

Editorial

Collaboration is a fundamental value in the practice of librarianship, and it is not a new concept or a new phenomenon. Libraries around the world have enjoyed a remarkable history of working together. Collaboration is at the heart of libraries and the core mission of a library is to provide access to information by bringing together a scope of resources and services pertinent to end-users. The present contexts of collaboration in other sectors of society, of a growing literature on collaborative management theory and practice, of the Colorado experience in library collaboration, constitute fertile soil that nurtures new initiatives in collaboration. The remarkable history of library cooperation, the present exigencies for broader partnerships and creative networking, and the new modes of collaboration required to meet the needs and interests of the 21st-century academy and public square, lead to collaborative librarianship.

Collaborative librarianship values and promotes thorough understanding, reasonable judgment, and wise action. It takes many forms, from in-house to consortia cooperatives and beyond. In the development both of resources and the provision of services, partnerships are crucially important, whether formal or informal and in their other myriad manifestations. The emerging concept of collaborative librarianship advances an understanding of the principles of why and how organizations and persons work together to achieve the desired goals effectively. Collaboration may be accomplished formally on a wider scale through rather sophisticated interlibrary loan agreements and delivery systems.

On a more elaborate level, even wider access to resources is achieved through extensive collaborative partnerships, consortium licenses, joint service programs, and shared web-based technologies. Collaborative librarianship encourages and supports the expansion of partnerships within the library world, promotes library networking, cooperation and partnerships in new ways and explores exemplars of collaboration, and probes the challenges encountered. This collaboration must be a redefining principle of libraries in the 21st century at a local, national and global level.

It is a transformational period that requires innovation and risk. If we are in a transformational period that will lead to a fundamental and substantive change in librarianship, academic libraries increasingly become multi-institutional entities, and this is true for all types of libraries including school libraries, public libraries, special, academic,

corporate, or most any other type of library. As LIS professionals, we need to address explicitly, extensively, and creatively a broad array of issues and challenges that face librarianship today. Increasingly, libraries are moved to seek partnerships with other libraries, with other organizations in the information and technology fields, with other entities in our institutions, and with other groups and enterprises in our communities.