Editorial

ELIP 2020: Stubbornly Social from a Distance

Writing this editorial has prompted me, perhaps foolishly, to try to make sense of a nonsensical year and to think about how the work we do in LIS can be understood alongside the changes and reckonings that have transformed the world in 2020. In searching for a through-line that connects September of 2019 to September 2020, I think back to different points in the making of ELIP 2020 and to the things that have shifted over the course of the year and the things, for better or worse, that have stayed the same.

It is an understatement to say that a lot has happened since the fall of 2019 when we put out a new call for submissions and started laying the groundwork for the third volume of the journal. In the months leading to 2020, we spoke to classes (full of students!) to spread the word about the journal, we hung posters throughout the FIMS building (unconcerned with how we moved through the building!), and I held ELIP office hours to meet with peers (no masks or distance!). I quickly learned what a wonderfully collaborative and social effort ELIP is and I found it energizing to talk to my MLIS colleagues about their research and to learn more about the potential for open access (OA) and libraries to jointly change the face of scholarly communication. ELIP's workflow became even more collaborative in the new year, when our editorial team began reviewing

the submissions and a crew of volunteers came together to tackle production work.

From September to early March, ELIP's collaborative work was firmly lodged in the FIMS Graduate Library—a home that bridges LIS research with the making and doing practice of librarianship and exists as a beloved community hub for FIMS' graduate students and faculty. Therefore, the closure of the FIMS Graduate Library and FIMS was for me and, I suspect, many others, one of the hardest parts of March's quarantine, and it was initially unclear to me how ELIP could maintain its momentum and collaborative drive virtually.

However, in the midst of all the uncertainty that we faced in March and April, it was quickly evident that the pandemic had not dissolved ELIP's devoted community of authors, reviewers, and editors. For so many this pandemic has been a time of disappointment and loss—of not getting to have the experiences and seize the opportunities that, prior to March, seemed like inevitabilities. Therefore, the moving-forward of ELIP and of all of the thinking, learning, and sharing that are poured into the journal was for me and many of the volunteers and authors who kept working on submissions through the spring and into the summer, a welcome continuation of pre-pandemic ideas and aspirations. It felt good to be able to hold onto

something familiar and forward-reaching, and to find meaning in this work.

Of course, it is MLIS student work—the emerging LIS thought and research—that lies at the heart of ELIP, and while it might seem like this body of work (all submitted prior to January) would have been untouched by the socio-cultural shifts that have occurred since then, I have not found this to be so. It is generally true that the significance of a text reveals itself the longer you live in it, but the effects of the pandemic and the powerful and persistent voices of local and global protestors have pressed us to look at everything through sharper lenses. In the context of a masked and physically distanced world which has experienced a profound laying bare of the white supremacy and stacked inequities that are so deeply entrenched in the structures of our institutions and the fabric of our every-day-lives, it is clear that we cannot read anything from the bubble that many within LIS had the luxury of existing in prior to March. Therefore, when I read these pieces now, I look more urgently for critical thought, innovation, and the creative imagining of other ways to do LIS, and I think that this spirit of questioning and reimagining runs through much of the work collected here.

The topics explored in this volume of ELIP are wide-ranging and indicative of the breadth of the field and of the diverse expertise and interests of FIMS' MLIS students; developments in public libraries, archives, academic libraries, scholarly communication, and news media are amongst the topics discussed. In spite of the broad scope of the topics explored, there is a frequent sense in

this work that LIS is a field in flux and that LIS practitioners have, in this moment, a unique opportunity—and a responsibility—to think carefully and critically about what path the field should take moving forward. This work ranges from a metaphysical analysis of library space (i.e., Stojanovic's "How Libraries make us Believe") to toolkits that LIS professionals can use to better serve their diverse patrons and enrich their collections (i.e., Forsythe's "Roll for Initiative" and Beier's "Teen Parents and the Public Library"). A number of these pieces take it as a given that LIS is never neutral and consider the ethical implications and values embedded in the decisions we make within different forms of LIS work (e.g., Allen's "Lessons in Labour," Melanson's "Towards Epistemic Justice," Ramos' "An Exploration of Canadian LIS Programs," and Hubert's "Transgender Representation"). In other works, we see sparks of innovation and adaptation, where established processes within LIS are reimagined and fresh approaches are offered (e.g., Chee's "Weeding the Web," Moffatt's "Practice Makes Perfect," and Moore's "The Enlightenment of Peer Review") and, in the context of societal and cultural change, new roles for libraries are identified (i.e., Nonkes' "When a Small Market Newspaper Closes"). Therefore, in reading through ELIP 2020, we are frequently asked to reflect upon the relationship between LIS' past—including its successes and failures—and the future that we are jointly working towards. Additionally, this volume includes reviews of useful resources (i.e., Li's "Omeka Classic vs. Omeka.net" and Moffatt's review of *The Future Academic Librarian's Toolkit*), an interview with an electronic resources and metadata librarian

(i.e., Moffatt and Brisbin's "Managing Transition and Change"), and reflections that offer insightful glimpses into the experiences our MLIS students have had working within LIS (e.g., Hem's "Transferable Skills in the Information Profession" and Mann's "Knowledge Management Practices in Public Libraries").

For ELIP, the through-line this year has been the persistence and dedication of its community, and I am grateful for everyone who kept working on it through this strange and difficult year. Authors, thank you for taking a risk and putting your ideas "out there" and choosing to include your thoughtful work in this volume of the journal, and thank you to the formidable team of reviewers, advisors, and production assistants for so generously taking the time to kindly and critically engage with the ideas embedded in this work. It is important to recognize that, as an OA publication, ELIP comes out of a huge cloud of volunteer labour

and is strengthened by the diverse skills that all of our collaborators bring. Thanks also to Marni Harrington, Melissa Seelye, and Kendall Sturgeon for your multifaceted and tireless work on the journal and the continuous support you provided to me and many others involved in ELIP throughout the year.

A new cycle of ELIP is about to begin and with it a fresh year of thinking and writing about LIS and questioning how it can be done better and more justly. Zora Neale Hurston once wrote that there are "years that ask questions and years that answer"; it seems clear that 2020 falls into the former category and so I look forward to seeing all of the future research, the collaborations, and the innovating in LIS that this big question mark of a year will undoubtedly launch.

-Sara Clarke, Managing Editor

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Reference

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