PARTNERSHIP

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Editorial

Charting the course of *Partnership*

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Partnership launched in 2006 as “an outlet for sharing innovations in the workplace and one of a very few Canadian venues for the much desired peer review.... [However, it is] in no way meant exclusively for academics: this is a journal for everyone” (Richard, 2006).

A decade into this project, we wanted to know: What does Partnership mean to the Canadian LIS community today?

Last year we circulated a [survey](#) to try to find out. We asked a range of questions about respondents’ reading and publishing habits in general, and about their perceptions of our journal in particular.

We had over 400 responses from librarians, technicians, administrators, board members, academics, and students across Canada. Almost half of the respondents work in academic libraries, but we also heard from the public, health, college, school, and government library sectors. Approximately half of the respondents have been working in libraries for over 11 years. The other half divided about equally between 0-5 and 6-10 years into their careers. We heard equally from respondents who were very familiar with the journal, somewhat familiar, or not familiar at all.

Here we present some of the major findings from this survey, as well as some of the Editorial Team’s initial actions in response to these findings. The [full data set](#) is also available for curious readers.

A Canadian voice is very important

Respondents told us that the Canadian angle of our journal means something to them. They also value the variety and open access nature of the content. Other dissenting voices told us that the journal was too generic and added nothing to the already

fragmented LIS publishing scene. Overall, we were surprised by how much Canadian content and context is meaningful in a globalized information world. Readers similarly value that *Partnership* is open access, which is not taken for granted in LIS publishing.

In response, we have clarified the mandate of the journal in this vision statement:

Partnership is the journal of “Partnership,” Canada’s national network of provincial and territorial library associations.

Partnership promotes the exchange of ideas about libraries, librarianship, and information science among practitioners across all library sectors. We are a Canadian, open access journal publishing double-blind peer-reviewed research and editorially-reviewed articles and opinion pieces.

What kind of journal title is Partnership?

While many respondents liked the friendly, collaborative, community-oriented connotations of “partnership,” many others told us the name is banal (“vague nearly to the point of meaninglessness”), confusing (“I did not know it was a library journal”), or misleading (“sounds like a trade magazine for wedding officiants”). Several said the title does not connote a serious peer-reviewed journal.

The journal, as many do not realize, is named for [The Partnership](#), a network of the provincial and territorial library associations. We have decided to retain the journal’s title to preserve its ties with The Partnership and to maintain continuity in the cataloguing and indexing of the journal.

How could Partnership improve (besides changing its name)?

Respondents told us the journal could improve its impact and relevance by publishing more frequently and by promoting itself more widely. Respondents felt one of the journal’s biggest liabilities is lack of name recognition, which may be improved through more frequent publication and promotion. We noticed a great divide between respondents who thought the standards of acceptance should be more rigorous, and those who wanted us to abandon the peer review process altogether. We also heard that the peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed sections on the website could be more clearly distinguished from one another.

We are working to improve name recognition of the journal through greater presence at library conferences and on social media. We are not currently considering increasing the number of issues per year; however, this decision could be revisited. We are firmly committed to continuing to publish peer-reviewed articles. We are exploring ways to make the distinctions between the sections clearer.

Why do Canadian LIS practitioners choose Partnership to disseminate their writing and research?

According to the respondents of this survey, the most important factors in deciding to submit a manuscript to this journal are that we are Canadian, open access, and peer-reviewed. Subject area compatibility and journal reputation were slightly less important. Very few cited a colleague's recommendation as a factor, or perceiving that the journal has a high acceptance rate.

How important is the "traditional" journal for Canadian LIS practitioners today?

The survey responses suggest that the traditional journal is still alive and well as a publication format for readers and contributors to the LIS literature. We asked, "**Which types of LIS literature do you read or engage with most frequently?**" Listservs, journals, and blogs came out on top, followed by social media, webinars, conferences, newsletters, books, magazines, and reports. However, journals are less frequently a source of information for early career practitioners than those with over 11 years of experience.

Figure 1. Engagement with LIS literature, by format.

We also asked, "**What are your preferred places for publishing your work or disseminating knowledge about LIS?**" Journals, conferences, social media, and blogs ranked at the top of the list as preferred outlets. Once again, early career practitioners are not choosing journal publication as frequently as more established practitioners.

Figure 2. Dissemination preferences, by format

We acknowledge that we did not achieve a statistically representative response to our survey; however, the responses do indicate some of the real achievements and areas for improvement a decade into the life of the journal.

Thank you to all of our readers, contributors, and others who took the time to participate in our survey. Thank you also to the 19 LIS library leaders across Canada who agreed to an interview before we launched our survey. These interviews helped us narrow the frame of our research and formulate our survey.

Reference

Richard, J. (2006). [Welcome to Partnership](#). *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library & Information Practice and Research*, 1(1).