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Don's Conference Notes-At the Helm: Leading Transformation-The 2017 ACRL Conference

Donald T. Hawkins
dthawkins@verizon.net

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Don's Conference Notes

by **Donald T. Hawkins** (Freelance Conference Blogger and Editor) <dthawkins@verizon.net>

At The Helm: Leading Transformation — The 2017 ACRL Conference

Column Editor's Note: Because of space limitations, this is an abridged version of my report on this conference. You can read the full article which includes descriptions of additional sessions at http://www.against-the-grain. com/2017/06/v29-3-dons-conference-notes/. — DTH

The 2017 conference of the **Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)** drew a record number of attendees — over 3,500 (5,000 including exhibitor personnel) — to Baltimore, MD on March 22-25. There were over 1,200 first-time attendees and 300 virtual attendees.
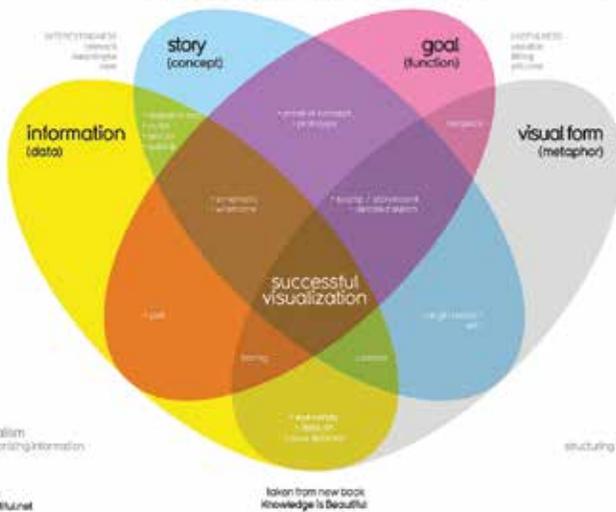
Opening Keynote

David McCandless, author of *Knowledge is Beautiful* (HarperCollins, 2014) and *The Visual Miscellaneum* (HarperCollins, 2009) presented an excellent keynote address, accompanied by numerous examples of fascinating visualizations.

He noted that information and data are beautiful and perhaps are a new kind of material. Numbers are constantly emerging into our world and must be visualized to be understood. What makes a good visualization? Here is **McCandless's** opinion — visualized, of course.

David McCandless

Time lines are excellent visualizations of the patterns and stories that lurk in the data. This one shows that fear is responsible for large number of media stories.
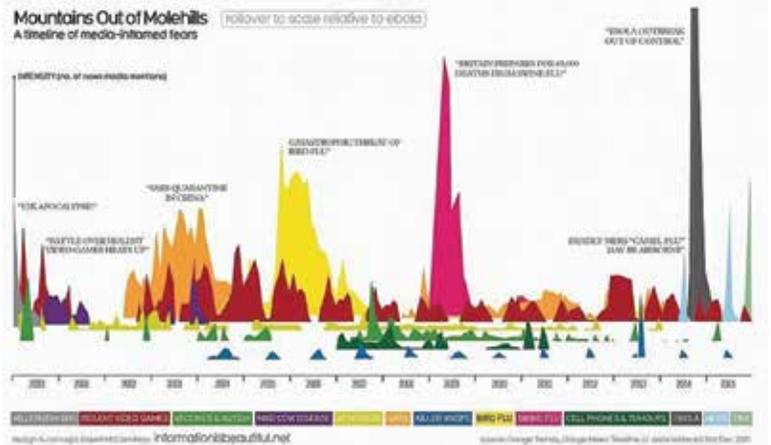
Because of our exposure to an information design medium — the Internet — we have become trained to receive information visually. There is so much knowledge in the world; what else can you do but manipulate it? For many other examples of visualization, see **McCandless's** website, *http://www.informationisbeautiful.net*.

Closing Keynote

The much anticipated closing keynote featured **Carla Hayden**, who became the 14th Librarian of Congress on September 14, 2016. Formerly CEO of the **Enoch Pratt Free Library** in Baltimore and a former president of **ALA**, she is the first woman and the first African American to hold the position.

Hayden became well known for her actions when she kept a local branch of the library open during the unrest in Baltimore in 2015, and it

Carla Hayden

became a symbol of stability. She began her keynote address by thanking **ACRL** for not moving its conference out of Baltimore.

During **Hayden's** confirmation hearings, many of the people she met said that libraries do matter, which caused her to think about how she could serve as the Librarian of Congress. She said that in thinking about the **Library of Congress (LC)**, she sometimes has "pinch me" moments when she reflects on the fact that **LC** has 162 million items and bookshelves that would stretch from Washington, DC to Davenport, IA. She is trying to make the Library relevant and wants to partner with all librarians. Can we make sure that everyone can see its treasures, which will mean that it is more physically accessible and more things are live streamed during its "Live at the Library" programs?

We librarians are the original search engine. We went into the field of librarianship and we are the trusted source because we believe that connecting people with the right information at the right time can make a difference. That is our strength and we should revel in it. Some people think of us as guides on the side; we should be guides out in

front! Let us claim the moment and say that we are librarians. There is no shame in saying that!

Scholarly Communication

Publishing Without Walls — A new digital publishing initiative funded by the **Mellon Foundation**, Publishing Without Walls (PWW),[1] has recently begun at the **University of Illinois**. A partnership between the University Library, iSchool, Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, and Department of African American Studies, it will seek to understand the needs of scholars in a contemporary environment, particularly how they want to produce and consume digital publications. Two series of projects have been established: Humanities Without Walls Global Midwest (HWW) and AFRO-PWW, which focuses on African American Studies.

The majority of scholars are generally comfortable using word processing software, but only 21% of them are comfortable with text markup languages, so it was decided to base the PWW project on a Word-based workflow. The strategies and priorities of the project are:

- Outreach and education,
- Production and workflows, and
- Research and education.

The Research Lifecycle — A study at **Cornell University Library** looked at the research lifecycle and how libraries can support it.

Academic libraries have traditionally focused on the acquisition and searching for information, but they also can have a role in researchers' other activities:

- Managing the flow of information and writing papers,
- Searching for information, which is the most common task for all researchers,
- "Brain work": thinking, understanding, and figuring things out,
- Self-discipline: tools used to curb and manage interruptions, and

*The Research Lifecycle
(Photo courtesy of Erin Eldermire)*

- Technology, which is used in all environments and maintains the flow of work.

Students' Information Literacy Skills — **Candice Benjes-Small**, Head, Information Literacy & Outreach, **Radford University (RU)**, wondered if students' information literacy skills improve over time. She and her colleagues analyzed citations in papers written by seniors and compared them with those in papers written by first-year students. In general, the first-year students used more popular and general sources, and seniors used a wider variety of sources. There was not much difference between the two groups in the use of quotations and paraphrasing. In departments where information literacy was rigidly enforced and taught by library staff, students showed more sophisticated use of sources; the conclusion was that **RU** and the library in particular added value to students' information literacy skills.

Library Operations and Services

"Let Me Learn" or "Just Give Me the Answer": Research Consultations and Mindsets — We want to provide assistance to our students and better understand their motivations to doing their research and consulting librarians for assistance. **Carol Dweck**, a professor of psychology at **Stanford University**, has promulgated a theory of "mindsets" which can be applied to students and research consultations. **Dweck** identified two types of mindsets: *growth mindsets* result in achievements based on hard work; *fixed mindsets* are based on natural ability.

A study by librarians at several universities explored the goals of students who met with librarians for research consultations. The efforts of librarians seem to improve academic performance; however, a growth mindset does not necessarily lead to a performance orientation. A study of about 100 students who came to the library for consultations led to new ways of thinking about how they approach the research process, their expectations of receiving help from an information professional, and how librarians could approach research consultations differently for students with a fixed mindset.

Open Access (OA) and Decision Making — How can we use the level of OA to make journal decisions? According to **Kristin Antelman**, University Librarian at the **California Institute of Technology (Caltech)**, many journals are openly available, so the value of subscription-only journals is declining. Publishers are concerned that OA allows cancellation of OA journals (for which there is a charge) to cut costs, and there is still a significant resistance to the idea of using OA as a factor in journal cancellation decisions.

Altmetrics

Metrics Selection in the Research Lifecycle — How can librarians select the best metrics to use in the research lifecycle to help satisfy a user's needs? Articles are not the only things that can be measured; for example, for books, one could not only derive metrics for the chapters in the book but could ask questions such as:

- How many libraries hold this book?
- How many Wikipedia articles mention the book?
- What do Amazon's reviews say about the book?
- For eBooks, how many abstract views, downloads, and clicks did this book get?

The "Golden Rules" of research metrics are to always use qualitative and quantitative input decisions, and to always use more than one metric as the quantitative input.

Bibliometric Services at the NIH Library — An illustration of the use of metrics is in the services offered by the library of the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**, where bibliometrics are used in consultation (study designs, etc.), training in bibliometric theory, and conducting analyses on research topics. Analysis categories include publication counts to determine the productivity of an organization, research topics, and citation impact.

Metrics for Research Impact — To determine research impact, we need to understand the numbers and look at the metrics in an appropriate context. For example, we need to recognize that journal impact factors can be manipulated and can skew citation count distributions.[2] And papers might be cited for other reasons than acknowledging influence (to point out errors, etc.). Therefore, it is important not only to put metrics in context but to use metrics closest to the impact you wish to document.

The Altmetrics Way of Measuring Scholarly Impact — Altmetrics can be used to supplement traditional ways of scholarly impact, which frequently revolve around citation counts. Altmetrics have the advantage that they become available much faster than citation data. An article's

New Era of Personalized Medicine — as well as co-author with Nobel laureate **Jim Watson** of an updated edition of *DNA: The Story of the*

Genetic Revolution. In April of this year, **Davies** won a prestigious **Guggenheim Fellowship** for science writing. "I am delighted to be joining the **Mary Ann Liebert team**," said **Davies**. "I have long admired the company's penchant for identifying emerging areas of science and medicine, and sought to emulate the longstanding success of *Genetic*

Altmetric Attention Score (AAS) is based on several factors such as mentions in blogs, tweets, on Facebook, etc. and is a measure of the impact an article has had and how much attention it has received. Here is a view of the AAS for a typical article.

and determined the number of times they were cited in Google Scholar, which showed him the hot topics being investigated by **York** researchers and the top journals in which they published their results. Not many researchers were aware of altmetrics, but they were especially interested to find the mentions of their work in the news media. Not only did **Nariani's** efforts reflect positively on the library; they were also used in teaching students.
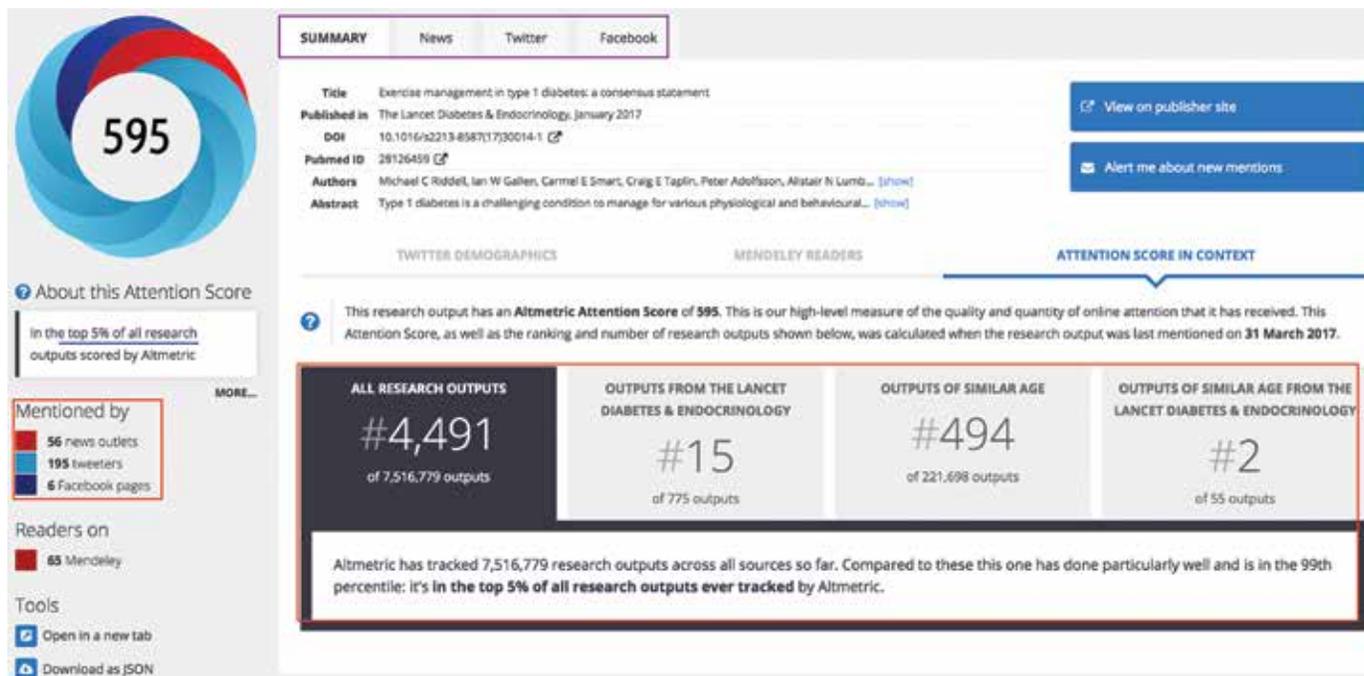

Photo courtesy of Rajiv Nariani

Rajiv Nariani, Science Librarian at **York University**, looked at articles published by **York** faculty members that had the highest AASs and told them how the scores compared with those of other articles. The data were obtained from an affiliation searches in PubMed and on Altmetric Explorer for Librarians.[3]

Makerspaces

New Literacies for Academic Library Makerspaces — Because of the technologies in makerspaces, librarians need new skills to run them, and they need to teach students about them as well. At the **University of Nevada-Reno**, the library offered

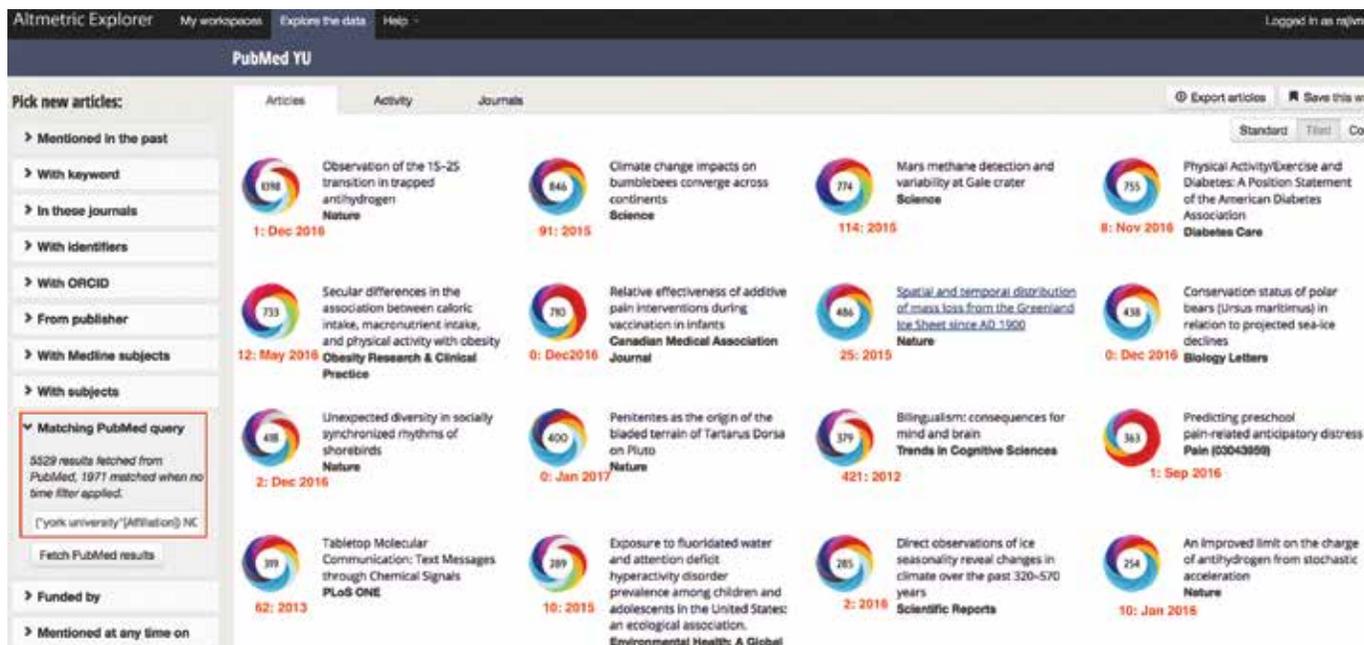

Photo courtesy of Rajiv Nariani

The faculty members were very happy to receive this data and said good things about the library. **Nariani** also looked at the same articles

courses in Photoshop, 3D printing and modeling, and related skills.

The most popular program was the "Tech Wrangler," which provides consultation to individual students using reference interviewing skills. The Tech Wrangler sessions were very popular because they dealt with a wide variety of equipment. Online courses were offered through *Lynda.com*; the most popular one was "Fundamentals of Programming," which was viewed for 735 hours during 2016 and completed by 91 students. The online courses are popular because they can be accessed on the student's own time and schedule. The number of consultations and online tutorial users continues to increase.

Makerspace or Waste of Space? A Course for Successful Academic Library Makerspaces — A panel of speakers from **Radford University** studied makerspaces and what makes them successful. They said that a makerspace is a place for people to make things using tools or equipment that would be too expensive for them to have in their homes. But it is also a gathering place for people with similar interests.[4]

Before setting up a makerspace, consider these questions:
- Will it meet an expressed need?
- Are there maker communities in campus departments?
- Can dedicated staff be hired?
- Is there space in the library for the makerspace to be visible?
- Can users be given free rein to experiment (after training)?

Predatory Publishers and Piracy

Everything You Wanted to Know About Predatory Publishing but Were Afraid to Ask — **Monica Berger**, Assistant Professor at **New York College of Technology** said that predatory publishing is slippery and controversial, just like fake news. Many predatory publishers create a venue for the lowest tier of scholars and are mostly interested in money. Aspects of predatory journals include promise of rapid publication, copycat journal names close to those of legitimate journals, creative bibliometrics, and the use of forms for contact instead of email addresses.

India accounts for 35% of the predatory authors, followed by 16% from Africa. Frequently, authors in those countries are pressured to publish in predatory journals. Operations of predatory publishers were exposed in a well-known sting operation conducted by **John Bohanon**, a correspondent for *Science* magazine, who sent a spoof article to over 300 OA journals, and over half of them accepted it without any peer review.[5]

What can authors do about predatory publishing? **Berger** suggested educating the user community, working with strategic partners, presenting workshops on evaluating journals, and working with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)[6] and Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC).[7] Trustworthy OA publishers are listed in the *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ)[8] and by the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA).[9]

Walking the Plank: How Scholarly Piracy Affects Publishers, Libraries, and Their Users — The rise of pirate sites is changing how researchers find and share scholarly content, which is affecting users, licensing agreements, and publishers. Publishers are becoming more restrictive. The entertainment industry has long dealt with piracy and might provide some examples for the information industry; the major difference is that entertainers are paid to publish, but students are not. Sharing results is a standard practice for researchers, and some systems facilitating sharing have existed for several years.

Sci-Hub has become a game changer and has downloaded over 50 million articles using proxy credentials gained from known-item searches on subscription databases. The originator, **Alexandra Elbakyan**, a student in Kazakhstan, has been called the "Robin Hood of Science," and she was sued by **Elsevier** and **Wiley** in 2015. Although the publishers won the suit and Sci-Hub was taken down, it promptly reappeared. (For more on Sci-Hub, see the following summary.)

Here are some suggested implications and actions that libraries could take to combat piracy:
- Educate ourselves and our users.
- Make content easy to find and use.
- Support a diverse and equitable publishing system.

Publishers are very worried and concerned. Even if researchers download only a few articles, they often appear somewhere else, which publishers call "the long slow leave." Some users think that libraries should champion the use of Sci-Hub as a viable way to access information; libraries are thus in a very uncomfortable position.

Shadow Libraries and You: Sci-Hub Usage and the Future of ILL — Sci-Hub, founded in 2011, uses logins to find articles on LibGen. The 2015 lawsuit by **Elsevier** resulted in a flurry of media attention, so the speakers in this session conducted a study of the effect of Sci-Hub downloads on ILL transactions. No significant correlations were found.

Sci-Hub usage is widespread but very uneven; 10 cities accounted for half of the downloads, suggesting that there are a relatively small number of Sci-Hub power users in the U.S. The number correlates with the total number of faculty members, students, and library expenditures at their institutions. Four of the top 10 most active IP addresses account for 13% of all Sci-Hub downloads.

Unusual and Non-Traditional Library Activities

Academic libraries are moving beyond their traditional activities and developing spaces for other uses to meet students' needs not related to information. These talks described some of these activities.

From Makerspace to Mind Spa — Stress from a variety of sources is widespread and creating anxious students. Higher education has neglected the whole person by failing to integrate the inner and outer life; traditional education emphasizes rational objective thinking, but there is also a need to nurture a student's mind, body, and spirit, not just the intellect.

Academic libraries are starting to express these needs by creating spaces for meditation, reflection, and contemplation to provide refuge and relief from stressful and harried lives. **Brian Quinn**, Social Sciences Librarian at **Texas Tech University Libraries**, rhetorically asked "Why academic libraries?" His answer is, "Why not?" — Libraries have traditionally been places for reading, writing, and reflection; many users understand this and seek out the library to recharge and revitalize.

Emily Daly, Head of Assessment and User Experience at **Duke University**, noted that in surveys, students expressed a need for these services; the top thing mentioned was adequate quiet study space. Some campus groups (i.e., Muslim students) also wanted similar spaces in which to pray several times daily. A space was created for them without spending any additional funds; the administration even placed a sign in the prayer room indicating the direction of Mecca so that students could face it when they prayed.

Lessons learned:
- Connect to institutional values,
- Identify campus partners,
- Take advantage of local expertise,
- Involve students from the start, and
- Be patient and persistent.

Daly also urged anyone considering establishing such spaces not to forget that library staff also has needs in this area; the head of HR at **Duke** has long wanted to cater to staff members' needs so people will not get sick as often because of stress.

At **Pennsylvania State University** at Hazleton, a unique "Meditation Corner" was created, and a poster by two **Penn State** librarians entitled "Within This Hallowed Hallway" reporting on a survey of formal and informal prayer spaces in libraries found that such spaces are not currently widespread.

More than Just Play: Board Game Collections in Academic Libraries — Another method of stress relief and relaxation is becoming more common in academic libraries: playing board games.

Sources of information on games in libraries include:
- **ALA's** Games & Gaming Roundtable (GamesRT)[10] that provides a venue for librarians to share their experiences. Libraries are encouraged to participate in International Games Week,[11] which takes place this year on Oct. 29 to Nov. 4.
- Local institutions such as public libraries can help academic libraries that want to start a game collection. Community gaming clubs and game shops are also resources.

• Donations from students and board game companies can be a resource for collections.

A significant problem is that pieces, cards, or even entire games can go missing. It is useful to have spare sets of dice on hand. 3D printing can help recreate missing pieces. It is worthwhile contacting the game producer; they might be willing to supply a missing piece or even a free copy of the game because they know that people check them out to try and see if they want to buy them.

Some libraries store their games in a Media Center where there is already a process for circulating various objects, and some charge for loans (up to three days at $5/day, for example). Games are not permitted to circulate via ILL. To detect missing pieces, libraries can weigh the boxes before and after they are circulated. Directions for games can often be found on the manufacturer's website. It is important to have a diverse collection of games (card games, board games, party games, etc.) and buy ones in which students are interested.

Midterms and finals are stressful times for students and are excellent opportunities to introduce them to a game collection. Money from book sales or year-end surpluses can be used to buy games without impacting the book budget. Some games may not circulate frequently; there is no need to worry about that because they do not take up much space in the library.

The **ACRL Conference** was large and extremely useful. Many other sessions could not be described here because of space limitations, as well as many poster sessions held during refreshment breaks in the exhibit hall. And of course, the exhibits presented a range of products and services of interest. Proceedings of the conference are on the **ACRL** website.[12] The next **ACRL Conference** will occur on April 10-13, 2019 in Cleveland, OH. 🌳

Donald T. Hawkins is an information industry freelance writer based in Pennsylvania. In addition to blogging and writing about conferences for Against the Grain, he blogs the Computers in Libraries and Internet Librarian conferences for Information Today, Inc. (ITI) and maintains the Conference Calendar on the ITI Website (http://www.infotoday.com/calendar.asp). He is the Editor of Personal Archiving: Preserving Our Digital Heritage, (Information Today, 2013) and Co-Editor of Public Knowledge: Access and Benefits (Information Today, 2016). He holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of California, Berkeley and has worked in the online information industry for over 45 years.

Endnotes

1. *http://publishingwithoutwalls.illinois.edu*

2. **Douglas K. Arnold** and **Christine K. Fowler**, "Nefarious Numbers," *Notices of the American Mathematical Society*, volume 58, issue 3, pages 434-7, 2011.

3. *https://www.altmetric.com/products/free-tools/*

4. See the presentation by **John Burke** at **ACRL 2015** entitled "Making Sense: Can Makerspaces Work in Academic Libraries?" and the references cited there.

5. **John Bohanon**, "Who's Afraid of Peer Review?," *Science*, volume 342, issue 6154, pages 60-65, October 4, 2013.

6. *https://publicationethics.org/*

7. *https://sparcopen.org/who-we-are/*

8. *https://doaj.org/*

9. *http://oaspa.org/*

10. *http://www.ala.org/gamert/*

11. *http://games.ala.org/international-games-week-2017/*

12. *http://www.ala.org/acrl/conferences/acrl2017/papers*

The Future of Academic Libraries
A Conversation with John Palfrey and David Lewis

A large overflow crowd gathered to hear a conversation with **John Palfrey**, formerly Executive Director of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at **Harvard** and now Head, **Phillips Academy**; and **David Lewis**, Dean of the University Library at **Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis**, discussing the future of academic libraries. **Palfrey** is co-author of *Biblio Tech* (Basic Books, 2015), and **Lewis** is author of *Reimagining the Academic Library* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).* **Loretta Parham**, CEO and Director, **Atlanta University Center Woodruff Library** moderated the discussion. Here are the questions posed to the two authors, for the full transcript containing their responses, see the online version of this article at ***http://www.against-the-grain.com/2017/06/v29-3-dons-conference-notes-sidebar/***.

Why did you write your most recent book and how have readers reacted to it?

Many libraries are deep into the planning of resources to respond to consumer demands for data, so there is a need to focus on the "adaptive expertise." How would you interpret that?

We are an aging population. What do you say about the future when the demographics are going to shift so dramatically?

How can our LIS schools respond? Can they meet this change?

You are not a librarian, but in your book you accuse librarians of not being risk takers. Can you explain that?

Time compression is changing our users' lives. A person's needs are now a moving target. That may give us the appearance of not being as quick to respond as we may think.

Another comment in your book is that we need to accept lower levels of service. What do you mean by that?

In the digital world, one of the challenges we have is that we do not have a clear standard. Until we reach the "ultimate small storage item," what do we do?

Some faculty members want nothing to change. Have you been involved with those types of people?

Enrollment in library schools has been declining since the last recession. It is very difficult to get students to take courses on academic library management. So we are forced to teach what students want, not what they need. I never had that much choice about what to take. For any student is seeking to gain knowledge, it is important to change the curriculum so the important courses are in the students' path, not on the side as an option. What do you feel about this?

Many of the things you need are not coming from an MLS degree.

Do you think there are traditional library values that we need to let go of, or do we keep the traditional ones and find new ways to meet them?

When resources have been decreased, what are collaboration trends?

David, you talk about a "united way" of infrastructure.

What is the scale of collaboration that we can reach?

What is your wildest idea for advancing the library's role in education and keeping up with our competitors?

What would you write about next if you were writing a book tomorrow?

We all face having the provost, president, and donors ask why we need a library. What is the takeaway statement in terms of the future?

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* For a review of **Lewis's** book, see *Information Today*, Volume 34, Issue 3, page 18.