

3-28-2017

Libraries and the Collaborative Imperative

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Recommended Citation

Emery, Jill and Levine-Clark, Michael (2017) "Libraries and the Collaborative Imperative," *Collaborative Librarianship*: Vol. 9 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship/vol9/iss1/1>

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Libraries and the Collaborative Imperative

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With this issue, we are entering our second year as editors of *Collaborative Librarianship*, and the journal is entering its ninth year of publication. We took this role on because we value collaboration, and throughout our careers we've been continually impressed by the willingness of librarians to share expertise with colleagues, whether those colleagues are close consortial partners or people they've never met before. Our profession thrives on collaboration; we go out of our way to share knowledge, resources, and experiences. When we compare ourselves with other professions, we tend to see competition – the collaborative efforts we undertake in libraries would be out of the question.

We collaborate because it benefits us and our users, but sometimes we collaborate because we know it will benefit other librarians and other users. In our daily activities, we see this all the time. Michael is currently working with colleagues on a research project that requires librarians at over 100 libraries to spend about an hour searching their discovery system and documenting the results – something they asked these libraries to do with less than two weeks' notice, and yet the response has been overwhelmingly positive and librarians have not just done the work but added notes, given advice, even thanked them for including them in the work. The work Jill and Graham Stone have done in creating Techniques for Electronic Resource Management (TERMs) and Open Access Workflows for Academic Librarians (OAWAL) has also been successful due to the collaborative input provided by librarians throughout the world.

Librarians routinely act for a greater good, even when that action appears not to benefit us directly. Membership in WEST – the Western Regional Storage Trust¹ – involves commitments of dollars, staff time, and scarce space to store journal volumes – with the goal of ensuring long-term retention. But non-members can take advantage of the work that WEST members do without contributing to the Trust in any way. WEST members do this work anyway, because it's important to all of us. In many consortia there are different levels of funding, so smaller and poorer libraries routinely benefit from the expenditures of larger libraries – with libraries of all sizes benefiting with the same journal packages, for instance, even though the difference of spending may be ten times or more.

This impulse to collaborate is one of the things that appeals to us about librarianship, and has made us so excited to read the inspiring submissions we have received in our first year. In a time when governments are trending toward selfishness and away from collaborating and when organizations that support libraries are in danger of losing funding entirely,² it is more important than ever that librarians work together to benefit a larger community.

This issue of *Collaborative Librarianship* makes us confident that librarians are continuing to do their part. Lori Ayre leads us off with a reminder of how important (but complicated) it is to protect patron privacy. Amelia Abreu talks about the concept of caring and its role in librarianship.



Emery & Levine-Clark: Libraries and the Collaborative Imperative

ianship. Both of these editorials about fundamental values seem especially important in the current political climate.

Our From the Field reports are more practical, but equally inspiring. We learn about a project to help Canadian libraries work together on linked data; about collaborative outreach at open access institutions, which are designed to support the traditionally underserved; about collaboration to teach students leadership skills; and about the development of PressForward, a tool to help us rethink scholarly communication models. We conclude the issue with two scholarly articles. One on how libraries can work with Wikipedia, both as a public good and as a way

to benefit libraries. Another tells us about a tool for helping manage purchase of e-resources collaboratively.

We continue to be impressed, inspired, and excited about the submissions we are receiving at Collaborative Librarianship. At every library event we attend, we attempt to identify work experiences and scholarship that should be more broadly disseminated and recognized. We hope that you're learning as much as us and are inspired enough to consider submitting your own articles.

¹ "WEST: Western Regional Storage Trust," <http://www.cdlib.org/services/west/> (accessed March 18, 2017).

² American Library Association, "President's Budget Proposal to Eliminate Federal Library

Funding 'Counterproductive and Short-Sighted,'" <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2017/03/president-s-budget-proposal-eliminate-federal-library-funding> (accessed March 18, 2017).

