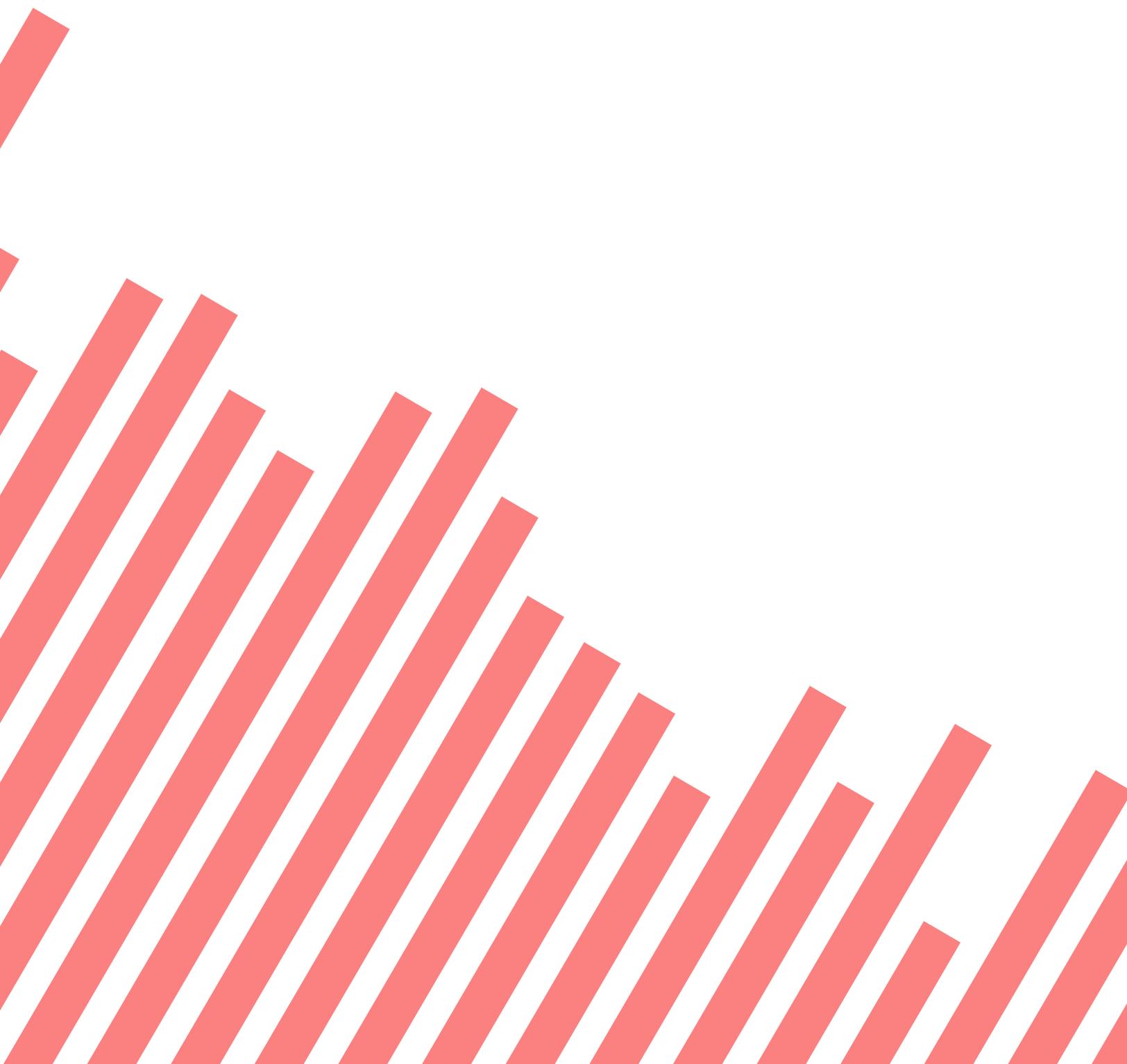


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Editor's Note

M. Sue Baughman, ARL Deputy Executive Director and RLI Editor

While not a new topic, many conversations are occurring about the roles of library staff and the changing nature of their work in support of research, teaching, and learning. Boundaries between specific functions or departments within the library continue to change as library employees grapple with issues of their roles in new service models. Staff are encouraged and expected to work more collaboratively and this is happening in a number of ways.

In these conversations the word “holistic” is often used to describe what is intended in this changing work. According to the online [Merriam-Webster dictionary](#), holistic means “relating to or concerned with wholes or with complete systems rather than with the analysis of, treatment of, or dissection into parts.” The term “integrated” is also frequently used to express this vision for the current and future states of librarianship.

Three articles in this issue of *Research Library Issues* explore different models and approaches to holistic librarianship and the convergence among librarians in a variety of roles. These articles speak to how three different libraries are transforming what has traditionally been more fragmented or specialized service.

The Cornell University Library uses a decentralized approach to scholarly communication that means library liaisons are often dealing with multiple and competing priorities. Realizing the challenge this model creates for advancing scholarly communication goals, library staff formed a Scholarly Communication Working Group charged to raise awareness of issues, tools, methods, and services for scholarly communication. In their article, “A Team- and Project-Based Approach to Advancing Scholarly Communication Initiatives across the Library,” Ashley Shea, food and agriculture librarian, Gail Steinhart, scholarly communication librarian, and Jim DelRosso,

digital projects coordinator, describe how the working group has facilitated the identification of projects and project teams in support of scholarly communication issues. The authors further describe a number of initiatives in which library staff engaged and discuss the lessons learned from the library's holistic approach to creating tangible results and improvements to scholarly communication goals.

Judith Logan, user services librarian, and Lisa Gayhart, user experience librarian, from the University of Toronto Libraries, explore intrapreneurship as a model for fostering innovation. Calling this an organic approach that can work within existing structures and processes, the authors describe the benefits of this model to the organization, the librarian, and the end user in their article, "How Intrapreneurship Enhances Existing Organizational Structures: A Holistic Case Study from a Large Academic Library." Logan and Gayhart share the overhaul of the main library website as a study for implementing the intrapreneurship model. Short- and longer-term outcomes highlight a number of changes in roles and responsibilities as well as organizational changes. The authors offer advice on ways to use intrapreneurship to promote holistic librarianship.

The third article, "Creating a Holistic Fabric of Services and Collections from the Inside Out: Exploring Convergence of Liaison and Special Collections Librarianship," considers the value of a holistic approach for liaison and special collections librarians in realizing a stronger model of service in support of research and teaching. From the University of Rochester, authors Kristen Totleben, modern languages and cultures librarian, and Jessica Lacher-Feldman, assistant dean, rare books and special collections, describe the challenges that perpetuate a divide between liaison and special collections librarians and offer strategies and approaches for building a different model. They emphasize the importance of creating an environment that is conducive to collaboration—through the organization's culture, internal personal communication, and staff engagement on projects—while moving away from fragmentation.

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A Team- and Project-Based Approach to Advancing Scholarly Communication Initiatives across the Library

Ashley Shea, Food and Agriculture Librarian, Cornell University Library

Gail Steinhart, Scholarly Communication Librarian, Cornell University Library

Jim DelRosso, Digital Projects Coordinator, Cornell University Library

Scholarly communication can be defined as “the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use.”¹ Put this way, scholarly communication has the potential to touch the majority of library operations and services, and not surprisingly, libraries vary greatly in how they organize support for scholarly communication.² A holistic approach to engaging staff from across the library in this work has the potential to cut across functional silos, solicit a more diverse range of perspectives, and encourage staff who might not be designated scholarly communication specialists to engage with those issues.

“A holistic approach to engaging staff from across the library...has the potential to cut across functional silos, solicit a more diverse range of perspectives, and encourage staff...”

Cornell University Library’s (CUL) approach to scholarly communication is highly decentralized, with scholarly communication embedded in multiple job descriptions (usually those of subject and functional liaisons), and a scholarly communication librarian based in Digital Scholarship & Preservation Services. The director of collection development also manages a fund that supports the Cornell Open Access Publication fund,³ and selected strategic initiatives related to scholarly communication. This highly distributed arrangement can make it challenging to advance specific scholarly communication goals, and library liaisons in

particular often have multiple and competing priorities that make it difficult to engage deeply on individual topics. We discuss here a successful strategy employed for a full calendar year, and present feedback from team members on the efficacy of this approach.

Origin of the Scholarly Communication Working Group (SCWG)

In an effort to identify, select, and advance new initiatives, the scholarly communication librarian, Gail Steinhart, suggested the formation of a Scholarly Communication Working Group (SCWG). With the support of library leadership, she convened an open meeting to solicit ideas and input on how such a group might function and topics it might address, and issued a library-wide call for volunteers to serve on a steering committee. All library staff, library liaisons, and others were welcome to volunteer for the steering committee. We strove to balance representation on the steering committee across libraries and functional areas and asked that volunteers commit to participating in one or more SCWG projects. The group launched in 2016 with the following charge:

The Scholarly Communication Working Group (SCWG) leads and/or participates in selected initiatives that support the creation, dissemination, evaluation, and preservation of Cornell scholarship. Focusing its work on points of friction at the intersection of technology and scholarly practice, the SCWG raises awareness of issues, tools, methods, and services for scholarly communication, facilitating communication and coordination among stakeholders in order to maximize the library's investments in this area.

The group's intention was to be nimble, and to accomplish its work by selecting from one to three projects for a calendar year and recruiting additional volunteers beyond the steering committee to work on those projects. Once projects were launched, the steering committee met infrequently, as the bulk of the work was accomplished by the project teams.

First-Year (2016) Projects

Project ideas for the first year were taken from the suggestions made at the open meeting (referenced above). Project team members were recruited from the library at large. The SCWG undertook two projects for 2016: promote ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) adoption, use, and integration on the Cornell campus; and promote effective author rights management.

ORCID@Cornell

ORCID iDs are unique identifiers for researchers, and provide a simple and standardized way to unambiguously link authors to their publications.⁴ The library has a natural and long-standing interest in supporting authority control as well as facilitating the flow of information about Cornell scholarship between Scholars@Cornell⁵ (a Cornell-developed web application, with a core built upon VIVO,⁶ that pulls together work by Cornell faculty and researchers) and other systems, such as those used for faculty reporting. The project's two primary goals were to promote adoption of ORCID iDs by Cornell researchers, and to provide staff with the skills they would need to support new ORCID users. The team did this by hosting multiple in-person and online training sessions, presenting in various staff forums (such as the library-wide Reference and Outreach forum), publishing a blog post⁷ that explained the value of ORCID, hosting an open question-and-answer "brown bag," and developing information and outreach resources (a library guide⁸ and print materials for distribution by liaisons and at service points). As of March 31, 2017, the library guide had close to 1,500 views, documenting impressive use within a span of several months. Library liaisons presented on ORCID in faculty meetings, helped faculty and staff with their ORCID records one-on-one, shared information about ORCID with their departments via e-mail, and included ORCID as a topic in various workshop and instruction sessions aimed primarily at graduate students.

The ORCID team also aimed to facilitate authorization of Cornell as a "trusted party" by researchers, and investigated opportunities for

integrating ORCID into library and campus systems. By the end of the year, there were more than 2,000 ORCID iDs associated with Cornell e-mail addresses, as well as a plan in place to include ORCID iDs as public information in Cornell's identity-provision services. At the time of writing, the latter has been fully implemented. Integration with the library's institutional repositories was less successful, primarily due to limitations of the platforms in use at CUL.

Author Rights Outreach

Author rights management was a topic of great interest to potential SCWG volunteers, as well as library directors at Cornell. After the steering group identified several resources in need of development that would support author rights education on campus, staff across the library were invited to participate in an intensive, one-day working meeting to collectively create these resources. During the meeting, participants developed a public-facing library guide on author rights,⁹ created a slide deck for a presentation on the topic, and drafted a sample correspondence for library liaisons to use in their work with members of the Cornell community. The team introduced these resources to all interested library staff in the library's Reference and Outreach forum, and finally, described in a blog post the results of the work as well as the process.¹⁰ Library staff report making good use of the resources developed—sharing the library guide with faculty, staff, and students, and using it in teaching and presentations. Usage statistics for the guide show 571 views over the life of the guide, as of March 31, 2017.

Staff Feedback on the SCWG Work Model

In March of 2017, we distributed a survey to all participants in the two SCWG first-year projects, ORCID@Cornell and author rights outreach. (See Appendix for the survey questionnaire.) We excluded ourselves from the survey, though we all were participants in one or both projects; this left nine potential respondents, with no crossover

between those who worked on ORCID@Cornell and those who worked on author rights outreach.

We received seven responses, with three of four of the ORCID@Cornell participants responding and four of five author rights outreach participants. Of those seven, two respondents identified themselves as library staff, and five as librarians (with one of the latter also identifying as a functional liaison). While none of the respondents identified themselves as either a subject liaison or an archivist, one of us is a subject liaison, and two of us are functional liaisons. All three of us are librarians.

The varied expertise of participants in both the SCWG and the project teams themselves was reflected positively in the survey responses. Six of the seven respondents reported forging collaborative partnerships across units, with three indicating that this objective had been fully achieved, and three reporting that it had been somewhat achieved.

Respondents' testimony regarding other outcomes of their participation was also positive. All seven reported that the process resulted in a tangible product that they have since used in their jobs, with five of those seven indicating that this objective had been fully met, and two indicating that it had been somewhat met.

Given the opportunity to expand on these responses, participants indicated that their participation in SCWG projects allowed them to learn more, not only about the relevant scholarly communication content—ORCID and author rights—but also about the process of creating and utilizing outreach tools such as LibGuides and other promotional materials. One respondent even noted that working on the project allowed them to more fully understand how best to work with CUL's director of copyright on issues surrounding author rights.

The survey results imply that SCWG is well positioned for future task-oriented projects. Six of the seven respondents indicated that

they would volunteer for a SCWG project in the future, stating that they appreciated the way in which the working group conducted its work, and that the methods were effective. While the SCWG formed teams for its second-year projects before this feedback was received, the group will use the feedback to guide its future work.

Second-Year (2017) Projects

With so many project ideas gleaned from the initial open meeting, the SCWG had to defer several to the second year. The following projects are currently in progress.

Open Access Policy Investigation

Cornell University does not currently have an open access policy, although the Faculty Senate approved a resolution in 2005 encouraging faculty to refrain from submitting papers to or refereeing for journals with exorbitant subscriptions fees, to publish in open access (or at least reasonably priced) journals, to negotiate in order to retain copyright in their works, and to deposit preprints or postprints to disciplinary repositories or to an institutional repository. More recently (2014) the University Assembly passed a resolution to establish a committee to investigate the feasibility of an open access policy for Cornell, and the work of that committee is ongoing.¹¹ While no members of the SCWG currently serve on this committee, recent changes to the administration of both Cornell University and the Cornell University Library presented an opportunity for SCWG to inform the next stages of this discussion. This project team is investigating the feasibility of providing library support for the kinds of open access policies currently implemented at peer institutions, with the intention of presenting library administrators with recommendations on a sustainable path forward.

Open Access Week Programming

In the past, various library groups have hosted a speaker on the topic of open access, and the SCWG has also hosted speakers when an opportunity arises. To date, there has been little to no organized activity on the Cornell campus during Open Access Week, a global celebration during the last full week of October each year, and there is significant interest among library staff in presenting one or more programs. The team is currently working in partnership with other library groups to bring an outside speaker to campus for one or more days this fall.

Supporting the Collecting Efforts of Unit Libraries

Initially conceived as an outreach campaign to promote the use of CUL's institutional repositories, the SCWG adjusted the purpose of this project to explore the current archiving practices and repository workflows for staff across campus. This change in scope occurred for two reasons. First, some colleges are served by dedicated repositories that have dedicated staff to collect and deposit publications on behalf of their faculty, and the managers of these repositories saw no particular need for an outreach campaign. Second, the working group realized that some library staff (including liaison librarians) actively collect the digital outputs of the colleges, departments, and centers they serve, or other materials of interest to their communities, and already deposit them to CUL's general purpose institutional repository, eCommons.¹² Because that work proceeds on a fairly *ad hoc* basis, this group aims to understand what works well (and could work better) for the staff and units that are doing this. For those that do not deposit outputs to eCommons, the team hopes to understand why that is and whether anything can or should be done to facilitate greater use of eCommons. The group will also document and share best practices for individuals and units doing this work, so that deposits to eCommons can be increased without creating an unsustainable workload for eCommons staff.

Lessons Learned

The 2016 projects employed different work models and had different goals. The primary objectives of the author rights outreach project were relatively finite, with tangible deliverables expected following an intensive one-day working meeting. Although minimal planning and coordination were required in advance, and outreach by way of a public presentation followed the meeting, the bulk of the work was contained within one working day. We will utilize this agile development process again when appropriate, to quickly and efficiently produce collaborative work products from a diverse representation of the library. We will also promote our use of this process more heavily when recruiting future project volunteers, as several participants indicated that their involvement was due largely to the anticipated high impact from a relatively low time commitment.

The ORCID@Cornell project was considerably more complex, requiring communication with and training for library staff, public-facing resources, and the outreach campaign, as well as technical work in collaboration with Cornell IT. The team accomplished everything it set out to, but assessing some components of the project was a challenge. In particular, we do not know how effective the outreach campaign was. We do know there were far more Cornell-associated ORCID iDs at the end of the project than when we began, but we do not know if that was a direct result of coordinated outreach, or independent uptake by faculty. A specific assessment plan could have helped us measure the efficacy of our outreach efforts, but we chose to balance the effort required of researchers to obtain an ORCID iD with the likely effort involved in responding to a follow-up survey about their use of ORCID. Similarly, explicit support and buy-in from library directors and other administrators could have helped us track outreach activities more closely. Integration of ORCID iDs into campus systems remains a challenge as researchers are under no obligation to make public their Cornell affiliation, or to authorize Cornell as a trusted party.

We learned from our 2016 projects the importance of specifying concrete outcomes, and methods and assessment strategies prior to a project's initiation. This is valuable both in terms of doing the best possible work and in securing pools of engaged

“We learned from our 2016 projects the importance of specifying concrete outcomes, and methods and assessment strategies prior to a project's initiation.”

volunteers. With 2017 projects underway now, we anticipate identifying 2018 projects in the near future. We have several ideas suggested by former volunteers. We also anticipate mining ideas from recent faculty and graduate student surveys (where several issues pertaining to scholarly communication were identified) and issuing an open call for project ideas and volunteers.

Going forward, the future for the Scholarly Communication Working Group's holistic, project-based approach to work looks strong. Participants appreciate that the projects have produced tangible results within a prescribed timeframe, and interest from volunteers has remained steady from year one to year two. Learning from what we have achieved so far, we will continue to employ methods appropriate to the tasks at hand. The SCWG has turned Cornell University's decentralized structure to its advantage, building connections across units and staff, and continuing to make real improvements to the scholarly communication support provided by the Cornell University Library.

Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge the work of their fellow members of the Scholarly Communication Working Group Steering Committee, Drew Wright (research services coordinator, Weill Cornell Medicine Samuel J. Wood Library) and Sandy Payette (director of IT for research and scholarship, Cornell University Library). We also thank all the members of our working group teams, past and present.

Appendix: Survey Questions

1. Which SCWG project did you work on?
 - a. ORCID
 - b. Author rights resources

2. What was your position at the time of your participation?
(check all that apply)
 - a. Librarian
 - b. Archivist
 - c. Staff
 - d. Subject liaison
 - e. Functional liaison
 - f. Other

3. As part of this project...
 - a. ...I formed collaborative partnerships across units.
 - i. Not at all
 - ii. Somewhat
 - iii. Fully
 - b. ...a tangible product was produced that I have since used in the context of my job.
 - i. Not at all
 - ii. Somewhat
 - iii. Fully

4. As part of this project, I learned more about (optional) [*free text*]

5. Are there any other outcomes from this project that you found notable? (optional) [*free text*]

6. Would you volunteer again for an SCWG project?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

7. Why or why not? (optional) [*free text*]
8. Do you have suggestions to improve the experience for colleagues that volunteer for future SCWG project teams? (optional) [*free text*]
9. Do you have suggestions on how to increase the number of staff that volunteer to participate in SCWG projects? (optional) [*free text*]
10. Do you have suggestions on how to increase the user impact of future SCWG projects? (optional) [*free text*]
11. Do you have additional comments or suggestions for the SCWG Steering Group? (optional) [*free text*]

Endnotes

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How Intrapreneurship Enhances Existing Organizational Structures: A Holistic Case Study from a Large Academic Library

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The concept of entrepreneurship has motivated people across a variety of disciplines to leave traditional workplaces in search of a different type of employment. At its best, entrepreneurship provides professional autonomy, faster product and service innovation, and necessary disruption to industries that have become complacent or stale.

This model seems far removed from libraries where we often organize ourselves in traditional, bureaucratic structures along functional lines (e.g., reference, cataloging, circulation). This arrangement makes sense for libraries; our funding generally comes from large parent institutions, so we are more stable than sales-based businesses. Does this mean we are doomed to miss out on entrepreneurship's benefits? Not at all.

Like entrepreneurship, *intrapreneurship* offers organizations opportunities to innovate. Batthini describes an intrapreneur as “an employee of a large organisation who has the entrepreneurial qualities of drive, creativity, vision and ambition, but who prefers, if possible, to remain within the security of an established company.”¹ This informal process is born of the employee's analytical skills and passion for their clients or organization. Intrapreneurial employees take initiative to solve problems with an organization's products or services from within the existing organizational structure.

Intrapreneurship in Libraries

Intrapreneurship offers libraries an organic approach to structural change. Reflecting on Stoffle, Renaud, and Veldof's seminal 1996 essay "Choosing Our Futures,"²

Neal proclaims that "we must dismantle traditional organizational structures

to create more agile advancement and more robust internal and external communications and collaborations."³ It seems that even 20 years after the initial call to arms for organizational change, libraries are still struggling to become more flexible and agile.

Intrapreneurship offers libraries an organic approach to structural change.

Intrapreneurship offers an opportunity to alleviate some of this tension through lightweight initiatives that can work within the existing structure. Organizations can address emerging areas of customer need that may not fit into existing portfolios. Indeed, one of Batthini's definitions of intrapreneurship was the "internal start-up" model: establishing a joint venture, a new subsidiary, a new outlet, or a new business unit.⁴ In a library context, intrapreneurship's internal start-up model is often seen in holistic librarianship: cross-departmental, project-based collaborations. This can begin an intrapreneurial culture shift in an organization that breeds flexibility and resilience.

Library technology, too, is ripe for intrapreneurial innovation. We all struggle to meet users' growing expectations of online services and products with our limited budgets and resources. It is a challenge to keep library staff members' technology skills up to date when low turnover minimizes opportunities to add staff members with new skill sets to the team. Providing quality professional development in this area can be expensive and hard to deliver at scale. Library leaders in charge of training-fund allocation may not be aware of these skill deficits or fully understand the impact they have on service delivery, making it difficult to direct development opportunities.

Benefits of Intrapreneurship

To the Organization

Intrapreneurship is budget friendly. It makes use of existing staff and does not require structural changes to the organization that may involve administrative departments like Human Resources or Finance. The lightweight nature of the process encourages temporary and informal arrangements that can be assessed for usefulness and impact early and often. This feedback loop can provide excellent insight into staff satisfaction, user needs, and service-delivery levels.

Cross-departmental collaboration is a common element of intrapreneurship in large organizations. Assembling new teams or adding members with complementary skills and knowledge to long-standing teams is an opportunity to address problems with a new perspective, share skills across department lines, and bring departments closer together. Timely collaboration allows teams to acquire needed resources more quickly than hiring and fewer training resources are required. Collaborative arrangements born of intrapreneurship can delay the need for a new hire and can work as a proof of concept for job posting and hiring decisions, helping the organization become more innovative, flexible, and responsive to user needs.

To the Librarian

The intrapreneurship framework encourages leadership at every career stage. As long as the employee is empowered to identify problems, gather the right resources, and build solutions, they don't need any particular title or authority level to practice intrapreneurship. Working in cross-functional teams builds empathy and allows team members to share their knowledge and collaborate effectively.⁵

For early-career librarians, this is an opportunity to connect with new teams, departments, and administration. Contributing to an intrapreneurial project within the library can provide a sense of ownership often lacking in entry-level positions and a platform to demonstrate their value to the organization. Intrapreneurial work also helps early-career librarians develop new skills outside formal professional development opportunities and practice leadership and project management skills that will be useful as their careers progress. Early-career librarians bring fresh eyes to an organization and its opportunities; intrapreneurship offers an outlet for their perspective.

For mid- or late-career librarians, intrapreneurship offers an opportunity to build capacity in new areas of the field, and emerging or previously unfamiliar areas of the profession. Embarking on an intrapreneurial project outside of their department can be an opportunity to reignite a passion for their work, avoid stagnation, and provide a change of pace. Working with new team members allows experienced librarians an opportunity to mentor and share the knowledge and skills they have developed over many years at their organization. Flat hierarchies may also limit opportunities for established librarians to advance their responsibility level; this is a means to address that gap.

To the End User

Libraries exist to serve communities. Our users trust that we have their best interests and needs in mind. We therefore have a responsibility to ensure we are using our resources—both financial and human—in the most efficient and practical manner possible. This requires us to experiment and assess continually.

When new user needs emerge, a culture of intrapreneurship encourages teams to assemble to develop new products or services, or add features to existing products to address the needs. Intrapreneurship's lightweight nature means that new products or

services can be delivered to users faster, then improved on iteratively for better and more consistent service both in the short and the long term.

Case Study

Organizational Context

The University of Toronto is large: 88,766 students enrolled on three campuses around the Greater Toronto Area.⁶ The university has a sizable undergraduate population, but also has a strong research focus, with over Can\$1.1 billion awarded in research funding in 2014–2015.⁷ The Times Higher Education’s World University Rankings puts us 22nd in the world with a score of 91.9% for citations and 86.3% for research.⁸

The University of Toronto Libraries (UTL) supports the university’s mission of “fostering an academic community in which the learning and scholarship of every member may flourish”⁹ with 44 libraries across three campuses staffed by around 900 people, including 500 librarians and professional staff. Our collections budget was Can\$31,449,135 in 2016, and we ranked fourth in the Association of Research Libraries’ Library Investment Index for 2014–2015.¹⁰ Our largest library, John P. Robarts Library, welcomes 18,000 visitors a day at peak term while our main website handled 9.1 million page views in the last academic year.

UTL departmental structures have been relatively static since the early 1990s. Standing committees are the primary way that staff of different libraries and departments come together to consult on common functions like reference, website management, cataloging, or mentorship. Occasionally these standing committees form smaller working groups to address specific issues that require expertise from several libraries or skill sets, but these groups are generally investigative in nature. Secondments, where a staff member temporarily takes on a new position in another library unit, are infrequent but not unheard of.

UTL's central Information Technology Services (ITS) is responsible for most of the library's web spaces and services. Before the arrangement described in our case study began, the ITS web team included one programmer, one graphic designer/information architect, and two librarians: one focused on library systems while the other, Lisa Gayhart, focused on the field of user experience (UX). Public services library staff could report issues or suggest improvements to the web team, often through the Web Advisory Committee, but they were not actively involved in the development or maintenance of the website. Web content was a grey area. Individual units provided and maintained the content for their functional areas, but major sections of the site were not owned and no one supervised content creation and maintenance as a whole.

The Opportunity

In winter 2014, the web team was preparing for a complete overhaul of the main library website, one of our web space's biggest properties. As plans for the redesign developed, the web team realized that they did not have the time nor the public service expertise to fully revise the website's content. This piece was crucial, however, to the website's overall usefulness and usability.

A large percentage of our LibQUAL+ respondents stated that they only use the library website and never use a physical library for their work,¹¹ making the redesign project tantamount to a physical renovation. It wouldn't make sense to put new paint on a building without making sure the foundation is sound. Similarly, we didn't want to redesign the website without overhauling the content.

Our Solution

We were concerned about this situation and decided to do something about it. Judith Logan, a public services librarian, had web writing

experience and formal training. Lisa's UX portfolio meant that she understood the importance of web content to users. Lisa and Judith proposed a part-time, temporary placement for Judith in ITS. Judith would devote one day a week to the website redesign project for four months to focus on the website's content and contribute to the overall process. Our supervisors and library administration accepted the proposal and the placement began in July 2014. ITS provided a desk for Judith and she was physically present in the department during her placement day. Her home department redistributed some of her duties.

Judith's work in ITS began with a content audit of the main library website and roughly followed Rebecca Blakiston's content strategy best practices.¹² As the months progressed and the team became more integrated, Judith developed her skill set to increase her usefulness to the project. She learned to use Drupal, the library website's content management system, allowing her to both edit content and complete more advanced content-related tasks. She also helped with user research and the usability testing Lisa was performing on alpha and beta versions of the site. Due to the early successes of the project, Judith's time on the project was extended a further six months.

Short-Term Outcomes

The new website was better. We produced a beautiful website that was selected as *Usable Libraries'* "Usable Library of the Month."¹³ Our collaboration wasn't the only reason the website redesign was successful, of course; this was one of the first projects to implement structured UX research and methodologies at all stages of the project. The collaboration did, however, ensure that the user-focused, evidence-driven design included a content redesign. Our team received a UTL Staff Team Appreciation and Recognition (STAR) award in the Innovation category.

We developed more technical skills. Our new skills freed up the developers and systems librarian to focus on the more challenging

aspects of the development. This increased our capacity and confidence; we later led projects that previously could have only been done by other people on the team.¹⁴ Now there are more staff members at the organization that can perform certain tasks, all without requiring a formal professional development program.

We learned to speak each others' language. Information technology is technical by nature, so it could sometimes be difficult for public services staff members to know how to bring up issues with ITS staff in the most effective ways. Likewise, ITS staff members did not always understand the impact of the issues public services staff were reporting, making communication more difficult. Judith's role on the web team allowed her to translate for both groups.

Our units became closer. Librarians in Judith's home department are highly skilled in research assistance and public service. This placement gave the department a way to share their collective insights into user searching and web browsing behavior and influence the website's design to benefit users. ITS staff now had a colleague with public-service expertise embedded in the department to whom they could turn when they needed a quick, informal opinion on design or functionality development.

Other UTL public services librarians now had an insider on the web team. We did not anticipate that having a public services librarian on the web team would embolden other librarians to get more involved with the redesign process. Judith frequently fielded calls from colleagues curious about what was happening and looking for ways to share their insights. She helped encourage and direct their feedback.

Longer-Term Outcomes

We made this interdepartmental placement indefinite. Encouraged by the new website's success and Library Administration's support of our project, we proposed an ongoing collaboration.

Judith now devotes 25% of her time to ITS projects that touch on the library's core web services: the website, catalog, and article-discovery tools. She still reports only to her home department's unit head. This arrangement will continue only as long as it makes sense for all parties. We did not want to enshrine it in a job profile for fear of betraying the placement's flexible, lightweight, and adaptable tenets. We also wanted to leave it open in case another librarian wants the chance to participate in the future.

The collaboration changed our approach to our work. We have come to see public service as an early warning indicator for UX problems that need attention. Public services staff pass issues on to the web team with concrete examples and test cases for both small and large fixes without waiting for a standing committee meeting or formal opportunity. Lisa has noticed that the web team is more receptive to these suggestions than before the collaboration began. They now see public services staff members as a key user group, and make sure to test specifically with them when developing or refining a web product. This benefits public services units as a good user experience of library tools reduces the work a user needs to accomplish a task, thereby eliminating unnecessary mediation from library staff.¹⁵ In addition, Judith's home department now frequently uses UX methodologies to approach designing their services and activities.

We increased interest in interdepartmental placements and cross-functional teams. ITS had been using agile and collaborative working styles before, but the placement allowed them to spread that model outside the department. We showed that a collaborative work arrangement could be fruitful for the staff members involved, their home units, and the organization as a whole. Library Administration circulated a set of guidelines for proposing placements that largely drew on our experiences. Cross-functional teams have become more and more important to UTL, so much so that "collaboration and team orientation" is now a category in our yearly professional assessment template.

We brought the user into the tool-development workflow.

Information technology is often a “backroom service” whose staff do not have much contact with front-end users except under controlled conditions like a usability test or focus group. Although we did not use Judith’s presence as a substitute for user research, she helped us make educated guesses that we could later test with users, maximizing the time that we had with our testers and speeding up the development process. To build on this, Lisa works on a public service point once a week to see for herself how people are using the web spaces and how they describe their use in their own words. Her time there is lightweight, flexible, user experience research when documented correctly.

How to Use Intrapreneurship to Promote Holistic Librarianship at Your Institution

Signal that you are open to intrapreneurship. Let your staff members know that you are interested in experimenting with your institution’s organizational structure and are open to their proposals. This could be as simple as an agenda item at a high-level meeting or an all-staff e-mail. You might be surprised by the proposals you get; your staff members undoubtedly have a different perspective on how to meet your users’ needs. We have noticed that this is great for staff morale.

“**Signal that you are open to intrapreneurship.**”

Look for likely projects. Time-limited projects are a promising way to get staff members working together in new ways. Are you implementing an important new service or technology? Allocate more focused staff time to new initiatives for a limited amount of time. Team members will have the time and mental energy to devote to developing their skills and knowledge. They’ll get more out of the experience and grow their skill sets faster. This also helps build staff buy-in for these projects since the team members will become champions for it in their home departments.

Identify your skill bottlenecks. There's always someone at an institution who knows how to do something important that no one else does. What happens when that person retires or goes on leave unexpectedly? Cross-functional teams disperse important skills within an organization, helping with succession planning and institutional memory. Look for opportunities to get these specialized staff members working on a project or collaborating with others so they can share their skills and knowledge. Perhaps there is a small piece of their job that other members of team could be trained to do. Both staff members benefit from such an arrangement; the specialized person now has help when the workload gets heavy and the newly trained person has an additional way to contribute to the team's success.

Upskill existing people *before* you hire a dedicated position.

The American Library Association job list is littered with functional specialist job postings like Digital Preservation Librarian or Scholarly Communications Librarian. Before you post one of these, try asking an existing staff member to “test drive” the role on a full- or part-time basis for a few months. This will give you a better sense of what skills are required for the portfolio and ensure that someone else in the organization is familiar with it, preemptively eliminating a skills bottleneck. This kind of testing can also provide an opportunity to demonstrate how the role brings value to your organization so you can help secure funding for the position, if necessary.

Conclusion

Our case study demonstrates an intrapreneurial pathway to holistic librarianship. Recently hired librarians saw an opportunity to approach a project in a non-traditional way, growing their skill sets and breaking down organizational silos in the process. Leadership can occur at all levels of an organization, but it takes vision and flexibility at the highest levels to shape its growth in the most useful direction.

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Creating a Holistic Fabric of Services and Collections from the Inside Out: Exploring Convergences of Liaison and Special Collections Librarianship

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Introduction

The work of liaison librarians and special collections librarians could more closely mirror and support the scholarship process if the expertise of both specializations are holistically considered and, when relevant, cooperatively combined. Viewing and integrating collections and services with this approach includes providing a “full spectrum of information available to scholars and students and the technological capabilities, rights of use, and services necessary for full utilization of these resources. The holistic framework’s *raison d’être* is knowledge creation—from inspiration to information, to analysis, synthesis and dissemination.”¹ It is well known that, in the 21st-century academic library, there is a shift from being “collections-centered” to “learning-centered.” By assisting users with the production of scholarly work, and by outwardly focusing library work toward more direct engagement with users, together, special collections and liaisons in academic libraries advance in their roles as facilitators, conduits, and partners in research. Outcomes stemming from these interactions increase the likelihood of building even more connections with users, further supporting their research and teaching.

This article considers benefits, advantages, and an overarching purpose of academic liaison librarians and special collections librarians working integratively to affirm and advance the libraries’ role in the university community. The piece also proposes ways in which libraries can enact

this holistic model by improving interpersonal communication, changing organizational culture and structure, experimenting with staffing models, and identifying staffing intersections.

Commonalities and Challenges of Working Together

Both liaison and special collections librarians preserve, uphold, advocate, and teach the scholarly work cycle. However, due to organizational structures and, at times, approaches toward teaching and reference interactions, the organization and strategy of librarians' work may not resemble the research process itself. Silos and fragmentation of collections (primary sources/rare materials vs. secondary sources; analog vs. digital sources) and services ("esoteric" vs. "pragmatic," etc.) provide disjointed, inconsistent points of service and fragment collection viewing and use. These structures and work situations, unlike a pragmatic and pedagogically sound approach to research, lack the correlation of content synthesis and integration of information. This environment also does not allow for the outcome that all of these collections and services combine to make up the very structure and substance of the academic library. Scholarly output, and aligning all collections and services with an institution's mission, objectives, research, and teaching are intrinsic to an academic library remaining relevant, dynamic, and essential to its constituents and stakeholders.

Meeting the needs of users is a central, unifying objective across academic libraries as well as within individual library departments. In this context, it can be asserted that *all* work in academic libraries is a unifying endeavor that serves the very same constituents. On discussing a holistic collections framework, H. Thomas Hickerson wrote that, "regardless of the description methods or systems employed, we owe our users the capacity to find related materials within our holdings, whether published, unpublished, art, artifact, digital collection or new media. This unified, broadly accessible information is also essential to library colleagues who should be knowledgeable in promoting primary resources in their liaison roles along with the latest new

database licensed. And I will add here that, surprisingly, it is not just our archivists and special collections librarians who have trouble stepping across dividing lines.”² Given the historical context of the special collections repository, the need to protect and preserve items, and the imposed physical limitations based on archival principles and practices, it is not surprising that both liaison librarians and special collections librarians and archivists find it difficult to promote each other’s expertise. Further, they may find, even when it is most relevant, that it is difficult or impossible to work collaboratively.

There are numerous challenges that create and perpetuate a divide between liaison and special collections librarian work, such as:

- By emphasizing differences and distinctive needs, the commonalities that bind special collections and other areas of the library tend to be minimized.
- Distinct hours, access policies, technical processing, resource discovery approaches, and physical locations represent exceptions that require workarounds from mainstreamed operations.
- “Special” can convey a sense of superiority giving rise to misperceptions, distrust, rivalry, and jealousy.
- Different administrative reporting structures can exacerbate rather than minimize organizational divides. Senior leadership must signal the importance of working closely together.
- Emphasis on the physicality of special collections is increasingly contrasted with general collections as they become disembodied digital objects more valued for their informational content and ease of use rather than their materiality.
- The rise of liaison programs can lead to turf wars over areas of responsibility and the primacy of contacts with faculty.³

Acknowledging these challenges, and stepping back from them for a moment, it is useful to ask questions: What would a more synthesized style of working together look like? What means are necessary for moving this process forward, taking away constructs

and perceived hindrances such as physical, cultural, administrative, and psychological divides and boundaries? What might be some approaches to work toward making this cooperative model a reality? This is not to give an illusion that this is a simple undertaking, but by imagining how this synthesis might look on the ground, we can further develop how it could be achieved, why it's important, and what is needed to get closer to making such a model achievable.

Defining the Collaborative Model

“Collaboration,” a term widely used, is often perceived as synonymous to cooperation and sharing responsibility without a motive beyond the notion of working together. It is through the development of a “collaborative model,” going beyond cooperation, that an interactive process with meaningful progress and fruitful outcomes can emerge. Through this ideology, librarians can provide more effective, consistent, and rich service and support to their users. Approaches to work and expertise in a shared, team-based manner, and the development of a shared understanding of work and resources, will increase exposure to and use of both general and special collections.

A collaborative model must center around the notion of permeating the silos that exist for primary and secondary source materials. The model begins with an overarching attitude that there cannot be an “us” and a “them,” and while each member of a collaborative team has particular skills that they contribute, a suspension of this bifurcation is an integral starting point. How that work evolves is dependent on the structure and size of the organization, but the collaborative model must begin with trust and a shared understanding that access to and discoverability of all resources is paramount. Territoriality should be non-existent from all stakeholders' perspectives. That is not to say that librarians

“A collaborative model must center around the notion of permeating the silos that exist for primary and secondary source materials.”

should not be mindful of the security and integrity of rare and unique materials or of teaching how to handle them, but that they should interpret the library's collections as interconnected.

The implementation of a collaborative model should lead to increased awareness of roles, strengths, and responsibilities within and throughout the organization. Combining perspectives can lead to more creativity in projects, including the promotion of all collections and services. Increased exposure of users to library services and resources can facilitate inspiration, learning, synthesis, and knowledge production, which may lead to more library partnerships with faculty and students. Librarians who recognize and use one another's expertise and experience provide users with a more well-rounded, consistent fabric of services with increased, cohesive exposure to both general and special collections.

For example, consider the exhibit as a vehicle for collaboration and the transmission of knowledge. Exhibits, in their curation, research, and dissemination, can serve as an excellent outreach and educational tool between colleagues within the libraries as well as the communities they serve. Traditionally, special collections librarians and archivists have exhibited archival materials to educate and share with others. Approaches vary and can incorporate collaboration with scholars outside of special collections, faculty, students, collectors, and others. Working with liaison librarians can enable a lively, vivid point of intersectionality of expertise through their diversity of perspectives and the pairing of primary and secondary sources in the exhibition medium. The physical and/or digital coupling of special collections holdings with general collections items—such as books, articles, films, other media, and current research—creates for the exhibit viewer, participant, or co-creator an opportunity to better understand the nexus of the scholarly process.

For a student, this can create a transformative learning experience in which they acquire a better understanding of the circuitous path

between the primary documents and the published or presented secondary source. Combining expertise could facilitate opportunities for students or other researchers to apply an integrative approach to exhibit creation. For instance, in an exhibit narrative, incorporating a variety of sources as part of the exhibition could illustrate the sources' interdependence and interplay. The research process, for example, could be explored via a professor's notes, a laboratory notebook, or other manuscript materials, coupled with published works and findings from those research notes and manuscripts, as well as criticism, interpretation, extrapolation, teaching notes, and student reinterpretation of that single original scholarly work. A collaborative approach to exhibition work can also lend itself to fostering digital scholarship projects and other multimodal scholarly expression, that include librarians as equal partners with faculty, students, and other researchers from outside the immediate academic community.

Envisioning Holistic, Integrative Special and General Collections and Services

In our vision, the services, collections, research, and teaching across library departments are integrated in a manner that represents and mirrors the process of and approach to academic scholarship. Users can more easily discover and access both general and special collections, facilitating their use in academic conversations and, paving the way for more creative, interdisciplinary connections. This seamless access leads to an increase in more creative course design, scholarly output, and professional relationships between faculty and students. These benefits might not occur without users experiencing a cohesive fabric of collections access, research consultation, instruction, and interdepartmental partnership.

Special collections librarians and liaison librarians as stewards of their respective collections have a shared understanding of what the other does in their day-to-day work. Being knowledgeable of each other's job responsibilities and practices allows them to,

when appropriate, practice complementary collection stewardship, intermingling primary and secondary sources in research guides, exhibits, and other outlets. Each possesses a firm sense of their own professional identity, while acknowledging each other's expertise both within the academic library and externally, through their broader constituents. Each makes appropriate referrals and works integratively on projects across library departments and together with faculty and students. This collaboration fosters a stronger sense of expertise and strengths within the library, both interpersonally, and to constituents. Further, each possesses an awareness of their greater objectives in the profession. They recognize that, although each librarian is responsible for specific collections, services, programs, departments, and other populations, no one "owns" those responsibilities, but rather they are the "go-to" person for their area.

Library administrators recognize the value of this work and encourage their staff to work across department lines as a means to further the strategic goals of the library and, in effect, the university. In concert with their supervisors and directors, librarians identify and pursue projects accordingly, with consideration to given time and workload restraints, while taking advantage of opportunities to work with and within their communities.

Faculty, students, researchers, and librarians continue to view the library as a place of inspiration, scholarship, creative and academic support, and as an incubator for envisioning the planning and implementation of scholarly projects in a broad manner of formats, media, disciplines, and perspectives. The university community sees the library as a place to exhibit, perform, program, and interact with scholarly work within and throughout their academic and creative communities.

Interpersonal Communication among Library Colleagues

Central to moving toward a more collaborative approach to providing services and facilitating access to collections, there must be a conscious

effort to build and further develop interpersonal communication among library colleagues, within and across departments. This communication development transcends librarianship, and while it does focus on the work, the need for improved communication centers around two fundamental components. First, an acceptance of meeting the constituents' needs first, and second, a recognition that interpersonal communication and shared understanding are based on trust and must be cultivated over time, with patience and complete buy-in from all parties. These components require a shift towards understanding and valuing the holistic approach to the work, and what that means on an individual level.

Beyond evolving roles, skill sets, and responsibilities, it is how colleagues interact internally that affects how they work with and relate to constituents. Critical to the development of these three areas is an examination, reflection, and evolution of interpersonal communications. In *Library Conversations: Reclaiming Interpersonal Communication Theory for Understanding Professional Encounters*, Marie Radford and Gary Radford “consider a view that sees conversation as a means of self-reflection, insight and behavioral change.”⁴ Approaching conversations this way creates cooperative opportunities to interactively contribute to the discussion, making the content and proceeding actions dynamic and shared. Upon examining several types of communication theory, Radford and Radford discuss a desired shift in focus from control and persuasion to communicating for feedback, moving the conversation beyond a transmittal of information to a receptive, interactive process.

All library staff are responsible for how they communicate with each other, and the way messages are conveyed and shared is just as important, if not, at times, more so, as the content: “As communicators in professional settings, our role is to be the custodian of the communication process. We need to initiate, sustain and transform patterns of communication with our workplaces.”⁵ Again, this is not easy in practice, but it can be argued that consciously or unconsciously,

how colleagues communicate ultimately affects the quality of service and work the library collectively gives to its community.

Viewing conversations as moving beyond telling to creating more interactive interpersonal sharing and responses,

the appropriate metaphor would be guiding a small boat through rough seas, where the skilled sailor responds to the push of each oncoming wave and each burst of wind, coordinating her actions skillfully with the actions of the environment in which she finds herself. To succeed, she must work with the environment, and make her actions part of its actions. A conversation represents a similar kind of environment. It is a context that must be travelled and negotiated with a constant sensitivity to the ebbs and flows of the interaction, and where one must constantly adjust one's communication behaviors to successfully make that journey.⁶

This analogy addresses an agent interacting with external forces and emphasizes that the surroundings and context are not personal. In thinking about and practicing this participatory, mindful communicative strategy, it is helpful to consider the communication patterns used: “successful communication is not about changing the psychology of another person. It is not about using strategies to get what you want. It is not about controlling the responses of another person in ways that benefit the sender. It is about creating communicative conditions in which change becomes possible.”⁷ Internally, liaison and special collections librarians and archivists must see what they do as a cohesive, unified effort focused on meeting users where they are, partnering in their work. Librarians need to learn how to nurture interactive, dynamic conversations with each other in order to facilitate true collaboration.

Organizational Culture and Structure

Recognizing and valuing differences and strengths offer insights into the identity and organizational culture of the library. Within the library

as an entity or organization, “thinking about organizational culture therefore involves recognizing the inseparability of binaries—together and apart, general and unique, structures and agents, organizations and identities—in sum, organizational culture as a constraint and as an everyday accomplishment.”⁸ Diversity both within and between departments and positions is critical, as colleagues rely on one another individually and collectively for their respective areas of expertise and experience. Further, it is intrinsic to a collaborative model to distinguish varying cultures, identities, and structures with siloed work, services, and collections, because having divisions, departments, or other types of organization in staffing provides structure. It is vital to recognize that within all libraries, there is a centralized, overarching goal: that the library exists to serve their constituents. The vision and approach of each department on how to achieve the overarching goal may differ, but it is the responsibility of each group to determine how to work integratively among departmental (micro) cultures and the whole library (macro) cultures.

By creating an environment that is flexible and culturally accepting of experimentation, new avenues of collaboration and cross-training can take place. The organizational culture of an institution can either foster experimentation and innovation, or in turn, it might work against those principles through continued siloing of expertise and compartmentalizing of departments, collections, or services. It is noted that “unlike hierarchical bureaucracies, the ability to innovate is most frequently associated with an open, entrepreneurial mind-set in an organization.”⁹ Anytime innovative projects are implemented, there is always a risk of them not working out. Cultivating a culture open to innovation needs to happen across departments, not only with top-down approval but horizontally in departmental and individual librarian practices. “For librarians...to risk that possible failure, there must be a culture where they first feel valued, secure and respected.”¹⁰

“By creating an environment that is flexible and culturally accepting of experimentation, new avenues of collaboration and cross-training can take place.”

Organizational culture and institutional culture, like organizational and institutional politics, can be as much myth or attitude as reality. Whether a complete restructuring of staffing and duties is necessary, or small experimental approaches to integrating staff from diverse areas into shared roles, there are helpful case studies and scholarship in management, business, and academic librarianship journals.

Staffing Models

One possible staffing model to foster collaboration is to develop a test or pilot project that would allow for cross-training and cross-staffing, specifically between liaison librarians and special collections librarians. At its most basic level, and based on interest, librarians can implement a small-scale staffing experiment, where librarians serve scheduled time in another department to participate in the work that takes place there; a newfound and deeper understanding is inevitable. Cross-training, shadowing, and observation in a test project such as this should center not just around materials and procedures, but should take a look at the interpersonal interactions between the librarians and the end users they are working with, and how the users are engaging with the resources and information.

Conversations and assessment of these cross-departmental interactions can be observed and noted during and immediately after the experience. Librarians can use what they learn and take it to the next level by creating and implementing plans to improve their work. Pursuing this approach will lead to greater understanding among librarians of each other's jobs and the ability to make appropriate referrals and to better assess needs library-wide.

The emphasis here is not on specialized training but rather on observation and shared communication and needs assessment on the ground. Asking the fundamental questions, "What can I contribute to this experience?" and "How does my work and expertise complement and possibly shape this interaction?"

This is a balance of sharing expertise, deferring to colleagues, and presenting this needs-based, scholarship-centric and progressive approach to meeting the needs of the library user.

Smaller archival repositories or special collections departments housed in smaller academic libraries are often staffed, by necessity, by individuals who may have other responsibilities that rest well outside of the archives. Smaller institutions are often compelled to staff the repository with a position or positions that are split, perhaps fifty percent “outside” of the archives, and fifty percent “in.” Additionally, some special collections libraries have limited hours and user demands may dictate that several staff outside of special collections need to be able to provide service for rare and unique materials after regular special collections hours. These scenarios represent not a challenge, but an opportunity to expand the role of the librarian into a new area of expertise and to further mirror research and scholarship by allowing a greater connection between “general or regular” and “special or rare.” For the end user, this holistic framework not only demystifies the “special” but also the “general” in terms of identifying, finding, and using resources.

This cross-departmental model has the potential to lead to more purposeful ideas for projects that would serve the campus community, and would in turn improve the quality of library work. A cross-departmental staffing model can facilitate the recognition and impact of connections with what we do and what we have in our collections, as well as a deeper understanding by the people in our community who could potentially work with us. At the most basic level, library services and work should mirror research and scholarship processes that take place in an academic setting. The integrative access and use of primary and secondary sources, both digital and analog, results in new scholarly contributions as well as a melding of the myriad areas of expertise that all librarians possess and foster. This improves service to constituents and allows academic libraries to evolve as an integral component of the scholarship process. A shared understanding and dissemination

of services and collections will lend itself to greater advocacy for and recognition of the role of the librarian in the research process.

All academic librarians should seek out ways to deliberately intersect areas of expertise, to try new services, events, projects, or programs that combine these intersections, bringing forth high levels of expertise in different areas into juxtaposition. Implementing these practices can facilitate the discovery and production of more scholarly output and projects with greater impact on the university community: “In fact, many times there is a pivotal moment in our encounters with library patrons or colleagues that hinges on the possibilities that are opened by this collaborative moment.”¹¹ It is in these moments that librarians build further connections and improve the work everyone does.

Staffing Intersections

Administrators, supervisors, and department heads should work together in synchronizing and sharing their departmental goals, examining how these goals complement and intersect with each other. This will facilitate more collaborative work in a meaningful way that feels sanctioned, and will help move departments, and hence the entire organization forward. Shaping departmental goals that are both aligned with the larger library and the academic institution as a whole, as well as across departments, will also help cultivate this holistic environment.

Naturally, there are times when there is no need to collaborate but, even in recognizing this, it is beneficial to observe and listen to the type of request or work that needs to be done and what might make it more complete and helpful for all stakeholders. Drawing upon and using connections between what liaison and special collections librarians *do* and what they *have*, regardless of budgetary constraints, helps fortify how they assist and partner with their community.

Liaisons and special collections librarians share the challenge of making collections more discoverable. For liaisons, it's facilitating access to e-resources and items in the stacks, so they will be used to advance and promote research and learning. For special collections librarians, it's increasing exposure and discoverability of archives and special collections, while also preserving and caring for the materials, to ensure that they can be used for research and learning. Stakeholders are at times reluctant or unwilling to take the time to access analog items or other collections. How can liaisons and special collections librarians team up to work on this challenge?

In order to make shared appointments successful, administrative support and facilitation is critical. Dual reporting, from an external perspective, may be less intimidating and confusing for the end user, who, understandably, is only concerned with having their needs met and not the organizational structure of the library. Approaching shared or dual appointments programmatically, rather than focusing on identification and implementation of boutique projects might be a direction and approach to consider. Recognizing that beyond the work, collegiality and growth stem from shared understanding and can be rooted in a collaborative environment that focuses on the end user. While this may be a daunting task for library leadership, this approach has the potential to reinvigorate the work and processes that take place in academic libraries.

Working together is not revolutionary, but approaching this outside of the work itself, and focusing on the notion of mirroring research could significantly alter the way that librarians reach and help their users. "For that reason, new organizational structures may prove essential in bringing humanities librarians and archivists together to pursue common outcomes. With the growing need to evolve policies and functional support for acquiring, managing, and supporting the use of society's born digital record, differing aggregations of technology and archival staffing will be necessary."¹² It could also be argued that beyond collaborating with humanities librarians, the increase

of interdisciplinary research may elicit more collaboration as well with liaisons with functional or disciplinary roles such as digital scholarship, social sciences, and natural sciences responsibilities. Further, expanding liaison librarians' knowledge of their libraries' rare books and special collections holdings and handling procedures while broadening special collections librarians' knowledge and experience of general collections and services, would help with convening individual and collective expertise, collections, and services.

Conclusion

A mindful and creative approach to collaboration—focusing on interpersonal communication, organizational culture and structure, and staffing models and intersections—could potentially transform services and resources for users. Distinguishing collaboration from cooperation, it is important to a library's organizational development and culture to notice and reflect on the way colleagues interact with each other (or not) in their daily work and responsibilities. Is a project's work shared in the process of planning and implementation or are both parties working separately, to the extent of simply not opposing each other's work? How do both parties discuss and communicate with others on their collaborative work, acknowledging responsibilities and roles while fulfilling outcomes? In particular projects, why is interdepartmental collaboration needed and what potential benefits will come from it?

While it is essential to consider the time commitments required as a fundamental component of embarking on collaborative projects, it is also critical to focus on how approaches to collaboration could better meet users' needs. Understanding what is possible to accomplish given realistic schedules and deadlines requires not only an awareness of what both our potential collaborators do and are responsible for, but also an awareness of one's own needs, requirements, and barriers. An academic library is a hive of activity, with competing priorities, activities, and demands, and "libraries must work to connect the

ongoing emphasis on engaged librarianship with the need for supportive organizational strategy, structure and culture.”¹³ With a mix of administrative support, shared goals, and a shared understanding of why, how, and for whom the work is for, together liaison and special collections librarians can help each other keep the focus on a project’s purpose and objectives. Developing a collaboration of any kind also requires a comfort with ambiguity, as, with a variety of perspectives, outcomes may not turn out as originally anticipated.

Every librarian brings their own expertise to bear on each experience and interaction. To best serve constituents, department and position responsibilities should not be an obstacle to working collaboratively. Looking internally at their work in a holistic way and making strategic connections among colleagues to combine expertise, services, and collections can help librarians “create agile systems for translating encouragement into ideas and, in turn, transforming those ideas into scalable, sustainable, and replicable services.”¹⁴

These challenges are not unique to liaison and special collections units within academic libraries. As in other organizations, fragmentation of work, responsibilities, communication, mission, goals, and other pieces of organizational culture creates similar conflicts. Thinking of the library as a whole, “organizational culture is hence the specific set of patterns that are materialized within one institution. These patterns are materialized...as action, technology, institution and so on.”¹⁵ How do liaison and special collections librarians develop and institute patterns to more closely reflect the research process and scholarly work cycle? It is highly recognized that working collaboratively is important to the success and future of academic libraries. It is in considering the nature of this work and why it is important that helps academic librarians ascertain how to do it that will help advance their work and, in effect, their institutions’ objectives.

Endnotes

- ¹ H. Thomas Hickerson, “Rebalancing the Investment in Collections,” *Research Library Issues: A Quarterly Report from ARL, CNI, and SPARC*, no. 277 (December 2011): 1–2, <http://publications.arl.org/rli277/>.
- ² *Ibid.*, 6.
- ³ Anne R. Kenney, “Foreword,” in *Collaborating for Impact: Special Collections and Liaison Librarian Partnerships*, ed. Kristen Totleben and Lori Birrell (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016), vi.
- ⁴ Marie L. Radford and Gary P. Radford, *Library Conversations: Reclaiming Interpersonal Communication Theory for Understanding Professional Encounters* (Chicago: Neal-Schuman, 2017), 46.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 148–149.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.
- ⁸ Martin Parker, *Organizational Culture and Identity: Unity and Division at Work* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2000), 1.
- ⁹ Jennifer Church-Duran, “Distinctive Roles: Engagement, Innovation, and the Liaison Model,” *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 17, no. 2 (2017): 268.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 268.
- ¹¹ Radford and Radford, *Library Conversations*, 46.
- ¹² Hickerson, “Rebalancing the Investment in Collections,” 6.
- ¹³ Church-Duran, “Distinctive Roles,” 269.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 269.
- ¹⁵ Parker, *Organizational Culture and Identity*, 232.

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