Celebrating 10 Years of Canadian Librarianship through the *Partnership Journal*

Guest Editorial by Jennifer Richard

Jennifer Richard is the founding Editor-in-Chief of the Partnership Journal. She held this position until 2010.

When I was asked to write the editorial for the Partnership Journal's tenth anniversary issue, my first reaction was "Wow, it's been ten years!" Then I thought, "Wow, it's still around ten years later!" This was followed by a feeling of immense pride and gratitude. Pride that was I involved in a truly long-lasting, successful endeavour that has contributed to the dissemination of research and practice within the Canadian library profession, and gratitude that it did so without me for the last five years. So often a project only lasts as long as the interest of its creator. An indicator of a really valuable venture is sustainability after the originators have moved on. This is the case of this journal—a credit to the members of the library community who participate in the success of the journal by thinking, writing, peer reviewing, editing, copyediting, creating the layout, proofreading, and reading it! This is true devotion to the Canadian library community and the profession.

In preparation for writing this editorial I reread all the past editorials from each issue. The first editorial (written by me!) describes the mandate of the journal:

The journal is an outlet for sharing innovations in the workplace and one of a very few Canadian venues for the much desired peer review status. In addition, the journal provides a chance for librarians and library workers to be editors, reviewers and writing coaches. Though of great importance to academic librarians, whose tenure or promotion often depends on peer review, this journal is in no way meant exclusively for academics: this is a journal for everyone (Richard, 2006).

The current Editor-in-Chief, Robin Bergart, referenced this quote in last issue's editorial in an effort to start asking questions about where have we been and where are we headed at the ten year mark. She wrote:

How well has this mission been fulfilled? Ten years later, how well does this mission still fit? Is there still a place for a generalist LIS journal in today's diffuse, and often very specialized, information landscape? How important is a Canadian journal in a globalized world? Is the function and role of a traditional LIS journal changing in a world of Twitter, SlideShare, and WordPress? (Bergart, 2015).

Though I can't answer all of these questions, I would like to share some thoughts about the journal on this important anniversary.

What Went Right?

We started out with a very strong mandate to be a gold standard open access publication and we remain that now with no embargoes, lots of content, rigorous peer review, no advertising, and no paid staff members. That is an enormous accomplishment in itself.

In the early days of the journal, I wrote the editorials to clearly emphasize the mandate. I explained why the journal was open access and addressed potential misconceptions about open access publishing. I wrote about the importance and value of conscientious peer reviewing. The journal supports and encourages authors while maintaining a high quality peer reviewing process.

Though I mainly used my editorials to highlight the issue's content and to express my appreciation for the hard work of the editorial team, I also sometimes took the opportunity to give my opinion on "hot" topics. Two of my early editorials that generated substantial reader comments addressed topics dear to me: the crisis in academic librarianship and the future of the Canadian Library Association. At the end of 2010, I said goodbye and expressed my immense gratitude to the many people who had inspired me and had worked hard to make the journal successful.

A very accomplished researcher and recently retired University of Saskatchewan librarian, David Fox, took over as Editor-in-Chief in 2011. At the fifth anniversary mark, David made a significant change by introducing a continuous publication model so that articles are made accessible as soon as they are completed. David also had a strong interest in analytics. He notes in his 2012 editorial that by that date, "238 different authors have contributed 279 articles to the journal. These articles have been accessed collectively over 270,000 times" (Fox, 2012).

Other changes over the years have been a switch from MLA to APA style and the elimination of HTML versions of articles which were extremely time consuming and often problematic to create. Citation counts were added as a feature to the journal's navigation bar. David also increased the size of the editorial team by hiring new copyeditors, a necessity for the new continuous publishing model. David Fox stepped down as Editor-in-Chief at the end of 2014.

What Went Not So Right?

In the early days of the journal there was a great deal of talk around the Partnership table about mentorship, particularly in the area of encouraging librarians to do research and share current practices. It was hoped that through the journal a writing coach mentorship program would be created, perhaps in conjunction with Canadian library schools. Unfortunately that didn't happen. There was so much work to do to just get the

journal up and running that this initiative fell through the cracks. Starting a new journal involved many activities and issues such as setting up and managing the website, indexing, promotions, copyright licensing, and recruiting and training new editorial team members.

One of the original hopes for this journal was that it would generate some revenue for the member library associations of the Partnership. This never happened and I don't necessarily think that it is a bad thing. There would be a great deal of additional volunteer time and effort involved in incorporating advertising into the journal.

Content Analysis

The journal has published 409 articles with content from three continents (North America, Africa, and Europe). The majority of the articles have come from nine of the ten provinces and three territories with the Ontario library community submitting 47% of the articles (excluding book reviews, profiles and news). The journal does accept both French and English submissions, however only about 1% of the articles are written in French. Progress has recently been made to include abstracts and keywords in both languages. Approximately 27% of the articles (110) were double-blinded peer reviewed, over 87 books were reviewed, and the journal has ventured into multimedia with video content. Sixty-eight percent of articles (excluding book reviews, profiles and news) are focused on academic libraries and 15% focus on public libraries. The founding editorial team expected that contributions from the academic sector would be prominent, given the requirement of many academic librarians to research and publish.

Robin Bergart asked “*How well has [our] mission been fulfilled? Ten years later, how well does this mission still fit?*” A pictorial word analysis illustrates that the mission has been fulfilled and still fits: it is a journal for everyone.

Figure 1. All keywords/topics from 2006-2015 with no weighting.

This illustration was created by using one instance of all of the keywords used to describe articles from the Innovations in Practice, Theory and Research, Conference Spotlight, Professional Development, and Viewpoints sections of the journal.

Figure 2. All keywords/topics from 2006-2015 with weighting.

In this illustration, keywords that appear most frequently are larger. Professional development, information literacy, and academic and public libraries stand out in the content of the past ten years

Figure 3. Weighted keyword analysis of the first issue published in 2006.

Figure 4. Weighted keyword analysis of the previous issue published in 2015.

The previous two figures illustrate the difference in keywords between the first issue and the most recent issue. Perhaps because it was one of only two gold standard open access Canadian library journals at the time, it's not surprising the open access would be a pertinent topic in 2006. The first few issues seem to focus more on technology and innovations, while the most recent issue has more of a focus on the social and social sciences.

What Now?

I think it is clear, without question, we have successfully met the mandate and mission of what was set out at the Partnership meeting in 2005. In my opinion the journal continues to publish high quality articles on a wide variety of topics. To answer Robin's third question "*Is there still a place for a generalist LIS journal in today's diffuse, and often very specialized, information landscape?*" I would still say yes, I think it is still important to have not just a Canadian journal, but a journal that is connected to your provincial and territorial associations because it gives the research a sense of ownership and a sense of accessibility for those whom may still be hesitant about publishing for the first time.

Robin's last question "*Is the function and role of a traditional LIS journal changing in a world of Twitter, SlideShare, and WordPress?*" is the most difficult to answer. In 2006 an online-only, open access library journal was novel, but as the entire publishing industry evolves, the editorial team should strive to look to the cutting edge once again. But I'll leave that to Robin and the editorial team to figure out! Best of luck with continued success of the journal in whatever form it may take and congratulations to everyone on the tenth anniversary!

Jennifer Richard