements and branching, allows a more personalized experience customized to an individual’s needs. Resources can lead with the format that is best suited to convey information rather than retrofitting the content to suit the available medium. Putting content first adds a new dimension and creatively [sic] need not be stifled by a paper page. (p. 21)

Other examples of conveying research in ways that go beyond the possibilities in the analog world include presenting statistical information not as numbers in a chart on a page but as information with which the reader can interact and manipulate in a live environment. Similarly, the entire field of data mining – using specialized tools against a significant corpus of data in discipline-based library databases to make new discoveries that would be impossible to find using traditional research techniques – is a burgeoning research field for many disciplines.

These examples illustrate that there is movement within the library profession toward that fifth level of digital transformation shown in Brooks and McCormack’s image, but overall, we are still not there. However, enter COVID-19, which has suddenly and unexpectedly accelerated the rise of digital transformation as noted by Brooks and McCormack (2020), Dobreva (2020), Newman (2020), and Rospiglioni (2020). From their perspectives, there is most likely no turning back, even once COVID-19 is behind us.

During spring 2020, libraries throughout the country found themselves scrambling to provide services and resources without providing access to facilities. Buildings were closed, and employees were working from home. Instructors at all levels found themselves providing online-only instruction to students, in many instances for the first time ever. Library and school employees found themselves working from home, certainly a situation many never even saw as a remote possibility, and yet literally overnight there they were. All these changes were paradigm shifts and would have been even more challenging had not libraries and educational institutions already been on the path of digital transformation. In spring 2020, everyone did what they could do to “make it work.”

However, after the spring term ended and into the summer, education and library administrators (academic, school, and public) soon realized that the coming fall would not represent a return to normal. Librarians and educators recognized that there would be a new normal going into the fall – just making it to the finish line would no longer be an adequate solution. Would facilities be open? If open, which ones, and how many people could come in? Would students return to classes? Would patrons return to libraries? Would employees return to the workplace? Would instruction be face-to-face, online-only, or some of both? How would library instruction be provided in an online environment? Ultimately, which library services were viable in this unknown realm and which were not, and who made the determinations?

Although some decisions could conceivably have been made at individual department levels, ultimately institutional leadership had to define and set the strategic plans in collaboration with IT professionals and countless others across the institution in order to enact plans effectively, many of these plans tightly bound with some level of technology. It is this level of collaborative, cross-institutional, strategic involvement at the highest levels that tips the scale firmly into digital transformation.

So, where are libraries now? Brown et al. (2019) suggest asking the following questions to determine if an institution is on the digital transformation journey. Look at your own institution and consider answers to these questions in light of changes made over the past nine months because of COVID-19:

- Are you working toward transformation related to any of the following?
  - One of your institution’s major challenges, such as student success, financial health, reputation and relevance, or external competition
  - Institutional value proposition
Institutional or departmental strategic direction

- How would you describe the proposed outcome? Substantial; having profound impact; resulting in tangible, fundamental change?
- Are you working toward deep and coordinated change?
- Is there evidence of significant shifts in culture?
- Is there evidence of these shifts in workforce?
- Is there evidence of these shifts in technology?

One might argue that most people reading and answering these questions would determine that their institutions and their libraries are definitely much more on the digital transformation journey than they were nine months ago.

One more consideration related to libraries (particularly academic and school libraries), their governing institutions, and digital transformation. From Sandhu’s (2018) perspective, libraries are in a particularly good position to assist their institutions in digital transformation, and he builds his case detailing libraries’ active roles in:

- Digital Teaching & Learning (digital pedagogy)
- Digital Scholarship (research data management, scholarly communication/publishing, scholarly training, collaborative research bids)
- Developing Digital Capabilities
- Library as a Digital Infrastructure Platform
- The Digital Student Experience; and
- Digital Business Transformation

The overall implication is that digital transformation: “the seismic cultural, workforce, and technological shift under way as the diverse digital landscape influences – and changes – almost everything we do” (Wetzel et al., 2018) is alive, well, and now starting to thrive in the educational/library environment. Many (Brooks & McCormack (2020), Citrix (n.d.), Salesforce (n.d.a.), and Savić (2019)) have stated: transform or be left behind. Savić (2019) even presents the very real example of Netflix, which “in 2000, proposed a partnership with Blockbuster. Blockbuster laughed at the idea. Bad response. Blockbuster went bankrupt in 2010, and Netflix is now worth more than $100 billion” (p. 39).

For over 50 years libraries and librarians have been activists in digitization and digitalization initiatives, doing all they can to promote transformation and not be left behind, successfully collaborating and competing with the internet. With a better understanding of true digital transformation, now is the time for libraries to continue on the journey, moving to the next level and working with their respective organizations to fully embrace digital transformation.

Additional Resources


Tech Talk, continued


Tech Talk, continued


Get Involved with LIRT

LIRT Standing Committees

Use the online form to volunteer

Adult Learners
This committee is charged with assisting library professionals to more effectively serve adult learners.

Awards
This committee is charged with selecting the recipients for the LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award and the LIRT Librarian Recognition Award.

Communications
This committee is responsible for soliciting and distributing content, in both written and visual formats, for all avenues of communication with LIRT membership. This includes, but is not limited to, preparing and distributing the round table’s newsletter, curating all social media accounts, and providing oversight of LIRT’s online presence. The committee may create and update content, as well as solicit content and advise other committees regarding the creation and maintenance of content.

Conference Program
This committee shall be responsible for annual program preparation and presentation.

Liaison
This committee shall initiate and maintain communication with groups within the American Library Association dealing with issues relevant to library instruction and shall disseminate information about these groups’ activities.

Membership
This committee shall be responsible for publicizing the Round Table’s purposes, activities and image; and for promoting membership in the Round Table.

Organization and Planning
This committee shall be responsible for long-range planning and making recommendations to guide the future direction of LIRT.

Teaching, Learning, & Technology
This committee will be responsible for identifying and promoting the use of technology in library instruction. Special attention will be given to technologies that enhance learning and can be easily adapted to a variety of different learning environments. Activities will include assisting with programs, writing reviews and articles for the newsletter, and promoting research that relates to our charge.

Top 20
This committee shall be responsible for monitoring the library instruction literature and identifying high quality library-instruction related articles from all types of libraries. Annually, this committee shall prepare and publish in the LIRT News a list of the Top 20 articles on library instruction.

Transitions to College
This committee builds and supports partnerships between school, public, and academic librarians to assist students in their transition to the academic library environment.

For more information about our committees, visit: http://www.ala.org/lirt/committees

Library Instruction Round Table News

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