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Independent Study Equals Instant Collaboration

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Independent Study Equals Instant Collaboration

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This is the story of two LIS students, distance-challenged virtual strangers, who came together and found that success is a shared recipe, and collaboration is a gift that leads to greater things.

Adrienne Matthews and Alison, both read the Spring 2013 call for students to participate in a [San José State University School of Library and Information Science \(SLIS\)](#) independent study project, and were intrigued. Lecturer [Laurie Putnam](#) sought help researching and writing for the [LIS Publications Wiki](#), an interactive tool that details information about publications LIS students and professionals can consider writing for. The only things the two students had in common were their love of writing and editing, and the moxie to apply for independent study to work on a website that neither had ever heard of. Accepted to work on the project, Alison and Adrienne were e-introduced, and began to develop a wonderful working relationship and friendship.

Although armed with articles, reference work and guidelines created specifically for their purposes, initially both students were tentative about taking the first steps, and so began by collaborating. The wiki project involved researching currently profiled publications, like [American Libraries](#), the flagship publication of the [ALA](#), and making sure information like the publication's purpose, submission guidelines and circulation figures were up to date.

"We started off with just basic fact-checking," Alison confirms. "We'd each take a profile, update it per the publication's website and other LIS reference sites, and read through each other's work to make sure they were as informational as possible. As we worked we discovered that we were both writers who had personal, firsthand experience being the information-seeker. We'd bounce ideas off each other and read as if we were the LIS person seeking to write for the publication, making sure everything we needed to know was included."

Step two involved reaching out to publication editors for their feedback and input, with the goal of making these LIS professionals aware of the wiki and their publication's inclusion. It also didn't hurt that now Alison and Adrienne were being introduced to a whole slew of LIS writers and professionals.

The students made contact and established ties across the globe with editors of sites like [LJ-BREAS: Library Ideas](#), an open access online journal covering contemporary LIS issues, published by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany. And UCLA's [Electronic Green Journal](#), whose audience consists of the educated generalist as well as the academic specialist (librarian, information consultant) interested in worldwide environmental topics.

"I really enjoyed finding out about the many journals available to LIS professionals. It helped expand my understanding of all the different occupations and roles available with LIS," Adrienne enthuses. "As I worked on the wiki, I became quite impressed with the sheer intellect that LIS professionals possess. We are a smart bunch of people! The depth of research is astounding."

Adrienne and Alison continued to work separately, checking in with Laurie and each other every so often to share information about new sites they'd stumbled upon, open calls for contributors, and discuss general LIS information that caught their attention. It was the basic rabbit-hole concept of LIS research. "The most enjoyable aspect," both agree, "was following all the threads from article to article, from resource to resource."

The hard work and connection-building paid off for both students, who were able to advance their LIS and writing careers as a direct result of working on the wiki. Alison used her wiki knowledge to query [BookRiot](#), a site whose profile she'd just developed, and is now a contributing writer for



the site. And LIS-wise, she is continuing in another semester of work under Laurie Putnam's direction, this time focused on helping move the site from its MediaWiki to a WordPress platform, with the exciting addition of publicizing the site in the very LIS publications she worked on in spring.

As for Adrienne, her work on the wiki propelled her to apply for the Editor-in-Chief role for the SLIS [Student Research Journal \(SRJ\)](#). "After I was appointed to this position, I've used the LIS wiki for my own marketing research purposes. I use the wiki to research other scholarly journals - to keep up with published materials and new ways of access. I've used the wiki for my classes as I found it an easy way to find scholarly research and it's an excellent starting point in probing in-depth research papers." Adrienne also used the wiki in her professional career as an independent Information Professional. "I plan to pursue content and copy editing positions in the educational journal publishing field. I love editing and the wiki is an excellent resource for that particular field."

In the midst of the exciting world of online learning, Adrienne and Alison took a chance on an independent study, and found each other as friends, co-workers, and co-conspirators in all things LIS. Citing the wiki as the tool that brought them together, both students agree that it was an experience that helped shape the direction of studies, reinforced the importance of research and particularly, writing for the profession. And they wouldn't have it any other way.

About the LIS Publications Wiki

The [LIS Publications Wiki](#) is first and foremost a research tool. Each entry details information on a publication that LIS students and professionals might be interested in writing for. Created by Laurie Putnam, lecturer in [San Jose State University's Library and Information Science program](#), the wiki was initially researched and populated by students in her [Publishing for the Profession](#) course.

The wiki is organized by category. Each individual entry details information essential to submitting a query to the publication: submission guide-

lines, including where to send and what's generally accepted; audience factors to consider, including geographic range and who reads the publication; the purpose and scope of the publication; and frequency of distribution.

Categories include:

- [LIS Scholarly Journals](#): aimed towards LIS professionals, these publications are peer-reviewed, with research-oriented content. Examples include *American Archivist*, [Library and Information Science Research \(LISR\)](#), and *Technical Service Quarterly*.
- [LIS Professional and Trade Publications](#): written for professionals working in the various LIS fields. Examples include *American Libraries*, [International Journal of Special Libraries](#), and [REFORMA Newsletter](#).
- [LIS Online Forums](#): wikis, discussion boards, and other online forums for LIS students and practitioners, including *Hack Library School* and *Librarian.net*.
- [Civilian Publications](#): all other publications that may be open to publishing the occasional LIS-related article. These can vary from *Atlantic Monthly* to *Mental Floss* to *Writer's Digest*.

The wiki is a constant work in progress. New publications are added and existing entries are updated frequently by a core group of SLIS students working with Laurie Putnam. If you are a publication editor or staff member - we strongly encourage you to check in occasionally and update your publication's information! If your site has updated writer guidelines, submission deadlines, a change in content or focus, or a new editor or section of the publication that you'd like readers to be aware of, please create a login and update your entry. Or contact us, and we'll be happy to take care of it for you. In fact, anyone with an interest in adding to and strengthening the wiki's content can create a profile, log in, and [add their knowledge](#) to the database.

If you would like more information on this dynamic LIS resource, please email lispubswiki@gmail.com, or contact [Laurie Putnam](#) directly.

Write away!

