

2013

## Review of Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Chemists: Research Support Services: Chemistry Project

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### Recommended Citation

Dupuis, John (2013) "Review of Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Chemists: Research Support Services: Chemistry Project," *Collaborative Librarianship*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 4 , Article 8.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship/vol5/iss4/8>

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## Review of *Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Chemists: Research Support Services: Chemistry Project*

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Matthew P. Long and Roger C. Schonfeld, *Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Chemists: Research Support Services: Chemistry Project*. (New York: Ithaka S+R, 2013), 52 pp.  
<http://www.sr.ithaka.org/research-publications/supporting-changing-research-practices-chemists>

Higher education continually restates the belief that teaching and research are not only interrelated, but that both are inseparable parts of the missions of our institutions. Not only that, we tell ourselves that they even feed off of each other. Students benefit from being exposed to the cutting edge research their professors bring to life in the curriculum. Professors benefit from the dynamic feedback loops that arise when they distill the state of the art in their fields for their students. It's a win-win.

Academic librarians want to be involved in both parts of the equation, integrated with the research activities of the faculty but also integrated in the curriculum, playing an important role helping students to prepare for the aspects of the research enterprise concerned with information seeking and organization.

It's important to recognize how connections on one side of the equation can lead to opportunities on the other. Helping that faculty member with a thorny problem finding obscure property data may lead to an instruction request for students. Similarly, while offering an interactive lab session teaching a group of undergrads how to use SciFinder, a faculty may request partnership to tackle old research data stuffed in a drawer.

Which brings us to the document under review: Ithaka S+R's *Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Chemists* by Matthew P. Long and Roger C. Schonfeld.

The authors report the results of a study of the research support needs of academic chemists in

the United Kingdom, interviewing both chemists and research support professionals such as librarians, lab technicians, scholarly societies, publishers and others. The goal of the research was to help those professionals design and assess products and services to better support the chemists in their research mission.

What were the outcomes? There are some products and services that the chemists found more important and that would be worthwhile for further study and experimentation such as data sharing, discovery tools, electronic lab notebooks, literature and research notes management. They also love library collections of journals and databases.

On the other hand, there are other products and services that seemed less useful to them, such as open access (OA) publishing or institutional repositories (IR). They also are not likely to be collaborating with a librarian on research-related projects, nor interacting much with librarians at all except for collections-related issues. This may be of particular concern as OA and repositories fall directly in the library purview. Does this mean chemistry librarians should de-emphasize both OA and repositories or just perhaps find better ways to market or package them?

From the point of view of the librarian desiring to collaborate with chemists on furthering the research mission of their institution, there are some interesting opportunities highlighted here that librarians seem well placed to exploit, either creating new services or promoting existing internal or vendor solutions. These opportunities are in areas such as research data management, knowledge management, discovery services, research interest-based alert services and research dissemination centres.

And of course for academic librarians, there's the huge potential for collaboration in the out-of-scope area of the report, integrating the li-

brary into the chemistry curriculum, where librarians can very directly exploit these opportunities and have a crucial role in educating the next generation of chemists.

Although focused on chemists in the United Kingdom, I think the findings are much more broadly applicable to research chemists in North America and other developed nations. I would also suggest that the findings are probably fairly applicable beyond chemistry to many other STEM areas where at least some of the issues are similar. As such, I would recommend that any science or technology librarian take a good hard look at the problems and opportunities presented in this report and see what makes sense in their own local situation.