

Editorial

The last issue of *Library and Information Research* (100, April 2008) offered the reflections of a wide range of experts and opinion leaders in the library and information sphere on the past, present and future of research in the profession. In the current issue, this theme is developed further, notably through a combination of papers discussing topics such as research libraries (and their users) of the future; scholarly communication in the LIS field; methodological issues and approaches for researchers and practitioners in LIS; and new ways of reaching out to, and engaging with, the users of library and information services.

In an invited contribution following on from the papers in issue 100, Pat Gannon-Leary, Moira Bent and Jo Webb discuss their vision of the research library of the future: what will be the salient characteristics of its user base, and how this will impact on the professional role of those who work within? The authors note how the impact of new technologies and changes in teaching and learning methods have led to changes in the use of physical space in libraries. In response to such changes, they put forward ideas to assist research support librarians with planning spaces, marketing services and integrating user-centric Web 2.0 technologies into this brave new world. In noting, however, the ongoing demand from some sectors of the research community for the research library of the future to continue to offer an appropriate environment and physical resources for scholarly endeavour and reflection, there is much here to identify such services with John Feather's well-coined phrase of "continuity and change" (Feather, 2008).

Empirical research into the effects of motivation on the publication productivity of UK academic information scientists is discussed by Serena Ellerslie and Charles Oppenheim. Using the well-recognised motivational theories expounded by Maslow and by Herzberg as a framework for a survey investigating motivational levels and drivers of academics in the LIS field, they analysed their findings in correlation with publication and citation counts of the work of respondents as measures of the quality and quantity of their publication productivity. Demographic factors analysed included age, gender, caring responsibilities and hours spent per week on research as opposed to teaching. While the more cynical reader may not be surprised to learn that those likely to produce more publications were older males without caring responsibilities, it is interesting to note that there appears to be an optimum amount of time to spend per week on research: those spending *more* than 15 hours appeared to be *less* productive than those spending 6-15 hours. Of course, the authors themselves recognise the dangers of drawing unsubstantiated causal conclusions from their findings: but nevertheless, the study raises some interesting questions and suggests that this is an area ripe for further research.

Andrew Shenton's paper also focuses on the nature of scholarly communication, this time very much from the perspective of the new researcher or practitioner wanting to move into publication of their work. In discussing some of the more common frustrations experienced by writers in the process (for example, having to respond to reviewers' comments that either contradict each other, or that suggest inadequate understanding of the nature of your work), he offers some useful tips

to increase one's chances of emerging from the publishing minefield successful and (at least relatively) unscathed.

With regard to methodological considerations in LIS research, Kalyani Ankem evaluates the use of quantitative systematic reviews and meta-analyses in the LIS field. In contrast with the medical field, she notes that this is a relatively under-used approach, and indeed, where it has been adopted, it is invariably in the field of medical information or health librarianship. In part this is attributed to the difficulties inherent in synthesising results from studies that display "research question scatter" and therefore cannot be considered to be comparing like with like. However, she also makes a strident plea for more rigorous use of inferential statistics in the interpretation of such analyses.

Methodological approaches are also key to the paper by Jon Warwick, who discusses the potential applications of system dynamics to the solution of strategic management dilemmas in LIS practice. He describes the use of such an approach to model demand for learning resources in an academic library context, and demonstrates how it can be used to optimise decisions with regard to purchasing and loan policies. Finally, with the focus remaining on methods to aid the LIS practitioner in achieving strategic objectives, Tracey Marshall and Sharon Reid describe how the relatively simple approach of a user survey can accomplish the dual goals of collecting useful information on user needs and attitudes, whilst simultaneously marketing the services that university library subject teams are able to offer academic staff and thereby increase user engagement.

With the addition of reviews of recently published books on subjects such as leadership of library and information services, library instruction for distance learners, providing effective LIS services for researchers, and the use of virtual reference services, we believe that this issue of *Library and Information Research* offers much food for thought, whether readers are interested mainly in theoretical, methodological or practical research concerns. We hope you enjoy reading it and welcome your comments!

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References

Feather, J. (2008) *The information society: a study of continuity and change*. London: Facet.