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## About Collaboration

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## About Collaboration

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Librarians tend to collaborate. Within our mission-driven organizations, we care about our users and their needs. Often those needs can't be fully met by on our own, so we cooperate with other libraries and other entities to provide resources to those we serve. Interlibrary loan (ILL) is an obvious example of this, but certainly not the only one. No library can afford to build a collection that will serve every potential user's needs. Nor can any library buy just the right books or subscribe to just the right journals. By relying on each other, we can provide our users with a deeper and richer collection than we ever could if we worked alone. Because ILL is so important, we have built systems, established standards, and created positions to share resources with other libraries. We value our common mission so much that we are willing to devote staff time and spend scarce resources to share with other libraries (and of course our own users benefit when another library does the same).

*Collaborative Librarianship* is a journal that celebrates this spirit of collaboration, explores how librarians cooperate through their home institutions, and hopefully suggests new ways to work together to better serve our users. As editors we are frequently asked by potential authors about what we are looking for, and our refrain is always that we want articles *about* collaboration. Not articles where libraries or librarians happen to work together, but articles where collaboration is the focus. We want to know why collaboration happens, why it is successful (or not), and how we can learn from those collaborative efforts. We do turn away submissions on a fairly

regular basis because while they document an effort that is collaborative, the overall case study or article does not delineate the actual acts of collaboration undertaken or evaluate why and how these efforts were successful or not.

In this issue, we have good examples of articles about collaboration. In our regular column "What Collaboration Means to Me" we ask librarians to reflect on the meaning of collaboration. This time, Lorcan Dempsey tackles that topic and subtiles his piece, "Library Collaboration is Hard; Effective Collaboration is Harder." He identifies four key challenges to library collaboration and suggests ways in which we can think more carefully about the right sorts of collaboration. We need to be better understand why collaborations sometimes fail to mature and succeed. There is much to learn from collaborations that do not fulfill their missions and intentions. In the other regular column, "Technology Matters," Lori Ayre and Jim Craner describe ways in which libraries can effectively work together to provide technical training to their users. Sometimes collaborations can be configured to be of specific intention and focus which in turn drives successful outcomes.

Our other articles -- on workflow for electronic theses and dissertations, by Rachel Paul and Cedar C. Middleton; A-Z list migration, by Kaily Brisbin, Melanie S. Parlette-Stewart, and Randy Oldham; cataloging, collection development, and marketing of graphic novels, by Wendy L. West and Rebecca A. Nous; and teaching information literacy to English language learners, by



Clara Y. Tran and Selenay Aytac -- provide valuable insights on those topics, but are equally valuable for what they tell us about models of collaboration within libraries and with other departments in higher education. All of these examples show how collaborations are investments that enrich everyone involved by the experience of collaboration.

We are always interested in learning more about collaboration and collaborative processes. Do you have stories from your own library about how you have collaborated with others? About why you chose to work together with another library or another department? About ways in which collaboration made a project more effective? We also want to hear about collaboration that is not effective, and provide examples of collaborations that fail to meet the collaborative goals undertaken. Many factors can lead to failures of collaboration: a lack of shared vision, under-funding of initiatives, or organizations developing beyond previously established shared goals.

Please share your stories about collaboration. This includes those examples of collaboration that does not fully succeed or achieve the intended outcomes. We are interested in exploring the collaborative processes librarians engage in from as many angles as possible. There are a number of ways in which collaboration is hard and becomes harder. Knowing when to walk away from a collaborative effort is as important as knowing when to enter into one. We would love to hear from you about your collaborative experiences.

