



Against the Grain

“Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians”

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Trends in Health Sciences and Biomedical Sciences Information and Services Provision

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The overarching title for this *Against the Grain (ATG)* special issue builds on the titles used for the Nov. 2008 and Dec. 2011-Jan. 2012 special issues. Adding the concept of “services” to this special issue’s title serves as a reminder that “if you build it,” they (users) will not necessarily come (paraphrasing a phrase voiced in the movie, *Field of Dreams*). “Services,” as used in this context, incorporate the necessary activities of marketing, training, partnering, and collaborating. This *ATG* special issue includes seven contributions by experienced authors who share insights and their own experiences. They address current trends and opportunities addressed or undertaken by those who work with persons involved in the triad of patient care, education, and research, and beyond. Hopefully, all of the articles will have elements that resonate with *ATG* readers or pique their interest.

Without a doubt, those who work in the health and biomedical sciences information sector are familiar with phrases such as

“global health” or “one health.” The second was selected as the theme of the historic 2013 annual meeting of the **Medical Library Association (MLA)** and its partners in Boston, MA. The **National Program Committee (NPC)** worked for three years to create a federated international meeting incorporating the 2013 Annual Meeting and Exhibition of **MLA**, the 11th **International Congress on Medical Librarianship (ICML)**, the 7th **International Conference of Animal Health Information Specialists (ICAHIS)**, and the 6th **International Clinical Librarian Conference (ICLC)**. The onsite report of the 2013 meeting recorded representatives from 46 countries. In the 2011/2012 special issue of *ATG*, staff from the **U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM)** shared examples of information innovation, often with a global focus. Although most librarians are not qualified to offer clinical medical assistance in global health initiatives or after international disasters, there are other ways for librarians to act glob-

ally, by participating in the initiatives of **NLM**, their institutions, or their professional associations. Many health sciences librarians belong to the **MLA**, a professional association that has never focused on only one country. The **International Cooperation Section of MLA** celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2014. As **T. Mark Hodges** wrote in the section history posted in the **MLA** Website, (<http://www.mlanet.org/archive/history/unit-history/international.html>), “...although **ICS** was only founded in 1989, its antecedents go back to the earliest years of the association and are an integral part of the history of the section. From the outset, the **MLA** has had an interna-

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tional role. Its very origin was an international venture, when American and Canadian medical librarians got together and formed the MLA in 1898.” In their article for *ATG*, **Carla Funk**, **MLA’s** Executive Director, **J. Michael Homan**, former **MLA** president and chair of the 2013 annual meeting’s **NPC** (also director of libraries at **Mayo Clinic**), and **Lenny Rhine**, trainer extraordinaire for **MLA’s Librarians Without Borders** E-Library Training Initiative (also university librarian *emeritus*, **University of Florida**), highlight some recent international projects, partnerships, and initiatives of **MLA** and its members.

Following a time honored tradition, professional health associations have had libraries at their headquarter offices and have offered library services to members. These days, health associations, often involving their members, may be active in many endeavors, as: publishers (of books and journals), developers of professional information gateways and clinical practice guidelines, providers of continuing education courses and authenticators of courses developed by others, and so much more. How central and embedded are librarians and librarians to these activities? The **Health Association Libraries Section (HALS)** of the **Medical Library Association** began in 1952 when the **Medical Society Librarians Group** was formed as a special interest group of **MLA** and has been known by its present name since 2001. In those early years, librarians sought a forum to discuss the unique

issues that medical society libraries faced. How are health associations currently meeting the information needs of their headquarters’ staffs? Do they provide information services for dues-paying association members? **HALS** has surveyed its members since 1980 and links to survey findings can be found in the research section of its site (<http://www.hals.mlanet.org/about/research/start.htm>). **Mary Hyde**, the 2013/2014 chair of **MLA’s Health Association Libraries Section (HALS)**, briefly reviews the landscape and highlights findings of the most recent **HALS** survey.¹ She also illustrates some current roles of health association libraries and librarians, using the example of the **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists**, where she works.

The **Association for Research Libraries (ARL)** Website, (<http://www.arl.org/focus-areas/scholarly-communication>), includes this definition of scholarly communication: “the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use.” The site also indicates that “researchers and scholars provide the focus and the purpose for scholarly communication. Librarians can be forceful advocates for positive change.” At the 13th annual **Charleston Conference Health Sciences Lively Lunch** in 2013, **Robin Champieux** of **Oregon Health & Science University** addressed three areas of her work as a health sciences scholarly communication librarian. She shared trends in 1) researcher and author profile creation; 2) studies of publications and scholarly work using traditional impact factor measures as well as newer measures such as altmetrics; and 3)

views on reproducibility and re-use of scientific information in the open access (OA) world. In this issue of *ATG*, another health sciences scholarly communication librarian, **Anneliese Taylor**, focuses specifically on activities and initiatives that are in response to OA policies and mandates. The **U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH)** is the largest source of funding for medical research in the world. So, there is no doubt that librarians who work at institutions receiving **NIH** funds should and have become involved in helping their institutions’ researchers and authors meet the requirements of the **NIH** mandate (**NIH** Public Access Policy, <http://publicaccess.nih.gov/>) that celebrated its 5th anniversary in 2013. This article will serve as an interesting “snapshot” since there are those who predict that many “disruptions” will continue to take place with the increasing number of open access mandates and changing nature of OA.² Most libraries and librarians would agree that they need to be responsive and proactive in establishing their niches in the evolving “ecosystem” of research funding policies and mandates, open access, and scholarly publishing in general.

Libraries and their institutional parents try to proactively and reactively address the challenges of data management and institutional repositories (IRs). Data management plans are increasingly being mandated by funding agencies. Libraries are monitoring trends and becoming involved at various levels. Those initiatives can perhaps counteract findings such as those reported in a December 2013 *Current Biology* article study, that data forming the backbone of many published articles becomes less and less accessible to other researchers as years go by.³ IRs archive scholarly output and the role of libraries and librarians in IR activities has evolved over the years. In a 2010 Webinar presentation entitled, “*Institutional Repositories for Medical Schools*,” **Tim Tanninga** of **bepress** alluded in the abstract to the growing trend of medical school libraries managing their own IRs.⁴ If a medical school does have its own IR (or plans to), what makes it unique, different, strategic? What work is involved and what elements ensure its success? In 2011 **Lisa Palmer** and two colleagues from **Thomas Jefferson University** surveyed the experiences of their respective institutions in a Webinar entitled, “*Challenges and Opportunities for Medical Institutional Repositories*.”⁵ Here in *ATG*, she overviews strides made in this area and shares insights from her work as an Institutional Repository Librarian in a medical school. She addresses commonalities and unique features of medical schools’ institutional repositories, compared to other types of IRs.

A September 2013 viewpoint article in *JAMA* was entitled “*The Evolving Role and Value of Libraries and Librarians in Health Care*.”⁶ One can observe a parallel evolving role and value of libraries and librarians in the basic sciences sector as well. Historically, many academic health sciences schools have had prominent basic scientists and educators. Basic science forms a foundation for health care education. In academic and other research

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institutes involved with translational and comparative medicine, basic science research findings can impact health care knowledge and practices. In 2010, a survey report on information seeking behaviors of basic scientists included this finding in the conclusion: "Although the basic science researchers expressed a positive attitude toward the library, they did not view its resources or services as integral to their work..."⁷ That finding was not shared by **Marysue Schaeffer** at the 2013 Charleston Conference Health Sciences Lively Lunch. She reported on the successful experience of **Becker Medical Library** at **Washington University**, where bioinformaticists on staff have provided specialized resources and services to the research community for the past ten years. Past *ATG* special issues included articles that addressed e-science (2011/2012) and VIVO (2008). In her 2014 *ATG* article, **Susan Kendall** provides an overview of the "rediscovered" basic scientist. A librarian with a basic science doctoral degree, **Susan** regularly works with scientists at her institution and networks with colleagues. She has developed and taught skills building CE courses in this area for colleagues in both **MLA** and **SLA** (the **Special Libraries Association**). She was a past convener of **MLA's** Molecular Biology Special Interest Group (SIG), and is the 2013/2014 chair of the **MLA's** Collection Development Section. One could conclude that, based on the efforts and successes of this author and her colleagues, suggested future roles in the conclusion of the aforementioned 2010 article are already coming to fruition at many institutions.

It is all too common to read or hear about special library closures and mergers. A small exception to that current trend has been a response to an aging population and changing demographics that have contributed to a

physician shortage in the United States. As the headline of a February 15, 2010 *New York Times* article by **Anemona Hortocollis** indicated, we are now "Expecting a Surge in U.S. Medical Schools." On November 2012, the **American Medical Association (AMA)** newswire featured an announcement about the opening of three new medical schools in the U.S., at **UC Riverside School of Medicine (CA)**, **Quinnipiac University's Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine** in Hamden (CT), and **Western Michigan University School of Medicine** in Kalamazoo (MI).⁸ At the time of the announcement, all had received preliminary accreditation status from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). As one might imagine, hand-in-hand with hiring faculty and planning curricular matters, new medical schools also must address libraries and information services. In days gone by, this was referred to as planning for the "opening day collection." How do present day librarians in new academic medical institutions plan for collections (or these days, online access to resources) as well as services for "opening days" — that is, the arrival of the inaugural classes of students on-site or virtually (for online courses)? What are some goals, priorities, and techniques? In her article, **Elizabeth Lorbeer**, library director at the third institution in the aforementioned **AMA** newswire announcement, shares some of her first-year plans and accomplishments. A follow-up at some future date may be interesting...

Last but not least, it is not an understatement to say that in many institutions, many things have changed. Changing budgets and priorities, external and internal, have driven libraries' decisions on collections (information resources), staffing, and space. Views about technology and practices are changing "in the trenches." So, in what direction should and could libraries head? Followers of hospital librarian **Michelle Kraft's** lecture circuit appearances at professional meetings or readers of her blog, The

Krafty Librarian: Every Librarian Needs a Bag of Tricks (<http://kraftylibrarian.com/>), know that they will be amused, entertained, sometimes challenged and/or invigorated by things she says and writes. **Michelle** has served on the **MLA** Social Networking Task Force, has moderated the popular "Tech Trends" session at **MLA** annual meetings, and, as December 2013 election results revealed, will serve as president of **MLA**, beginning her duties at the conclusion of the 2014 **MLA** annual meeting in Chicago (May 16-21). In the 2011/2012 special issue of *ATG*, **Patricia Hammond** wrote about hospitals' collection building and information resource work. In this issue of *ATG*, **Michelle Kraft** questions some established, perhaps entrenched, practices, routines, and thinking. It is her opinion and prognostication that much could and should (still) be changed in hospital and health sciences libraries, and perhaps other types of libraries as well.

Thanks go to all of this year's special issue contributors for sharing their expertise and insights! 🐼

Endnotes

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