



LIRT empowers librarians from all types of libraries to become better teachers through sharing best practices, leadership and professional development, and networking.



School

Public

Special

Academic

Library Instruction Round Table

NEWS

From the Vice President

I thought about titling this article with sort of wordplay involving “vice president” and “unprecedented” in reference to both the times in which we live and the fact that I’m new to this role. But honestly, if I read the phrase “in these unprecedented times” one more time I might lose the remainder of my sanity. So, I opted for the boring title. 😊 (...Are emojis predated in these articles?) But let’s be clear: times are tough—and we’re all still trying to figure things out.

Seeing as I’m also trying to figure the VP role out, I took a line from Jennifer Hunter (VP, 2020) and read through the past several years of Vice President contributions to the *LIRT News* to see what my predecessors had to say. What I found is that most of their articles can be distilled into the following theme: **collaboration is vital for navigating change**. I agree wholeheartedly with this theme and intend to continue it.

Years ahead of the pandemic, Barbara Hopkins (VP, 2013) urged us to embrace instructional and technological advances to aid library users. Andy Reville (VP, 2015) called for us to break down professional silos and collaborate across library settings to support student success. In 2018, VP Kristen Edson called on us to continually question whether our methods are truly meeting user needs. In 2022, I’m echoing all of these sentiments—loudly. Keeping up on digital resources and instructional methods is necessary for proactively aiding and engaging students across learning environments, and we should work across public, school, and academic libraries to provide a unified network of support. Moreover, recent news of various school boards and state legislatures promoting censorship of school and public library resources presents another scenario in which we must work together as librarians, regardless of setting, to advocate for and collaboratively develop accessible pathways to intellectual freedom for our communities of users.

Fortunately, due to its dedicated and innovative membership, LIRT provides an excellent space for collaboration across library settings. If you’re interested in working with colleagues across institutions, I encourage you to [volunteer to serve on a LIRT committee!](#)

Becca



Becca Neel
LIRT Vice President

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From the Editor

I want to use this month's letter to say thank you. If you're reading this issue of *LIRT News*, thank you for taking the time to catch up with what LIRT is up to, to see what we have planned for ALA Annual, and for learning from colleagues. Thank you to Dana Lucisano who wrote about experiential learning with tablets at her library, to Holly Hebert for agreeing to be spotlighted in this issue, and to Billie Peterson, who every few months churns out yet another great Tech Talk—I don't know how she does it.

Thank you to our great LIRT leaders, President Susan Mythen and Vice President Becca Neel, thanks to past leaders who continue to help LIRT in so many ways, and a special thank you to all who agreed to run for LIRT office this year even though we have so many commitments already on our plates.

If you engage in instruction in some form, thank you for passing your wisdom on to others. Sometimes our jobs can seem underappreciated, but I hope you continue to take inspiration from LIRT and the work of our fabulous members.

Looking forward to spring,

Sherri



Sherri Brown,
LIRT News Editor

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Contributions to be considered for the **June 2022 issue** must be sent to the editor by **May 1, 2022**.

Production editor: Rachel Mulvihill
University of Central Florida Libraries

Candidates for LIRT Offices

ALA election polls run from March 14-April 6, 2022. Members are provided with information about how to vote via email. More details can be found on the ALA web page: <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection>

Candidate for Vice President/President-Elect

Victor Baeza

Victor Dominguez Baeza is an associate professor and the Graduate Initiatives & Engagement Coordinator for Oklahoma State University Libraries. His 25 years of involvement in library instruction have given him diverse experience in designing, directing, and delivering workshops, training sessions, and seminars. Victor has a BS in Communication from Eastern New Mexico University. He earned his MLS from the University of North Texas College of Information, Library Science and Technologies and received his MBA from Texas Christian University. He has been involved with LIRT in many capacities since 1997, including as co-chair of the Conference Program Committee (twice), co-chair of the Membership Committee, member of the Top 20 and Liaison Committees, LIRT Treasurer (twice), and LIRT Councilor (1 term).



Statement of Interest: I've been a member of ALA and LIRT since 1997. Over my career I've had the privilege of being involved in public, school, and academic libraries, as an employee, collaborator, and a volunteer. I have seen how instruction is involved in all aspects of librarianship, whether working with patrons, volunteers, or employees. As LIRT's Councilor the last 3 years I kept focus on identifying proposed changes to ALA's governance that could have positive and negative effects on the round table. In 2020, I was asked to serve on the Forward Together Resolutions Working Group and the Forward Together Fiscal Analysis Working Group through Annual of 2021, serving as the liaison between both groups as they sought to re-imagine ALA's governance structure. I seek the office of Vice President/President Elect because I want to continue working to make sure the role of round tables are recognized and supported in the new structure of ALA and continue the efforts of LIRT leadership to ensure the round table's resources are used to best serve and engage membership.

Candidates for LIRT Offices

Candidate for Secretary/Archivist

Rachel Mulvihill

Rachel Mulvihill is Head of the Downtown Campus Library at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. She currently serves as the Co-Chair of LIRT's Communications Committee and Production Editor for *LIRT News*. She has been active with LIRT since 2015, having previously served on the Top 10 and Newsletter Committees. Rachel earned her bachelor's degree in Anthropology from the University of Florida and her Master of Arts in Library and Information Science from the University of South Florida.

Statement of Interest: I have enjoyed and benefited from my affiliation with the Library Instruction Round Table for the past seven years, participating in the work of several committees and working on the *LIRT News* publication. I find the mission of the round table compelling and appreciate the inclusion of librarians from all types of libraries. I would like to continue my contributions to LIRT through service as Secretary on the Executive Board.



Candidate for Vice Treasurer/Treasurer Elect

Trina McCowan

Trina McCowan is the Assessment Librarian at the University of North Florida. She currently serves as the LIRT Intellectual Freedom Committee Liaison and as a member of the LIRT Communications Committee.

Statement of Interest: Service to others has always been an essential part of my personal and professional life. I would be honored to use my experience with large departmental budgets to serve the round table as treasurer. My budget experience includes supervising multiple budgets, regular invoicing, reconciling, and reporting. I look forward to continuing the excellent work done by Erica England and Fagdeba Bakoyema (Bako) contributing my talents and abilities to LIRT.



Candidates for LIRT Offices

Candidate for LIRT Councilor



Samantha Kannegiser

Samantha Kannegiser is a Student Success Librarian at Rutgers University in Camden, NJ. She has spent her entire career working in information literacy instruction and has been a member of the LIRT since 2018. As Student Success Librarian with liaison responsibilities, Samantha is an enthusiastic and dedicated library instructor. Samantha has continually contributed to the profession through her service on the ACRL University Libraries Section Technology in University Libraries Committee and as co-chair of the Instruction Section Teaching Methods Committee, as well as her research into information literacy instruction in chat reference and the use of augmented reality in library orientations. Samantha earned her BA in English from Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ and her MLIS from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ.

Statement of Interest: As LIRT Councilor, I would build upon my existing work to serve all librarians and advocate for the many ways we provide instruction to our communities. As a member of LIRT I have drawn much support from its resources and members, who have provided vital support, particularly in the early years of my career. I am eager to serve as LIRT Councilor and to give back to the vibrant community that has given me so much.

LIRT @ ALA

LibLearnX and Instruction Recap

On Friday, February 4, 2022, the LIRT Membership Committee hosted a Zoom discussion about LibLearnX and instruction. Blake Klimasa, Lily Dubach, and Mitch Fontenot were so pleased to welcome eight attendees to the informal event. The session started with ice breaker questions then quickly delved into attendees' perceptions of LibLearnX, followed by deeper topics. One-shot instruction sessions, critical information literacy, vocational awe, diversity, and many other pertinent and timely topics arose. Feedback at the end indicated that attendees would enjoy future sessions.

Holly Hebert

Assistant Professor
Middle Tennessee State University



What brought you to LIRT?

Honestly, it was when I was hired at MTSU as an Assistant Professor and needed to get involved in a national organization for the service part of my job. I think I went on ALA's website and just started looking at all the options. I saw the Adult Learners Committee and it looked like something I would be interested in. Everyone was so nice that I decided to stay.

What was your path to librarianship?

Like many others, librarianship is not my first career even though I've been a lifelong library user. Directly after college, I worked for several years as a caseworker for the elderly and disabled. After having kids, I didn't want to work full-time at first, so going back to that job wasn't an option. I started working as a page at our local public library since I was always there anyway. While working there I got to know the reference librarians and thought, "I can do that," so I went and got my MLIS at Wayne State University. From there I worked in public and academic libraries and also for a library vendor before I started teaching.

Tell us about your current position. What do you like most about it?

I teach in our Master of Library Science Program at MTSU, which is delivered asynchronously online. I love so many things about it! Teaching in a library science program was something that occurred to me way back when I was in library school. I remember thinking that it would be a cool thing to do when I got old, and now here I am! I love the people I work with, having access to an academic library, and being involved in a university community, but the best part is my students. I love watching them grow and learn and seeing what great things they go on to accomplish.

In what ways does it challenge you?

Being on the tenure track is a little nerve-wracking, and juggling my classes and advising duties, plus serving on committees and doing research, gets overwhelming at times. However, it has enabled me to grow in ways I never thought possible. During the pandemic I also decided to start on my doctorate (Hint: they waived the GRE) so that is sort of a self-imposed challenge related to my job.

Throughout all of your educational experiences, what teacher inspired you the most and why?

I've had a lot of great teachers over the years, but I'm going to go in a little different direction on this one. After high school I went to a very small junior college near Philadelphia. During my freshman year, I lost my dad after having lost my mom just the summer before. It was a really rough time for me. There were several teachers who took an interest in me personally and literally carried me through the rest of that year. When I was sick in the dorm, they brought me soup and took care of me like surrogate parents until I was able to stand on my own two feet again. I will never forget their kindness.

Continued on next page

Member A-LIRT, continued

Holly Hebert

When you travel, what do you never leave home without?

Well, the correct librarian answer would be 'a book,' which is true. I always have a print book or ebook ready to go. But a more honest answer would be snacks. I have a food allergy, so I'm never sure where I can find food when I'm traveling, even though in reality, I have never starved yet, as anyone who knows me personally can attest to. I also usually have my SLR camera with me, because photography is a lifelong hobby of mine.

If you could change one thing about libraries today, what would it be?

This is a tough question, because I see libraries doing so many awesome things and serving people in so many different ways. During the pandemic we've seen libraries stepping up and offering online programming, handing out COVID tests, providing curbside service, and so much more. I guess I would say don't be afraid to grow and change and try new things, but also in the haste to 'modernize,' don't leave people out. There are still patrons who need large print books and who aren't ready to get all of their information online. Sometimes I worry that we move ahead without making sure as many people as possible are coming with us. There needs to be a balance.

Tell us one thing about yourself that most of us probably don't know.

Another lifelong interest of mine has been genealogy. Even as a young girl, I liked tromping through family cemeteries with my Nana and looking at her handwritten family tree, which was written on a large piece of paper that rolled up like a scroll. At one point a few years ago during a job change, I considered becoming a certified genealogist and doing that as my job. Maybe someday.

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

I love being involved with LIRT and getting to meet so many great people and learning about what they do out there in library land. So many wonderful things are already happening in LIRT so it's hard to say. As with any volunteer organization, it's hard to keep the momentum going sometimes when people are busy with their day jobs and life in general. I enjoy learning more about our members (like in this Member A-LIRT) and the opportunities to learn and collaborate online during the year, not just at a conference. I hope we can continue in this direction.

Did you know? You can be featured in Member A-LIRT!
Just reach out to the LIRT Membership Committee Chair,
Lily Dubach, at lily@ucf.edu.

LOOKING AHEAD TO ALA ANNUAL JUNE 2022

LIRT is hoping to see everyone in person again this June (fingers crossed) in Washington, D.C. Here are a few of the events we'll be hosting (we'll have more details in our June issue!):

LIRT Annual President's Program: Critical Information Literacy Applications for Academic, Public, and School Libraries

Critical information literacy asks that librarians work with their students to learn about, question, and challenge the oppressive systems behind the creation, production, and dissemination of information. This difficult work is happening across all types of libraries, encompassing (among other topics) questions of neutrality in the resources libraries provide, the algorithms that provide search results, and the voices that are absent or present from our collections. In this session, participants will learn about the efforts of librarians from three different libraries to engage with and promote critical information literacy practices with their users.

The LIRT President's Program is scheduled to be held on Saturday, June 25, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. Watch the ALA conference website and upcoming 2022 *LIRT News* issues for more details.

LIRT 45th Anniversary Celebration and Awards Ceremony

The LIRT 45th Anniversary Celebration and the annual Awards Ceremony will be a combined event at ALA Annual this summer. The Awards Committee and Organization & Planning Committee are planning a joint event celebrating LIRT's 45th Anniversary and honoring this year's LIRT award winners! Please join us on Sunday, June 26, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. More details will be forthcoming. We are looking forward to a great time!

LIRT Discussion Forum: Applying Adult Learning in Contemporary Libraries

The Adult Learners committee is planning a non-juried panel discussion centered on the intersection of adult learning theory and practice for ALA Annual. The forum is tentatively scheduled for Monday morning, June 27, 2022. More information soon.

Planning for **Bites with LIRT** is also under way!

Mobile Computing Devices:

Design Experiential Learning for your Department

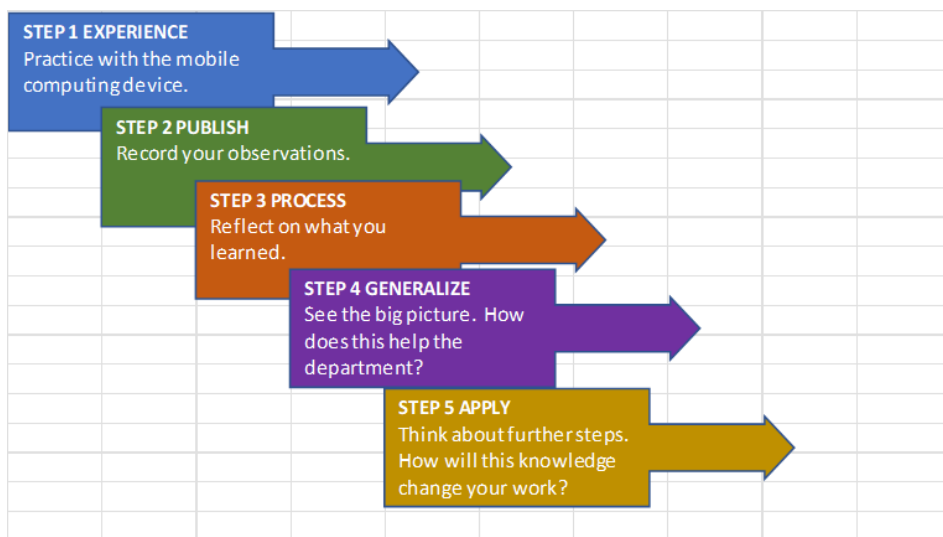
By Dana Lucisano

No matter what type of library you work in, chances are you've been approached any number of times by patrons who are confused about how to use their mobile computing devices (MCDs), such as tablets, laptops, or smartphones. At the urban public library where I work, the book-a-librarian program tends to be our vehicle for responding to this need. But, do we have the skills to do the job? While we probably would not be expected to be experts on every brand or model, I think all of us who work with the public should attain a basic level of competency with MCDs in order to be in compliance with technology standards applicable to the library field.¹ I know that, where I work, all of us are expected to be able to walk a patron through the steps involved in downloading ebooks or audio books to their devices. What are some baseline expectations where you work? Do you realistically think everyone in the department is prepared to meet those expectations?

One day, I happened to discover a bunch of MCDs in a storage area. It was kind of a messy pile, actually: assorted tablets and USB cables all tangled up together. I wasn't even sure they were still usable. Nevertheless, an idea started to take shape in my mind. I thought to myself that if all of us in Adult Services could get some time to play around with these devices, we might benefit in terms of gaining greater computer literacy. This would, in turn, enhance our department's overall readiness to train our library patrons. In other words, with no expenditure of funds required, we could initiate our own informal train-the-trainer venture.

Assuming you have some MCDs hanging around your facility, or can obtain them, you can easily design a course similar to mine. Don't go out and purchase multiples of the same device. I think the fact that we had five different types of MCDs—four tablet computers plus one laptop—worked out well because it gave us practice with a variety of brands and models.

Experiential learning activities (ELAs) have five steps: experience, publish, process, generalize, and apply.



Experiential Learning Activity - Mobile Computing Devices

¹WebJunction. (2014). Competency index for the library field. Retrieved from https://www.webjunction.org/documents/webjunction/Competency_Index_for_the_Library_Field.html

Mobile Computing Devices continued

Step 1, Experience: Personally, I found the experiential phase to be the most enjoyable part of the ELA, although I have to admit to being a little apprehensive. I had an iPad at home at that time, which I used quite often, but there were many features I had not experimented with. Thus, there was just the tiniest chance that I might not meet my learning objectives. This reminds me of something: the course facilitator is not required to be any more knowledgeable or tech-savvy than anyone else. Encourage everyone to think of this training as horizontal, where everyone mentors everyone else.

Each participant was required to set aside roughly an hour to work on whichever device we were studying that week. A little orientation in advance doesn't hurt. The facilitator should attempt to gather background information, especially the user guide. If it isn't feasible to print it out, make a note of the URL so that people can find it if they get stuck. Some manufacturers may also have online discussion forums that are helpful for new users. Do not forget to make a list of passwords in advance so that people will be able to unlock the devices and oh—very important—charge up the device in advance. If your library owns a book that can serve as a general reference, keep it on reserve.²

Let's say that during Week 1 of the course, the group will be studying the Amazon Fire HD8. The participant notes the type of technology on the top of page one of their ELA Report (see **Appendix** for sample ELA Report). They get the key from the supervisor's desk, unlock the cabinet where the MCD is kept, and sign it out using the sign-out sheet prepared in advance by the course facilitator. Now, before they type in the password, they must stop to reflect. Is there any specialized vocabulary that pertains to this device? The same feature on an iPad may be called something else on an Amazon Fire HD8. This is where the user guide comes in handy. Next, because this is self-guided learning, the participant needs to decide what their learning objectives are. This is very much individualized, and no one should be embarrassed about having very humble objectives. The point is for each person to challenge themselves to learn something new.

Step 2, Publish: While it's okay to do the experiential phase with a partner, you should insist that each participant write their own report. In order for experiential learning to be effective, there must be appropriate follow-through to embed the learning. This is why most ELAs include some type of report writing.

Steps 3 and 4, Process and Generalize: Even though by now the participant has practiced using the MCD and recorded their observations, they still aren't finished with the exercise. Notice that, on the worksheet, the participant is asked to reflect on whether or not they accomplished their learning objectives and what else they would like to know about the device. The time frame for follow-through could be well beyond the confines of this week's module! Each participant will get out of the course what they put into it. If you hear any grumbling, that's the message you want to convey.

Step 5, Apply: We finally come to the stage where we think about what we could do with this technology. The comments that we write in this part of the ELA Report are meant to inspire debate among the entire staff, which is one of the reasons why all participants are required to read everyone else's reports. Read and comment, that is. Whether you decide to email your reports to one another or post them in some type of online discussion forum, don't shortchange yourselves by skipping this final step.

Allocating a week for each device meant that we ran a five-week course, meaning five consecutive ELAs. Each of the ELAs was self-contained. If you have only two MCDs, run a two-week course. At the end of the course, the facilitator should award certificates of completion to course participants. Templates for this may be found online or through your word processing software. The facilitator should also prepare a report summarizing what the group accomplished. Describe how you expect the training will lead to improvements in your department's service standards.

Feel free to use or modify the worksheet. Have fun with the training!

Author note: Dana Lucisano is a Reference Librarian at Silas Bronson Library in Waterbury, Connecticut. Contact: dll-2@hotmail.com, 860-836-3355.

²We used Burke, J. J. (2016). *The Neal-Schuman Library Technology Companion: A Basic Guide for Library Staff*. 5th ed. ALA Neal-Schuman.

Mobile Computing Devices continued

Appendix - Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) Report

Participant: Dana Lucisano

Experiential Phase

Technology to be studied: Amazon Fire HD8

Relevant pages in textbook: pg. 72-73

Key vocabulary: navigation bar, Amazon Drive account

What's my objective? To what extent do I want to experience the technology?

- Learn how the basic controls work;
- Learn how to get to the settings menu;
- Open the internet browser;
- Practice reading an ebook or audiobook;

Is there anything else I want to add to the above list? I would like to listen to the weather report for the Fourth of July, which is tomorrow. I would also like to use the camera to take pictures of the displays currently on view in the art gallery spaces.

Date/time of proposed self-directed training: 7-3-2019, 9:30 a.m.

Report Phase

Date/time I did the training: 7-3-2019, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Observations based on my experience of the technology:

After I turned the power on, I went into the Settings menu to set up Wi-Fi access. With the Wi-Fi access enabled, I was able to open the user manual that is preloaded onto the device. After browsing the manual, I tried various tasks, including adjusting the accessibility settings to enable the "magnify" feature.

There was an ebook already loaded onto the device. I opened it and used the magnify feature to enlarge the text. While the magnify tool is helpful for people with low vision, reading an ebook with it is impractical because you have to keep panning back and forth to read the whole page.

Since I didn't see an internet browser button, I decided to download an app that would take me online. Searching the free apps available in the app store, I chose "search engine for Google." It took less than a minute to download. Using this app, I searched for "wfsb weather." (WFSB is a TV station in Hartford.) We're in for some great summer weather for the holiday. Although I was able to view the weather report, I was hoping there would be a way to have it read to me. I didn't see the ability to do that on that particular URL. I could probably accomplish that through a different site.

After I launched the camera app, I took many pictures of our wonderful nature displays in the lobby. At this point, I don't know how I can email them to myself. From reading the user manual, I came away with the impression that photographs must be stored on an Amazon Drive account, which I don't have.

Mobile Computing Devices continued

Process and Generalize Phases

Did I accomplish my learning objectives? If not, explain what follow-up actions I would like to take.

I need to find out how to email the photographs to myself.

What questions do I have about the technology?

What can you do with an Amazon Drive account? Is it similar to a google account?

Apply

Add any thoughts about how this technology could be utilized to improve customer service at the Bronson Library

I think we should look into purchasing special carrying cases for all of our tablets. It wouldn't take much for someone to drop one of them and crack the screen.

All of our tablets should have scanner apps loaded onto them. These apps are available at a low cost. Do we have a budget for this? Having a scanner on a portable device like this would open up possibilities. Scan something right at your desk in Lower Reference and email it from there. Offer patrons the convenience of scanning documents from anywhere—even if we meet them at function outside of the building. Loan the devices out; give people the flexibility to scan documents at home.

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

Send your articles to Sherri Brown (sherri.brown@virginia.edu)

Tech Talk

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

Dear Tech Talk— Some colleagues who work in cataloging and metadata have recently mentioned their interest in Wikidata. I work in public services and am familiar with resources like Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons, but Wikidata is new to me. Can you help? **—What's With Wikidata**

Dear WWW— Like Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons, Wikidata (<https://www.wikidata.org/>) is another offering from Wikimedia, and it is of particular interest to those who work in cataloging and metadata services, but it has value outside of that realm as well.

First some background information. With funding from the Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence (established by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen), the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation (Science Program), and Google, Wikimedia worked toward the goal of “developing a semantic, machine-readable database. . . [that] will bring all the localized [foreign language] versions of Wikipedia on par with each other in terms of the basic facts they house.” Three phases were identified: (1) creating a Wikidata page for every Wikipedia entry in all languages; (2) allowing editors “to add and use the data in Wikidata,” and (3) implementing “the automatic creation of lists and charts based on data in Wikidata, which can then populate the pages of Wikipedia” (Perez, 2012). Wikimedia launched Wikidata in October 2012. Also, since they are often linked together, Wikibase is “the software that powers Wikidata,” as well as “a MediaWiki extension. . . that lets you store, manage and access structured data” (“Wikibase,” 2021).

Bartov explains that Wikidata solved two problems for Wikipedia in particular, as well as other Wikimedia resources:

- Outdated data – no mechanisms for automatic updates along with the repetitive work of manually updating data in Wikipedia entries available in multiple languages.
- Inflexible ways of lateral (cross-cutting) queries of knowledge—no viable way to marry together bit of data across Wikipedia to answer certain types of questions, such as *what countries in the world export rubber*. (Wikimedia Foundation & Bartov, 2017)

With this background in mind, let's look at this description of Wikidata from the site's introductory page: “Wikidata is a *free, collaborative, multilingual, secondary database*, collecting *structured data* to provide support for Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons, the other wikis of the Wikimedia movement, and to *anyone in the world*” (emphasis mine). They follow this description with details:

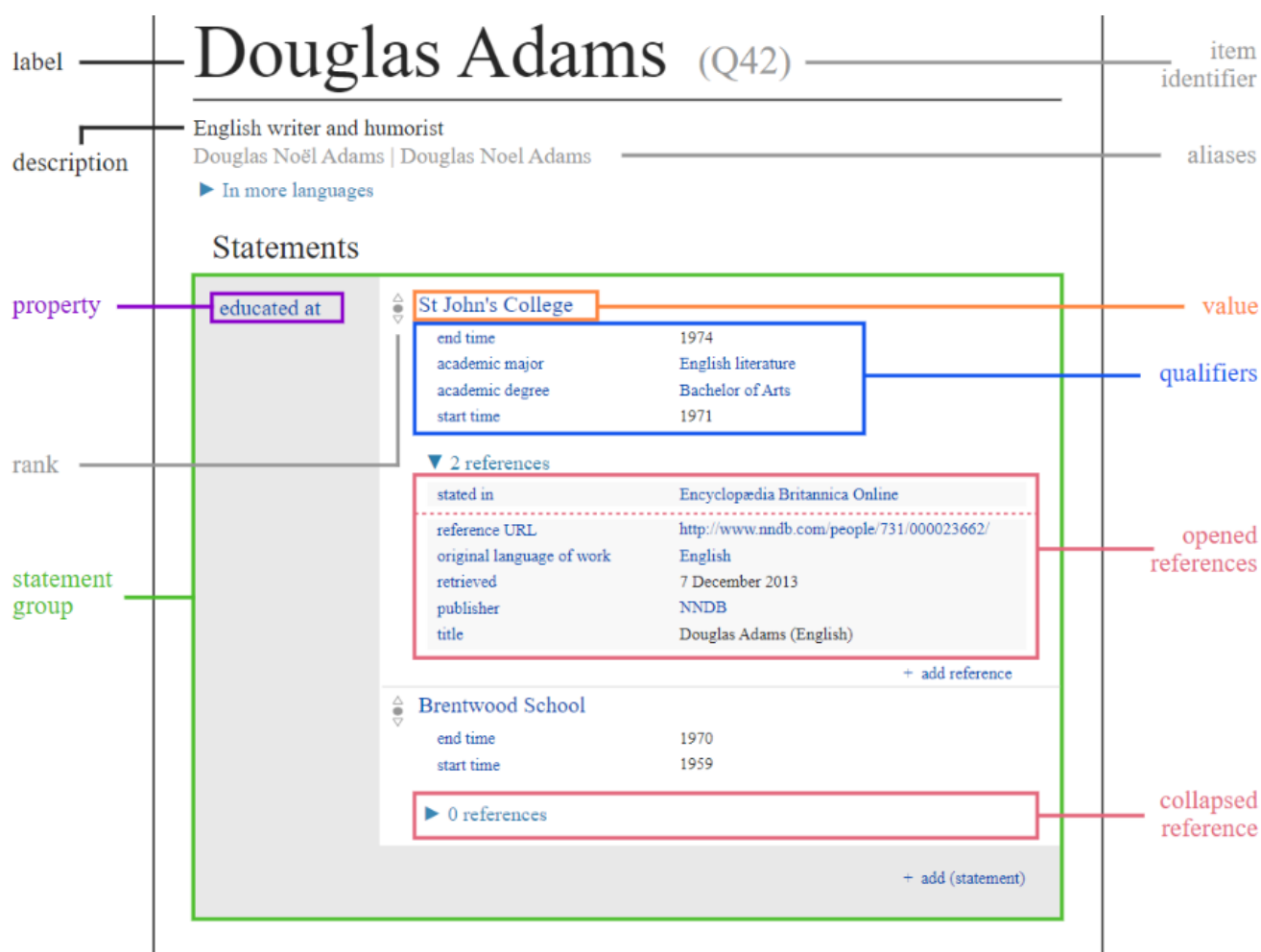
- **Free.** The data in Wikidata is published under the Creative Commons Public Domain Dedication 1.0, allowing the reuse of the data in many different scenarios. You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the data, even for commercial purposes, without asking for permission.
- **Collaborative.** Data is entered and maintained by Wikidata editors, who decide on the rules of content creation and management. Automated bots also enter data into Wikidata.
- **Multilingual.** Editing, consuming, browsing, and reusing the data is fully multilingual. Data entered in any language is immediately available in all other languages. Editing in any language is possible and encouraged.
- **A secondary database.** Wikidata records not just statements, but also their sources, and connections to other databases. This reflects the diversity of knowledge available and supports the notion of verifiability.
- **Collecting structured data.** Imposing a high degree of structured organization allows for easy reuse of data by Wikimedia projects and third parties and enables computers to process and ‘understand’ it.

Tech Talk, continued

- **Support for Wikimedia wikis.** Wikidata assists Wikipedia with more easily maintainable information boxes and links to other languages, thus reducing editing workload while improving quality. Updates in one language are made available to all other languages.
- **Anyone in the world.** Anyone can use Wikidata for any number of different ways by using its application programming interface [API]. (“Wikidata: Introduction,” 2021)

The data structure underlying the Wikidata entities is of the greatest importance – because of its relatively simple (yet extensible) implementation that enables the handling of complex concepts and because of its human- and machine-readability. Consequently, it’s important to have a basic understanding of this data structure.

Below is an example of an entity—Douglas Adams—from Wikidata, with labels associated with various bits of data found in this record.



<https://tinyurl.com/2p89vf23> CC0 license

Taken from the *Wikidata Glossary*, below are some key elements from this entity:

Description — “a language-specific descriptive phrase for an item, property or query. It provides context for the label.” **Note**, descriptions are also used for purposes of disambiguation, for example Stephen King (American Author); Stephen M. King (researcher); or Stephen King (American footballer).

Item – “a real-world object, concept, or event that is given an identifier (an equivalent of a name) in Wikidata together with information about it.” **Note** that all items will have a unique identifier that begins with **Q**, followed by a number. In this example, the Wikidata item identifier for Douglas Adams is Q42.

Label – “the main name given to identify an entity (i.e., an item or a property).”

Property (also attribute) – “describes the data value of a statement and can be thought of as a category of data, for example ‘color’ for the data value ‘blue.’ Properties, when paired with values, form a statement in Wikidata.” **Note** that all properties (like items) have a unique identifier that begins with a **P**, followed by a number. Also new properties go through a vetting process before implementation (“Help: Properties,” 2022).

Qualifier – “a part of the claim that says something about the specific claim, often in a descriptive way.”

Reference (or source) – points to a specific resource that supports a claim. . . [only indicating that] the claim appears in a reference, not its validity

Statement – “a piece of data about an item, recorded on the item's page. . . Wikidata. . . merely collects and reports them with a reference to a source.”

Value (also datavalue) – “the actual piece of information stored within a claim. Wikidata has a range of allowed datatypes (such as ‘item’, ‘mathematical expression’, ‘quantity’), [with the datatype] determined by the property used.” (“Wikidata: Glossary,” 2022)

The data structure is developed by creating relationships between different bits of data. In the example above, a statement asserts that *Douglas Adams* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q42>) is associated with the property *educated at* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P69>) which is then given the value of another item in Wikidata, *St John's College* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q691283>).

Additional qualifiers indicate that he *started* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P580>) in 1971 and *ended* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P582>) in 1974, receiving an *academic degree* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P512>), a *Bachelor of Arts* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q1765120>), in the *academic major* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q4671286>) of *English Literature* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q186579>), along with references from the *Encyclopedia Britannica Online* and *NNDB* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q5375741> and <https://www.nndb.com/people/731/000023662/>) that potentially verify the data.

Every bit of data in Wikidata (automatically in the public domain) is available for reuse in creating and enhancing entities and also for creating the kind of queries that marry together bits of data across Wikidata to yield very specific results. For example, you can perform a query that identifies all the other authors listed in Wikidata who received an education at St. John's College (<https://w.wiki/4oZw>). Additionally, if a bit of data is updated in Wikidata and that data is pulled in by other resources (whether a Wikimedia resource or otherwise), that data is automatically updated. Data from Wikidata also has the potential of populating the info boxes that display on Wikipedia entries. Although not yet robustly implemented, an example can be seen for the *Mauna Kea Observatories* entry (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauna_Kea_Observatories). Note the edit icons to the right of some of the data in the info box that reference data found in the Wikidata *Mauna Kea Observatories* entity.

As mentioned previously, because of the granularity of bits of data in Wikidata and the relationships constructed, Wikidata can be queried in ways that Wikipedia and other resources cannot. To do this, Wikidata uses SPARQL, which enables “users to write queries against what can loosely be called ‘key-value’ data or, more specifically, data that follow the RDF specification. . . [making] the entire database. . . a set of ‘subject-predicate-object’ triples” (“SPARQL,” 2022).

SPARQL is nontrivial to learn, and it is beyond the scope of this column to provide much detail. However, Wikidata provides resources to help novices (<https://tinyurl.com/bddubcjs>). It also provides two useful tools, both available from the Query Service page (<https://query.wikidata.org/>):

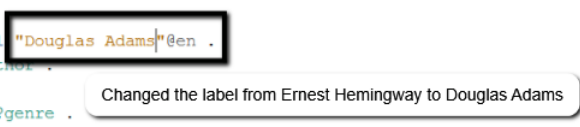
- *Examples* – Sample searches that when selected will be placed in the search form where the user can modify them for her purposes.

Tech Talk, continued

- *Query Builder* – A visual interface for building simple Wikidata queries for those with little SPARQL experience.

Use *Examples* to see if a SPARQL query already exists that can be modified. To obtain a list of Douglas Adams' books from Wikidata, search for *author* in *Examples*. In the *Literature* section one of the options is *Books by a given Author including genres and year of first publication*; select that option. When the SPARQL code displays; change the label "Ernest Hemingway" to "Douglas Adams."

```
1 #Books by a given Author including genres and year of first publication
2 SELECT distinct ?book ?bookLabel ?authorLabel (GROUP_CONCAT(?genre_label) as ?genres) (MIN(?publicationDate) as ?firstPublication)
3 WHERE
4 {
5   ?author rdfs:label "Douglas Adams"@en .
6   ?book wdt:P50 ?author .
7   OPTIONAL {
8     ?book wdt:P136 ?genre .
9     ?genre rdfs:label ?genre_label filter (lang(?genre_label) = "en").
10  }
11
12  OPTIONAL {
13    ?book wdt:P577 ?publicationDate .
14  }
15  SERVICE wikibase:label {
16    bd:serviceParam wikibase:language "en" .
17  }
18 } group by ?book ?bookLabel ?authorLabel
```



Run the search, obtaining these results: <https://w.wiki/4oZg>.

If a viable example isn't available, use *Query Builder*—the approach I used to create the search for other authors in Wikidata who were educated at St. Johns College. Whereas the previous link (<https://w.wiki/4oZw>) displays only the search results, this link (<https://w.wiki/4oav>) displays how the search was constructed in the *Query Builder*.

Also, SPARQL can provide results using data visualization, such as this bubble chart identifying the 100 largest cities in the world (<https://w.wiki/d9m>) or this map that displays mountains over 26,000 feet (<https://w.wiki/4ob6>).

An important caveat when querying Wikidata—it can only find the data that is available in Wikidata. So, is the list of authors who went to St. John's College 100% complete? Probably not. It is a list of the authors currently identified in Wikidata who have an attribute of being educated at St. John's College. Have all of the books written by Douglas Adams been identified? Not necessarily—once again, only those that have been correctly entered into Wikidata. Nevertheless, it's possible that a SPARQL query of Wikidata will find information/data that is good enough to answer a question that otherwise becomes a *wicked hard* question.

Also remember that SPARQL has a learning curve, and these examples are very elementary—just enough to demonstrate some tools and provide some context for how SPARQL works as well as what kind of results these queries produce. Those so inclined can go into as much depth as they like with SPARQL using the resources provided by Wikidata and other internet resources.

How do libraries fit into the Wikidata world? Librarians—especially catalog and metadata librarians—are all about authority control, the concept of an *approved entity* that governs identities or subject headings or classification schemes. However, there isn't a single source for any authority control, especially identity authority control as is clearly indicated in the Douglas Adams Wikidata entity (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q42>) where nearly 200 unique identifiers are listed at the bottom of the record, some well-known to the library profession and others that are relatively obscure.

However, there is a growing belief that Wikidata is a viable approach for libraries to implement Linked Open Data (LOD) and that perhaps Wikidata can serve as a hub for the multitude of identifiers available from around the world (Association of Research Libraries, 2019; Cooley, 2019; Do, 2021; Ferriter, 2019; Lemus-Rojas & Pintscher, 2018; and Poulter & Sheppard, 2020). Consequently, librarians have a vested interest in the curation of Wikidata.

The implementation of LOD is challenging for most libraries because of the level of technical expertise needed, but Wikidata—through its very nature—produces Linked Open Data; it's human- and machine-readable; it has a simple/low-barrier interface for creating linked data; it's flexible and versatile; it's collaborative. All of these features and more support its use by librarians for projects that use LOD. See an example of LOD at the University of Wisconsin (<https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/9910034010302121>) from their BibCard project (<https://github.com/UW-Madison-Library/bibcard>), which enhances data in the library catalog using several sources, including Wikidata. To see the Linked Open Data, expand the options under the *Information from the Web* section near the bottom of the record.

The Library of Congress has already populated over one million LC identifiers in Wikidata, most of them from the Name Authority File, with around 35,000 coming from the LCSH subject file. The links to these entities in Wikidata also appear in the id.loc.gov authorities (Ferriter, 2019). See Douglas Adams' entry in the LCNAF as an example (<https://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n80076765.html>).

Authority control and LOD are not the only areas where there is value for Wikidata in the library profession. The Association of Research Libraries (2019) white paper describes the value of Wikidata for scholarly communication, for addressing aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and other possibilities—providing examples of what others have done, as well as recommendations for getting started in the various areas (pp. 27-46).

It's not difficult to get started with Wikidata. Simply create an account, verify your e-mail address, and start creating/editing. A simple activity might be looking for your library in Wikidata and adding the library's website URL, if it's not already listed in the statements. If your library is not listed in Wikidata at all, consider creating a new item for it and building out applicable statements. Another fun way to get started with Wikidata is to play the Wikidata Game (<https://tools.wmflabs.org/wikidata-game>). Lemus-Rojas & Pintscher (2018) also suggest some basic approaches for getting started with Wikidata:

- Add references to existing statements
- Add library archive collections, with an attribution to the institution that holds them
- Add "value to the development, implementation and improvement of Wikidata properties"
- Create new items
- Contribute "to the creation of data models"
- Verify "the accuracy and completeness of existing data"
- Add identifiers (pp. 16-17).

However, before you do too much editing in Wikidata, you should invest some time in learning about it, using some of the resources listed below:

- *A Gentle Introduction to Wikidata for Absolute Beginners [Including Non-techies]!*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVrAx3AmUvA>. A 3-hour video, but well worth the time!
- Wikidata Tours <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Tours>
- Wikibase/DataModel/Primer <https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Wikibase/DataModel/Primer>
- Wikidata:WikiProject Linked Data for Production/Practical Wikidata for Librarians <https://tinyurl.com/yijtutda>
- Wikidata Professional Development Training Modules
<https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/training/wikidata-professional>
- Wikidata Institute https://wikiedu.org/wikidata/?pk_campaign=summer-institute

Additionally, you may want to investigate some of these tools:

- Free Image Search Tool for Wikidata <https://fist.toolforge.org/wdfist/index.html>
Helps add images to Wikidata in a single click.
- Mix and Match tool <https://mix-n-match.toolforge.org/>
Lists entries of some external databases and allows users to match them against Wikidata items.
- Reasonator <https://tools.wmflabs.org/reasonator/>

Displays Wikidata entities in a more human-friendly format; see the Douglas Adams Resonator rendition (<https://reasonator.toolforge.org/?q=Q42>).

- Visualize Data https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Tools/Visualize_data
Provides specific Wikidata projects that incorporate visualized data.
- Wikidata Game Distributed <https://tools.wmflabs.org/wikidata-game/distributed>
Provides additional games.

If you become deeply involved in creating and editing content in Wikidata, you may want to take advantage of the Wikidata: WikiProject LD4 Wikidata Affinity Group (<https://tinyurl.com/2p8amu7f>), and Robare (2020) found that asking questions through the project chats was very helpful to resolve quandaries. Even if you aren't working on one of the Wikidata projects, asking the community for perspectives and advice should prove to be helpful. This is one of the benefits of Wikidata being a collaborative community.

Despite the promise of Wikidata, some have expressed reservations. As early as 2012, Graham expressed his concern that “the core idea behind the project can only serve to congeal the power and voice of those already at the core of processes and practices of knowledge production and reproduction”—that the marginalized will not be well served. Tharani (2021) identified concerns such as: loss of control over metadata; the global nature exposes “dichotomies and disconnects that are social, political, environmental, cultural, and institutional in nature”; and the sustainability of integration into library operations (p. 6). Metilli, Bartalesi, & Meghini (2019) suggest that Wikidata's openness made it susceptible to vandalism and made its ontology structure less stable (p. 421). Most recently, research by Shenoy et al. (2022) demonstrated that there is “still room for improvement for preventing entity duplication and constraint violations, having consistent guidelines for literals, and completing missing data” (p. 9).

Nevertheless, between wide acceptance of the concepts behind Wikidata and the ease of getting involved with Wikidata, the development and use of Wikidata has increased extraordinarily since its launch, as is indicated in the statistics presented in the chart below.

	2012/2013	2022	Increase
New Registered Users	4,000	148,000	3600%
Editors	9,000 (average)	31,000 (average)	244%
Active Editors	2,000 (average)	8,000 (average)	300%
Edits	52,000,000	2,000,000,000	3746%
User Edits	5,000,000	672,000,000	13340%
New pages	11,000,000	97,000,000	782%
Total Pages	5,000,000 (average)	91,000,000 (average)	1720%
Total Page Views	879,000,000 (2016)	3,000,000,000 (2021)	241%

<https://stats.wikimedia.org/#/wikidata.org> as of February 6, 2022

These statistics illustrate a strong adoption of Wikidata, a trend that is likely to continue. And adoption is not limited to the library profession, as illustrated in these articles: Berthoud & Hartley, 2021 (Smithsonian); Burgstaller-Muehlbacher et al., 2016 (genetics); Metilli, Bartalesi, & Meghini, 2019 (literature); Pohl, 2021 (spatial subject indexing); Putnam et al., 2017 (genetics); Waagmeester et al., 2019, 2020, and 2021 (life sciences); and Wolfe, 2019 (Black Book Interactive Project).

Additionally, the systematic review focusing on Wikidata research studies performed by Mora-Cantallos, Sánchez-Alonso, & García-Barriocanal (2019) indicates a clear increase in research on Wikidata, with two research studies identified in 2014 increasing to 21 in 2018 (pp. 254-256).

Yes, library professionals need to be aware of developments with Wikidata—both in the library profession and in the wider world in general. If nothing else, consider the recommendations made in the Association of Research Libraries (2019) white paper that provide guidance for individual librarians and for library leadership and organizations (pp. 9-10). Where do you or your organization fall regarding these recommendations?

Additional Resources

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

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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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