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The *Substance Abuse Library and Information Studies* is the eProceedings of the 40th Annual Conference, entitled *Never Neutral: Resistance, Persistence, Insistence*, organized by the Substance Abuse Librarians and Information Specialists (SALIS) partnering with the Association of Mental Health Librarians in Berkeley, CA, May 1-4, 2018.

SALIS is an international association of individuals and organizations with special interests in the exchange and dissemination of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) information (salis.org).

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Pebbles, rocks, and milestones
The librarian as an intellectual

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When a pebble is dropped into a calm pond, the ripple effect is quite distinctly visible in the form of concentric circles – that is, in calm waters. Substance-abuse librarians and information specialists are not just the dependable rocks who anchor research in tradition; we also play a dynamic part in shaping the field, whether visible or not – dropping pebbles into the calm ponds, murky waters, and vast oceans of addiction studies for over forty years.

The 2018 Annual Conference entitled “Never Neutral: Resistance, Persistence, Insistence” held jointly with the Association of Mental Health Librarians on May 1-4 in Berkeley, California marked an important milestone in the life of SALIS as an organization: this was the 40th conference when SALIS professionals gathered to celebrate, exchange ideas, and strengthen relationships.

Combining two small organizations to hold a joint conference was a great initiative and rewarding in so many ways. Gaining insight into problems of colleagues and institutions not only helps us find out that we are not alone but, eventually, might bring us closer to solutions. We have no choice but to recognize that we are not working in our silos any more. A professional organization has the potential to add value for its members along with their host organizations and means so much more than simply helping each other with occasional article requests or answering tough reference questions.

As is unfortunately the case each year, many SALIS members missed the opportunity to travel to California and participate in person. For those grappling with the feeling of being left out in the era of constant connectedness, the current issue of the Substance Abuse
Library and Information Studies aims to provide a glimpse of the scholarly activities at the conference, complementing the colorful reports in SALIS News and slides on the SALIS website. The metaphor of concentric circles passably describes the ultimate goal of the presentations, that is, to show how the work of information professionals and/or policy makers intersects with “what can only be described as an assault on facts, privacy, and access to information resources.” Small pebbles into a cloudy ocean, words uttered in the conference room now have their chance to expand into the next circle, as the SALIS Journal is proud to announce its 5th volume with the publication from the 40th conference. Another milestone, with some pearls rather than just pebbles.

In the center of these concentric circles, there lies the eternal question: what do librarians bring to the table? Call me old school, but I still strongly believe in librarianship as an intellectual activity first and foremost. Amidst admirable databases and search platforms, innovative discovery services, state-of-the-art communication tools, and adorable kitty cats, we shouldn’t lose sight of the values that a librarian can add to the mix of research, instruction, and treatment in the field. The ability to find the right information at the right time, securing and providing access to information in a non-judgmental manner, serving and relating to a variety of users at their levels, and teaching skills indispensable for evaluating information are just a few on my list. The focus, however, should be on our intellectual curiosity and on passing it on to the next generations. After all, this curiosity comes from the inquisitive mind, which is destined to search for information by seeking knowledge and hunting down facts, no matter where they lead us.

Any gathering on addiction-related topics in 2018 cannot avoid touching on the opioid crisis of our times. A broader historical context highlights the shift from punitive prohibition to harm reduction driven by the drug policy reform movement. In his talk “Drug Policy Reform in a Time of Trump” invited presenter and keynote speaker Craig Reinarman from the University of California, Santa Cruz “traces the progress of the drug policy reform movement and explores whether the current epidemic of opioid overdose deaths combined with the rise of an authoritarian regime will breathe new life into punitive prohibition.” With a bold and explicitly polemic stand, the transcript of his presentation commemorates an important moment in the history of SALIS conferences, following a tradition of practicing free speech and taking sides as a scholar.

Who else other than librarians, who possess and advocate the skill of critical thinking, would be more suitable to navigate among fake news? Christine Goodair’s review entitled Fake of false news: How can you spot it? provides a thorough overview of the topic including its history, interpretations, and various approaches to the phenomenon in a geographically and politically divided user environment. Anyone who teaches information literacy at any level can benefit tremendously from this paper, including the extensive bibliography with direct links. Remarkable is the conclusion that highlights the relevance of librarians, hoping that the resources and training on information literacy libraries provide will be recognized and utilized.

Another article from a historical perspective, Isabelle Michot’s “The history of the documentation on addiction in France”, points to the same important role librarians and libraries need to assume and maintain with regards to all resources available on the Internet. Documenting the history of Toxibase, the French network on addiction, the author walks us through the notorious stages of unsustainable national or local endeavors in addiction science. With its content selected
and indexed by experts, this database used to provide indispensable services for 30 years before its final closure in 2007. It is somewhat comforting to hear that the preserved historic collection, although not updated, will be available for on-site use.

Written by Chad Dubeau, a brief report from Canada entitled “Reporting on addiction trends using an established current awareness service” provides valuable insight into tasks librarians routinely perform, such as monitoring and tracking trends. Demonstrating with data and results from a current awareness service called Addiction News Daily, the author ventures into reflections with his intellectual approach of performing mundane duties. Fulfilling the increased needs to monitor trends in the field of substance use and information, the reports and results show a great potential for addiction professionals for the benefit of the field.

Pebbles and milestones; the list could go on and on, drawing upon previous SALIS conferences, SALIS News, social media, and listserv activities. Impact is not necessarily directly proportional to the effort, or not always measurable. Andrea Mitchell has been providing the list of new books tirelessly for decades, providing the personal touch in a time when vendor databases are available for convenient selection and acquisition. The impact on addiction collections is not quantifiable with a download count like the DIGS project. And, as all librarians will confirm, download counts merely indicate interest and won’t prove impact. Regardless, SALIS members will be delighted to read updates, written by Sheila Lacroix, Andrea L. Mitchell, and Barbara S. Weiner, on the SALIS Collection in the Internet Archive, aka the DIGS project, which, celebrating its fifth years, another milestone, had reached its target of 1,800 books by the end of 2017. As an example, Jellinek’s Disease concept of alcoholism (“the most frequently cited and least read book in the field” according to William White) had been borrowed nearly 300 times and there is a waiting list.

The issue starts with a polemic topic covered by a renowned addiction scholar, so it is appropriate to end it with another controversial subject presented by one of our own. Taking the idea of resistance to a new level, Meg Brunner’s article, “Let’s Get Critical: Critical Librarianship as the Way Forward”, introduces the core concept of critical librarianship to addiction librarians for the first time. With their popular approach to keep our profession current, relevant, and capable to meet certain needs of our times, critical librarians provide a fresh approach to traditional areas of librarianship, including collections, information literacy, publishing models, peer review, and more. The article offers examples of how the concept can be translated into mental health and substance use disorder librarianship.

The 2018 conference presentations show many similarities with the topics from previous years. In addition to sharing best practices and case studies in the field from the past year, strengthening our ties, redefining and solidifying our roles are recurring patterns. Promoting the latest technologies and innovative methods for collecting, preserving, and delivering information and providing perspectives from the past via historical alcohol research seem to be the two key roles these presentations carve out for librarians and information specialists in the field. No doubt that preserving the intellectual component of librarianship requires the audacity of stepping out of our comfort zone whether via participating in systematic reviews or in other research studies, assisting with instructional goals or consulting on treatment modalities.
If we revisit the history of SALIS conferences, documented for posterity in the first issue of the SALIS Journal, and look at conference and paper titles from the first meeting to the present, not only can we see the milestones, but also some of the circles the tiny little pebbles created. It is refreshing to read about all the activities our fellow librarians have been doing all over the world. This includes some fantastic resources and curated lists that are promoted outside SALIS in the field. A great example is the third edition of *Publishing Addictions Science*, edited by long-time SALIS supporter Thomas F. Babor, who consulted substance abuse librarians for three chapters. Used by our constituents all over the world, the book has been downloaded over 13,000 times, as of March 2019 – a statistic which both makes us proud to be part of this important endeavor and indicates the ongoing relevance of addiction librarians.

Just a few more small pebbles thrown in were the updated history of E.M. Jellinek’s life and contributions to alcohol science, introduced at the SALIS conference in 2014, and later published in more details in the inaugural volume of the SALIS journal. Now part of the Wikipedia entry on Jellinek (Wikipedia) and more, this pearl has become one of the biggest promotional items for SALIS and its librarians, cited as the 36th Annual SALIS Conference and linked to our journal, the *Substance Abuse Library and Information Studies*.

Among the achievements should be mentioned our contributions to knocking down predatory publishing that affects our field gravely. Inviting Jeffrey Beall to the 2016 conference in Denver (and the subsequent interview with him published in SALIS News snowballed within and outside SALIS) resulted in the Rutgers Predatory Publishing LibGuide. Consulted over 2,500 times and linked from all over the world, this research guide is a great example of the sort of intellectual activities that makes us remain relevant for the field.

Where are we going? The future is bleak and unpredictable. Libraries are shutting down, and collections are endangered by ignorance, incompetence, or unawareness of what they are worth. What we librarians can do is preserve our persistence, our dedication to the profession, our passion to serve those who need it the most, and the intellectual curiosity we bring to the table. An important lesson from the past was taught to us by the five pillars of alcohol studies, with the dissemination of information as one of the original five most important components of the discipline as formulated at Yale in the 1940s. This alone should entitle us to claim our role as information professionals, on equal footing with researchers and clinicians. Library and Information Science has grown up to measure up with the other disciplines that take part in addiction studies.

I am looking forward to brainstorming with colleagues about our potential to remain relevant and meaningful players in the field. The SALIS conferences, SALIS news, listserv, and the SALIS journal have been making waves in our small pond and in the larger disciplinary ocean. Discovering that our articles were downloaded in China or Hungary from an open depository also indicates our importance, disseminating cutting-edge research across geographical barriers. On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to tip my hat to all those who tirelessly put that effort into creating content, adding value, not only justifying our profession, but also moving it forward by keeping it relevant.

Dizzy from the latest buzzwords, we should keep in mind that we have been making a difference with our intellectual curiosity and open mind. Some of us are good at connecting seemingly disconnected pieces of information, others have fantastic people skills. Identifying
potential needs before they pop up as needs also keeps us relevant in our jobs. All in all, while we are working hard to hang on to our archives and our expertise in this brave new world let’s preserve our best selves as librarians and remain open-minded, resourceful thinkers. Let’s remain well-read and well-informed intellectual librarians, with integrity and pride, all together.

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Drug Policy Reform in a Time of Trump

Presentation transcript

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Can the momentum of drug policy reform be sustained in a time of Trump? Thirty years ago, the inelegant phrase “harm reduction” was invented in Liverpool, rooted in the logic of syringe exchanges, which saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Despite the best efforts of US and UN drug control agencies to suppress Harm Reduction, it has become common-sense public health policy in dozens of countries. This talk traces the progress of the drug policy reform movement and explores whether the current epidemic of opioid overdose deaths combined with the rise of an authoritarian regime will breathe new life into punitive prohibition.

Keywords

Harm reduction, drug policy, prohibition

I would like to talk to you today about some of the broader historical currents that swirl around us in the field of drug scholarship.

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation — a slow-motion argument, ostensibly about how to interpret a book, which ruptured the theological structure that dominated the human imagination across the Western world for over fifteen centuries. The Reformation was a key condition of possibility for the Enlightenment and the rise of science, and thus for the materials with which we ply our trades.

This month marks the 50th anniversary of “May ’68,” a moment of mass protest in Paris and a hundred other cities around the world. It marked the rise of the anti-Vietnam War movement, the growth of the counterculture, and a revolt of the young intelligentsia, all of which took inspiration from and built upon the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. and the de-colonization movement in the developing world.1 May ’68 was another watershed

1 Flacks, 1971; Erikson, 1975
moment when social movements shifted the tectonic plates undergirding the dominant culture.

I suggest there is now a less grand but still profound shift underway in how we think about drugs and drug users, of which you are all part: the shift from punitive prohibition to harm reduction (e.g., Heather et al., 1993). This shift is driven by the drug policy reform movement, which was inspired largely by the health and human rights tragedies of punitive prohibition. This movement has led to extraordinary change in what knowledge gets produced and disseminated, and therefore in institutional practices in the U.S. and dozens of other countries.

Donald Trump and Attorney General Sessions have conscripted all the forces of the right wing in efforts to turn this movement around and to reverse a wide range of drug policy reforms in nearly all 50 states. The question is, will they succeed? Or will the momentum of reform be sustained?

My answer will be cautiously optimistic. Now, if I were you listening to this claim, I might be thinking, “What’s he been smoking? What sort of ivory tower utopian could be optimistic in the time of Trump, whose authoritarian regime is rooted in racism and as close as the U.S. has ever come to fascism?” Your skepticism is warranted, but bear with me. Yes, it is tricky to talk about progress with Trump in power, but I suggest that drug policy reform was a long time coming and, try as they may, Trump and company will find it difficult to turn the ship of reform around.

To trace the trajectory of reform I must start with what I call the punitive turn, which began in the late 1960s. In the wake of growing mass protests, urban uprisings (often too simply called “riots”), the spread of illicit drug use, and increasing crime, Nixon and the Republican right effectively fomented fear and won power based on a “law and order” campaign. The U.S. drug control system and criminal justice system in general turned increasingly punitive, with more arrests, for more offenses, and bearing longer sentences. The ideal of rehabilitation in prisons was in effect abandoned in favor of harsher punishment (Austin and Irwin, 2001). So-called “truth in sentencing” laws were passed to reduce judges’ ability to adjust sentences in the interest of justice. The Kennedy/Johnson War on Poverty was shoved aside by a war on the poor.

By the 1980s there were “three strikes” laws designed to put people with a third serious conviction in prison for life (although in practice there were more third strikes for marijuana possession and petty theft than for murder, rape, and robbery combined [see, e.g., Zimring et al., 2001]). At a moment of national hysteria around crack cocaine, a nearly unanimous Congress passed draconian new laws mandating minimum 5-year sentences for possessing small quantities of the drug (Reinarman and Levine, 1997). The Reagan, Bush-I, Clinton, and Bush-II administrations all gave greater powers to prosecutors and police, and rewarded them for low-level drug arrests with more funding. It all added up to what became known as mass incarceration, which fell disproportionately on poor people of color. In the span of a single generation the punitive turn quadrupled the prison population, giving the U.S. the highest incarceration rate in the world — five to ten times higher than other modern democracies.


3 Walmsley, 2018; see also the International Centre for Prison Studies, http://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/fi
The first thing to slow this punitive turn was the public health emergency of HIV/AIDS, which sparked the rise of what came to be called *harm reduction*. Once epidemiologists discovered that syringe sharing among injection drug users was a primary vector of transmission, syringe exchange programs (SEPs) began to spring up around the world. SEPs were the seed corn of the harm reduction paradigm. This now includes health services for injection drug users, addiction treatment in and in lieu of prison, medical marijuana, decarceration, opiate maintenance, distribution of Naloxone to reverse overdoses, and most recently safe consumption spaces for medically-supervised injections to reduce overdose deaths, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and other diseases. The basic logic of harm reduction is that drug problems cannot be made to go away, but by adopting public health principles we can reduce the damage that often accompanies them. The harm reduction paradigm in drug policy is part of democracy’s long march through the institutions of social control, a kind of begrudging acknowledgement of the basic humanity of the marginalized.

What began with small bands of underground outreach workers distributing sterile syringes in Rotterdam and Liverpool has grown into standard policy in 30 countries in the past 30 years. There is an International Harm Reduction Association with thousands of professionals as members across the globe, harm reduction NGOs in dozens of countries, and peer-review scientific journals devoted to research on harm reduction strategies such as syringe exchanges.

The widespread adoption of harm reduction practices is a public health breakthrough, an historic crack in the stone wall of punitive prohibition with enormous health implications. What was initially opposed as “addiction-enabling” blasphemy has become common sense. Globally, experts estimate that hundreds of thousands of HIV/AIDS deaths have been averted, along with many billions of dollars in health care costs. In addition, together with an array of criminal justice system reform efforts, harm reduction policies have avoided hundreds of thousands of human years of incarceration as well as millions of petty marijuana possession arrests and the stigma of a criminal record (Levine and Small, 2008). The harm reduction movement has opened up greater access to treatment, health, and social services for drug users. A lot of troubled lives have been turned around and a lot of families saved further grief.

The reaction to all this from the right has been to reaffirm the old normative boundaries of the War on Drugs. For example, Attorney General Sessions recently stated that “good people don’t use marijuana” — implicitly writing off as “bad” the ~130 million Americans who have used marijuana, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Despite all evidence to the contrary, Sessions continues to equate marijuana use with heroin use and to instruct U.S. Attorneys to arrest and prosecute marijuana users even (or perhaps especially) in states where voters have made it legal. His attempt to re-stigmatize nearly half the American population over the age of 12 is part of the right’s rear-guard action to re-kindle not just the drug war but the broader culture war.

This is not to say, of course, that we are free of drug problems. Opioid addiction and overdose deaths, for example, have reached crisis

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4 See, e.g., Lurie and Drucker, 1997; Aceijas et al., 2004; National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, 2009.
levels. The Centers for Disease Control reported that 2016 was another record-breaking year for overdose deaths, increasing 17% to 64,000 deaths, or roughly 175 Americans every day. Such overdoses have become the leading cause of accidental death for people under 50 years of age.

How does the harm reduction paradigm help us understand this? We might start with a crucial demographic piece of the puzzle: who is dying of opioid overdoses? Ann Case and Angus Deaton (2015, 2017), Princeton economists, discovered a striking decline in average life expectancy unique to white people without a college education. Further research led them to conclude that this group suffers disproportionately from what some have called diseases of despair — opiate addiction, alcoholism, suicide. These downwardly mobile, working-class and lower middle-class whites face dwindling life chances — and they know it.

The fact that the iconic addict is now white instead of black and Latino — the “dangerous class” du jour mostly “us” rather than “them” — has led policy makers to be more open to harm reduction approaches and other reforms. Since the late 1980s, the drug policy reform movement has broadened the discussion of drug problems to include not just the consequences of drug use but the consequences of drug policy. Official responses to the opioid crisis have been noticeably softer. During the crack scare of the late 1980s, for example, politicians called for a prison cell for every user. Now syringe exchanges are widely accepted and there are bipartisan calls for harm reduction policies like more treatment beds and wider distribution of Naloxone to reverse overdoses. More people have come around to the reformers’ view that we cannot incarcerate our way out of our drug problems, that decades of “get tough” drug policies led to mass incarceration of the powerless — a costly failure and human rights disaster.

Another vital piece of the opioid puzzle: the leading villain in the story is a legal pain reliever, Oxycontin, and its chemical cousins. This has complicated the usual views of addiction, widening the aperture of attribution to include over-prescription by physicians. Over-prescription has led to a sizeable wave of iatrogenic addiction (i.e., addiction originating in the course of medical treatment). Patients often start with a physician’s prescription for an opioid pain reliever but once addicted end up turning to a heroin dealer. Street heroin is often partly or entirely Fentanyl, a far more potent synthetic opioid that dramatically increases the risk of overdose.

Overprescribing, in turn, was encouraged by pharmaceutical industry promotional practices (see Angel, 2006). Drug companies oversold the new opioids with massive marketing operations and misleading claims. With tragic irony, they claimed that Oxycontin could and should be widely prescribed for pain relief because there is little or no risk of addiction.

Bringing in working class despair, physician over-prescribing, and pharmaceutical

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5 The opioid crisis has even come to a library near you. The New York Times reported that a growing number of librarians are stocking and learning how to administer Naloxone, or Narcan, to have the capacity to reverse opiate overdoses among library patrons.

6 Alana M. Vivolo-Kantor, et al., 2018. See also https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/opioid-overdoses/index.html. N.B. Not all such deaths are unequivocally caused by ingestion of opiates alone; many times overdoses stem from opioids used in combination with alcohol and other drugs.
industry deception expands our view of the opioid crisis beyond the malevolent molecules of a drug and the alleged psychopathology of the “junkies” who ingest it. This constitutes genuine progress toward a sociologically deeper understanding of the sources of opiate addiction and overdose deaths, which has been an important intellectual aim of the drug policy reform movement.

Let us now return to my initial question: Can drug policy reform keep going in time of Trump? It took decades of work by a variety of reformers to slow the right wing’s “get tough” juggernaut and to begin peace talks in the war on drugs. But now Trump and Attorney General Sessions are trying to reverse course and replace hard-won reforms with more punitive policies (e.g., ordering US Attorneys to charge arrestees with the highest possible offence and advocating the death penalty for drug sellers). Will they succeed?

In my view they are likely to fail for several reasons. First, there is a more powerful drug policy reform movement than has ever existed before, anywhere. It has more organizations, with more members, more media coverage, and more funding than ever before. The National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) has been around for 50 years. Students for Sensible Drug Policy has chapters at hundreds of college campuses in nearly all 50 states. The Drug Policy Alliance among others has spearheaded successful campaigns for medical marijuana and decriminalization of minor drug offences across the US. Dozens of local NGOs have succeeded in reforming harsh drug laws and policing practices and in advocating for more treatment and social services for problematic drug users. This movement isn’t on the decline; it is still growing.

Second, the drug policy reform movement and its myriad allies have called into being and crystalized an articulate political constituency for a different response to drug problems. Against the simplistic scapegoating mythology of the drug war, the movement has shown that most drug users are not in fact marginalized deviants, but rather educated, employed, and engaged citizens – friends, co-workers, parents, neighbors. Unlike the homeless street addicts of stereotype, they have the social capital to resist stigma. This constituency is far broader than the usual left-libertarian suspects. It now includes conservatives who worry about the size and scope of the state and how costly and counterproductive punitive prohibition has been. Most important, the drug war’s disproportionate damage to families and communities of color has made them strong allies in this movement. Drug policy reform has become a top priority for civil rights and racial justice movements, from the NAACP to Black Lives Matter.

Third, this movement and this constituency have been part of a broad process of cultural learning in which the old demonizing discourse has been supplanted with the more humane lexicon of harm reduction. Most people have figured out that we over-reacted to crack cocaine, with disastrous results. Most people have figured out that drug problems are impervious to all the harsh punishment thrown at them. Most people have figured out that lots of “good” people get into some form of trouble with a drug, legal or illegal, and they often need help getting out of it. Most people have figured out that addiction and other

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7 See, e.g., Parker, Aldridge, and Measham, 1998; Eisenbach-Stangl, Moskalewicz, and Thom, 2009.

8 Aviram (2015) calls such conservatives “humonetarians”.
forms of problematic drug use belong in the realm of public health, not criminal law. In short, the harm reduction paradigm is ascendant in the US as it has been in nearly all other modern democratic societies.

For the past 20 years, voters in the U.S. and elsewhere have taken drug policy into their own hands. Medical marijuana laws have been passed in 30 states and adult use has been legalized under state law in 9 states and Washington, DC. Most European countries have embraced at least some harm reduction policies. Portugal, Uruguay, Australia, the Czech Republic, Italy, Germany and Switzerland have moved toward decriminalization in one form or another. Many Latin American nations that were once drug war allies are in open revolt against U.S.-style punishment-based prohibition.

These are the sounds of the American drug war consensus fracturing. The drug policy reform movement and the harm reduction paradigm have forced global drug policy toward an historic inflection point. I don’t see it turning back at the behest of Trump and Sessions, who offer nothing but more prison.

We live in a truth-challenged time when George Orwell seems a starry-eyed optimist, a time in which simple fact-checking has become an act of resistance. This is how all these issues connect to what you do, as librarians and information specialists, every day: preserve, organize, and facilitate access to information. Protect that, and citizens will at least have the capacity to figure out the truth.

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Fake or False News?
How Can You Spot it?

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The term “fake or false news is one that has been used frequently since 2016 and is now quite commonplace. It has become a subject in its own right – it makes news and is written about in the news, and impacts upon society and particular groups such as those in the information sector, research or academia, journalism, communication etc.

Keywords
Fake News, False News, Libraries

Introduction
The term “fake or false news is one that has been used frequently since 2016 and is now quite commonplace. It has become a subject in its own right – it makes news and is written about in the news, and impacts upon society and particular groups such as those in the information sector, research or academia, journalism, communication etc.

What is Fake News?
There is no clear or consistent definition of fake news, yet it is not a new phenomenon
Fake or False News? (Allan et al, 2018 and Bennett, 2018). Fake stories have been around for a long time and the term false news is over 300 years old. For example in the English Civil War 1642–1651 both the Parliamentarians ("Roundheads") and Royalists ("Cavaliers") produced pamphlets making unfounded claims against the other side. King Charles the 2nd in 1674 issued ‘A Proclamation to Restrain the Spreading of False News, and Licentious Talking of Matters of State and Government’.

The Collins English Dictionary defines fake news as “false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting” whilst the Cambridge English dictionary defines it as “false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke” Clearly, many words are used to describe the concept from misinformation to propaganda, alternative facts – take your choice, but its function appears to be intended to misinform or influence the reader. Its content can include bias, be fabricated or may comprise elements of both fact and fiction.

In 1995 at a European G7 Ministerial Conference on the information society, the Chair concluded, “Progress in information technologies and communication is changing the way we live: how we work and do business, how we educate our children, study and do research, train ourselves, and how we are entertained. The information society is not only affecting the way people interact but it is also requiring the traditional organizational structures to be more flexible, more participatory and more decentralized” (European Commission, 1995). Since then we have seen the continuing development of the Internet and the emergence of email, social media, and other means of communicating and sharing information locally, nationally and globally (Goodair, 2015) These developments, of which fake news, is the most recent adds to the challenges already faced by libraries, media, governments in managing the accuracy of information flow and access to verified sources.

Before the internet, it was much more expensive to distribute information, building up trust took years, and there were much simpler definitions of what constituted news and media, making regulation or self-regulation easier. Libraries and text books were key resources for all, from the journalist to the academic.

However, the rise of social media has broken down many of the boundaries that may have prevented fake news from spreading so quickly and to a wider audience. It is important to recognise that we do not only learn about the world through ‘reliable and traditional sources’; we learn through a host of informational cues – street corner conversations, gossip, through signage and posters and abandoned newspapers in restaurants, in train carriages and through social media and email and text messages. Our common forms of communication today enable anyone to create and disseminate information, whether it is fact or fiction. Facebook and Twitter allow people to exchange information on a much greater scale than ever before, while publishing platforms like WordPress allow anyone to create a dynamic website with ease. Hence the obstacles to creating fake news have been done away with.

Whilst fake news is mentioned regularly in the media the actual prevalence of it is hard to estimate as evidence is hard to gather. For example Facebook have estimated that 60 million bots maybe infesting its platform, and by the simple acts of liking and sharing posts, social bots (automated accounts impersonating people) can magnify the spread of fake news (Emerging Technology, 2017).
What is it that drives fake news?

Clearly, since the invention of the printing press there have been political, economic and social motivations for creating fake or highly distorted news. Well known instances include Orson Welles 1938 adaptation of H. G. Wells' novel 'The War of the Worlds' broadcast on radio which used fake news flashes to convince listeners into thinking that Martians had landed at Grover's Hill New Jersey. (Wikipedia, 2018).

In the First World War – British Press, encouraged by the Government of the day published various false stories about German atrocities, an example of state-sponsored misinformation designed to influence public opinion. Recent political campaigns particularly, the American Presidential have become synonymous with More recently Silverman and Alexander in Buzzfeed an American news website articles reported the presence of commercially driven content in a where fake news is used by people to earn money from social media sites.

UK and European Actions

In the UK and Europe fake news has caused concern. The UK government in January 2018 announced a plan to establish a new unit to counter "fake news". A Downing Street spokesperson for UK Prime Minister Theresa May told journalists.

"We are living in an era of fake news and competing narratives. The government will respond with more and better use of national security communications to tackle these interconnected, complex challenges".

"We will build on existing capabilities by creating a dedicated national security communications unit. This will be tasked with combating disinformation by state actors and others. It will more systematically deter our adversaries and help us deliver on national security priorities". (BBC News, Jan 23, 2018)

In January 2017 a UK Parliamentary Committee for Culture, Media and Sport established an inquiry into 'fake news': the growing phenomenon of widespread dissemination, through social media and the internet, and acceptance as fact of stories of uncertain provenance or accuracy. In June 2017 due to the general election the Committee completed this inquiry with a successor inquiry being re-established; 2017-19: Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee Fake news inquiry. In July 2018 the Committee published an Interim Report. The UK Government's response to this interim report has been disappointing -the Members of Parliament who worked on the UK's “fake news” inquiry are dismayed with the Government's response after it accepted only three of the 42 recommendations made (Walker, 2018).

At the same time the European Commission set up a High Level Expert Group (HLEG) to advise on policy initiatives to counter fake new and disinformation spread on line. (European Commission, 2018).

The HLEG recommended that a “Code of Practice” be issued that commits online platforms and advertisers to take a number of measures to prevent fake news being both uploaded and disseminated “with a view to producing measurable effects by the end of 2018”. In September 2018 representatives of online platforms and the advertising industry presented their individual roadmaps on how they would implement the self-regulatory Code of Practice on online disinformation. These roadmaps include actions showing that platforms plan to extend their tools against disinformation to all EU Member States ahead of the EU elections.
The European Commission in early 2018 commissioned a Flash Eurobarometer survey on Fake News and Online Disinformation. The aim was to measure the perceptions and concerns of 26,576 European citizens around fake news. Early results indicated that fake news exists across the EU with 83% of respondents believing that fake news represent a danger to democracy and in the view of respondents’ journalists (45%), national authorities (39%) and the press and broadcasting management (36%) should be the main responsible for stopping the spread of fake news. (European Commission, 2018).

**What is the Information Sector’s Perspective?**

Libraries as we know them today are collections of books, journals, electronic resources, databases and other sources of information for people to use for business, leisure, education, research etc. Social media is a tool that many libraries use to disseminate information on a regular basis. Librarians in their training are taught to verify sources and evaluate information so that they can provide users with verified sources and reliable information.

The key issue for the library and information sector is how to apply that training to fake news. However, this does raise questions such as what is the role of an arbiter of information and how independent can you be? What does a library service do when users complain about books or resources being bought or not because they do not fit with users’ viewpoint or accuse the service of censorship? And this can apply to posts on any form of social media.

The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) has been active on the role libraries have in digital literacy and in its Statement on Digital Literacy (2017) it describes the contribution of libraries and librarians in helping individuals harness the potential of digital tools such as using online services, internet searching, podcasts, social media and so on.

With growing awareness of fake news IFLA in 2018 issued the following statement

*The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is deeply concerned about the phenomenon of ‘fake news’, and in particular the policy responses that aim to address it. This statement contains recommendations to governments and libraries, and will be accompanied by a toolkit of resources.*

As IFLA States ‘Libraries have an institutional and ethical commitment to help users access reliable and authentic information. This role is as important as ever in an era when “fake news” is a seemingly growing phenomenon. At the individual level, active library efforts to build relevant media and information literacy can also help support citizens to evaluate critically the credibility and appropriateness of information source.’

At a political level it called on Governments to

- Refrain from passing laws which will have a disproportionate impact on freedom of access to information and freedom of expression, notably through broadly or vaguely defined ‘bans’ of ‘fake news’, or other restrictions of access to digital resources and the Internet.
- Ensure that Internet platform regulation does not create incentives to restrict free speech in an unwarranted fashion.
- Show restraint in referring to “fake news” to avoid legitimising it as an excuse for censorship. (IFLA August 2018)

This call was approved, along with other points about information literacy, freedom of speech and other related issues, by the IFLA.
Council in August 2018 so it is too early to say if it has had any impact (IFLA Statement on Fake News, 2018). As IFLA state ‘Critical thinking is a key skill in media and information literacy, and the mission of libraries is to educate and advocate its importance. Discussions about fake news has led to a new focus on media literacy more broadly, and the role of libraries and other education institutions in providing this.’

To assist libraries and educational establishments IFLA produced an infographic, available in many languages, on how to spot fake news (Fig. 1).

Research Libraries UK (RLUK) is a consortium of thirty seven key research libraries in the UK and Ireland. The main aim of RLUK is to shape the research library agenda, and contribute to the wider knowledge economy through innovative projects and services. RLUK submitted evidence to the UK Parliamentary Fake News Inquiry commenting upon the role of libraries and information literacy, and access to information as a human right. Libraries in their view have a key role in defending truth and helping users discriminate between reality and lies.

Libraries have long had a key role in educating people how to use all types of information. These include developing information and media literacy, and digital literacy skills. Libraries support people to critically examine and evaluate information, and to evidence their learning and knowledge including citations. RLUK member libraries, and libraries across higher education in the UK offer training in these skills to researchers, students and staff. The need to increase investment in ensuring everyone has information literacy skills has never been greater. Everyone must be empowered to make informed decisions through access to information and skills, as outlined in the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development to which RLUK is a signatory (Research Libraries UK, 2018).

The UK’s Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals information literacy group working with INFORM, an independent research consultancy that promotes the importance and benefits of information literacy, submitted evidence to the fake news inquiry. Their submission focused on the need for education and discussed the question ‘How can we educate people in how to assess and use different sources of news?’

“A major part of any solution is a much greater emphasis on the teaching of critical thinking in secondary schools. These abilities do not currently feature prominently in the curriculum, and there is much evidence to suggest that school-students are ill-equipped
when evaluating the information that they are confronted with. The findings of a very recent, large-scale study in the US showed that “overall, young people’s ability to reason about the information on the Internet can be summed up in one word: bleak. Our “digital natives” may be able to flit between Facebook and Twitter while simultaneously uploading a selfie to Instagram and texting a friend. But when it comes to evaluating information that flows through social media channels, they are easily duped” (Stanford, 2016). Poor habits picked up in early years deserve to be addressed, before they become ingrained for life. In the UK, Ofcom (of which more below) reported that, “28% of 8-11s and 27% of 12-15s assume that if Google lists a website then they can trust it” (Ofcom 2016). Ofcom in 2015 also found that 10% of children believe information they find on social media to be ‘all true’, the previous survey found that only 4% held this belief - a 150% rise on the previous year (Shenton, Pickard, 2014). A number of initiatives have emerged to address the issue in UK secondary school settings. One example is the Evaluating Online Information and Sources booklet and its Proforma Tool11 (understanding the trusting self), which are means for developing an agile, personal model of information literacy. This tool, devised in 2014, has been used in schools at various levels and was recently re-tested on sixth formers with excellent results (Walton et al, 2016). This tool led to a transformation in student behaviour and thinking from passive recipients of online information to active questioners of everything they read. Research associated with the deployment of the tool not only shows that people have varying capabilities (from very high to very low) to discern information but also that this capability can be increased with the appropriate teaching and support” (InformALL & CILIP, 2018).

It is accepted that academic Libraries have a commitment to their users to provide high quality, accurate information resources, however there are issues and problems that Rick Anderson the Associate Dean for Collections and Scholarly Communication J. Willard Marriot Library University of Utah explores the five problems that academic libraries grapple with – these are in his view

**Problem No. 1: ‘truth’ and the academy**

**Problem No. 2: inevitable selectivity**

**Problem No. 3: selecting and promoting interpretations**

**Problem No. 4: the necessity of studying lies**

**Problem No. 5: What does ‘alternative’ mean**

And he states “As is so often the case, the problem of fake news appears simple on the surface but becomes more complex and treacherous the more one tries to engage with it. Where does all of this leave us, as librarians, with regard to our responsibility towards our patrons and the larger polity? (Anderson, 2017).

**Conclusion**

Whilst the issue of fake or false news is debated in the media and at governmental levels it is hoped that through these discussions that the contribution of libraries, and other educational establishments in providing training and resources on information literacy is recognized and built upon.
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The history of the documentation on addiction in France

30 years of a turbulent history - Maintaining access to information despite challenges

Isabelle Michot
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In 1986 the so called Toxibase network, a national organization made up of nearly 20 centers, was settled to provide in France a unique online database accessible to professionals in the field of addiction as well as the general public. This article recounts the setup of this network (1986-1991), its expansion (1992-1998), its apogee (1999-2003) and its decline (2004-2007). For budgetary and political reasons, several regional centers have gradually closed down since 2005, thus the territorial network could not be maintained and the Toxibase association was dismantled in 2007. The OFDT was given the assignment of becoming the national resource center on addiction in 2009. In parallel, the flow of information and publications has been steadily increasing, hence the interest of a website giving access to the public to all OFDT publications and an easily searchable bibliographic database, referencing documents selected by information specialists.

Keywords
History, Documentation, Database, Network, France

Toxibase: the French network on addiction

The association Toxibase was created in 1986 through the diligence of professionals in the field of drug addiction and public authorities (DGS\textsuperscript{10} and DGLDT\textsuperscript{11}), despite considerable reluctance and pessimism. Indeed, in the late 1980’s France had to face great drug issues such as a heroin epidemic and the emerging AIDS epidemic, in a context of a very strict policy towards drug users (1970 Law on narcotics) (Pompidou et al., 1971).

The aspiration to implement a national network on pharmacodepencies was motivated by the fact that the French care

\textsuperscript{10} Direction générale de la santé [National Health Directorate].

\textsuperscript{11} Direction générale à la lutte contre la drogue et la toxicomanie [General Delegation for the Fight against Drugs and Drug Addiction].
system for drug addicts was in its early stages (Damade, 1989). The first challenge was to gather an existing team of clinicians. Moreover, working data and published papers were difficult to track down and hardly available on short notice.

The first configuration of the network gathered six centers: the Coordinating Center in Lyon, the CEID\(^\text{12}\) in Bordeaux, the IRS\(^\text{13}\) in Reims and the Saint-Germain center, Marmottan Hospital and Didro center in Paris (Toxibase, 1991-2005) (fig 1).

Toxibase presented itself as a reliable, performant and rigorous tool for clinicians and implemented a computerized bibliographic database from the beginning.

From its start, the association had also the ambition to better promote French works and studies at international level. Thus, the establishment of ELISAD, the European Association of Libraries and Information Services on Alcohol and Drugs, grew out of the initiative of Toxibase who invited in 1988 16 European librarians in the field of drug addiction to a round-table meeting in Lyon. It made those participants more aware of the added value they could find through regular meetings and collaboration. One year after the creation of a Working group of European documentation and information centers on alcohol and drugs in Stockholm, ELISAD was formally established in 1990 during another meeting in Lyon. It gathered at this time 25 centers. The main ones dated back to the late 1990’s and even the early 1970’s for a few of them but only six (including Toxibase) could rely on a computerized database. This partnership was also inspired by several European and international existing networks. The most important of them was SALIS, founded in 1978 and considered as ELISAD “big sister” (ELISAD, 2008).

In 1992, the Toxibase database was managed by information specialists and made considerable progress. Its access was available online but limited and expensive. Then an access through a specific computer terminal (Minitel “36.17 Toxibase”) was made available with more diversified services. The Minitel, considered in France as an ancestor of the Internet, was a computer terminal used to connect to the French Videotex service (Rouault, 1993).

In 1993, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (OFDT) were both created. As part of a convention with the French State, Toxibase partnered from 1994 to 1995 with the EMCDDA’s Reitox network\(^\text{14}\) for the start-up of the OFDT. An article published in 1995 in European Addiction Research (Köstler, 1995) described the different services proposed by this “central information service in addiction research in France”: besides the database, a bibliographic search service by phone or email with primary documents supply, a quarterly journal Toxibase – Revue Documentaire (first issue published in 1992), a press clipping review and thematic syntheses. The main audiences of the services were, in decreasing order, students, social workers, health professionals, teachers, information professionals and physicians. The added benefits of this network to the information

\(^{12}\) Comité d’étude et d’information sur la drogue [Drug Study and Information Committee].

\(^{13}\) Institut de recherches spécialisées [Institute of Specialized Research].

\(^{14}\) The EMCDDA coordinates a network of national correspondents in all EU countries, Norway and Turkey. These national monitoring centers gather and analyze country data according to common data-collection standards and tools.
specialists were the pooling of journal subscription fees, the shared current awareness and, generally speaking, a rationalization of their work. In 1996, the Toxibase network consisted of 10 centers and by 1997 the database was made accessible on the Internet with a paid access (the Minitel service was definitely closed in 2012). In 1997 also, Toxibase became a SALIS member.

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<th>Toxibase Services</th>
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<td><strong>A network organized by a Coordinating Center in Lyon</strong></td>
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<td>Contribution to the bibliographic database</td>
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<td>Press review <em>(until 1999, then by the MILDT afterwards)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thematic synthesis</td>
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<td>Bibliographic searches</td>
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<td>Supply of primary documents</td>
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<td>Toxibase Journal</td>
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<td>Thesaurus on addictions</td>
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Contributing to the bibliographic database was the main activity expected from the information specialists of the network. Journal subscriptions were dispatched between centers and each one had a cataloguing list of journal articles, institutional publications, websites and research results to follow-up and a current awareness to perform. Lots of abstracts in English were translated to French and the interface of the online database was bilingual.

* Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs

1999 was a turning point in France in terms of drug policy. This in turns impacted Toxibase and its network. The 1999-2001 Government Plan for the Fight against Drugs and the Prevention of Addiction (MILDT, 2000) was issued by the Interministerial Mission for the Fight against Drug and Drug Addiction (MILDT)\(^{15}\). One of its main purposes being to improve the access to information and documentation on this topic, the first generation of Centers for Information and Resources on Drugs and Dependencies (CIRD) was settled up in order to fulfil this objective as well as providing methodological support on the elaboration of projects. Three of them were already Toxibase centers. Very importantly, substances such as alcohol, tobacco, prescription medicines and performance-enhancing drugs were included in this Government Plan, and consequently fell into the scope of OFDT and Toxibase missions. The financing and consequently the control of Toxibase became directly monitored by the MILDT, which made available the Toxibase products (including the database) on its own website (www.drogues.gouv.fr) at the end of 1999. Due to technical and administrative issues, this online access was finally transferred back to Toxibase in 2003 and the coordinating governmental action in the drugs field, as well as promoting and funding drug-related research.

\(^{15}\) The MILDT (renamed MILDECA - Interministerial Mission for Combating Drugs and Addictive Behaviours in 2014) is the central structure, reporting to the Prime Minister, for
network got its own website (www.toxibase.fr)\textsuperscript{16}.

Nevertheless, as of 2002-2003, the Coordinating Center and some other centers began to face financial difficulties and not later than 2003, an audit was requested by the MILDT’s President. The ensuing guidelines implied the simplification of the CIRDDs network, the national coordination directly by the MILDT and a greater complementarity between partners through closer local links.

In 2004, a five-year Government Plan (MILDT, 2004) advocated a merger of the territorial networks (DATIS\textsuperscript{17}, OFDT, CIRDD and Toxibase) while enforcing a pooling of resources, the clustering of centers on a regional level, that contributed then to the termination of the proximity centers. This Plan also decided in 2005 to entrust a new mission to Toxibase i.e. the coordination of the documentation mission and the status of State operator. The same year, the CIRDD 93 (fig 1) was closed and the MILDT stopped funding the documentation center at Marmottan Hospital in Paris. Marmottan is considered a pioneer care center for drug addicts in France. It was founded in 1971 by Claude Olievenstein, a famous psychiatrist. The financing came thereafter exclusively from the psychiatric hospital Perray-Vaucluse from which Marmottan relied on administratively. As this documentation center was strongly involved in the Toxibase network, the loss of its participation has been a great drawback.

The new challenges that Toxibase had to face required a reorganization of the network which began in 2005 with a study on the implementation of a new bibliographic software, the same tool across the network in order to improve the working methods. The choice was made one year later and the information specialists were rapidly trained, when unexpectedly a new decision came from the MILDT: as of 2007, Toxibase would no longer receive any funding. The President of Toxibase and the Director of the OFDT were then commissioned to work on a merger of Toxibase into the OFDT’s activities. Nevertheless, because of financing issues, the proposal was not viable. This failure put a stop to Toxibase and the coordinating center of Lyon was closed in June 2007.

**Towards a National Resource Center**

The databases were still available online but not updated anymore. Nevertheless, and despite the lack of coordination, the network’s information specialists continued to work together. A virtual network of the CIRDDs was implemented thanks to an Intranet listing the titles of the references of interest.

The centers kept on working under such circumstances when, after 20 years of existence, it was decided to close the MILDT’s documentation center in June 2009. This large Parisian documentation center used to be open to the public and had an important collection of reports and books. Following this closure, the OFDT was assigned by the MILDT the purpose to establish a national documentation resource center on addiction. Nevertheless, since its origins, the OFDT’s documentation center has never been open to the public. The OFDT partly recovered the collections of the coordinating center (a few books, some reports and the journal collection, leaving aside the prevention tools for example, and the vast collection of off-prints) and the

\textsuperscript{16} Not available anymore.

\textsuperscript{17} Drogues Alcool Tabac Info Service [Drugs Alcohol Tobacco Information Service].
most interesting part of the MILDT's collection (journals, books and reports).

**Challenges and perspectives**

Obviously, it was a crucial challenge for the information specialists of the OFDT. In order to carry out this new mission, the OFDT received in 2010 a specific funding dedicated to a new bibliographic software and for the resumption of several subscriptions previously belonging to the MILDT’s. The French open source integrated library system PMB\(^{18}\) (often compared to Koha\(^{19}\)) was selected. Three databases were integrated in addition to the Toxibase thesaurus: the OFDT’s own bibliographic database (11,000 records), the bibliographic database of Toxibase but not its other databases (36,000 records) and a legislative database previously managed by the MILDT (1,300 records). Because of a lack of space at the OFDT, 1,200 reports were digitized and thereafter the hard copies destroyed.

The additional funding has not been sustained and year after year, subscriptions to journals have been canceled, based on the ratio of indexed articles to prices (graph 1).

As the national network stopped, it became more difficult to maintain current awareness on regional publications and on grey literature. However, the gradual suppression of subscriptions did not imply a lesser monitoring of those journals. The references of their articles are imported into a citation manager, EndNote, and articles of interest are retrieved individually. When proceeding to a bibliographic search, the PMB database is searched first, followed by the EndNote database, and then, if necessary, external sources.

With the increase of the flow of information and resources on the Internet, librarians and information specialists remain more than ever indispensable in detecting and selecting publications of interest. Presently at the OFDT, the current awareness on non-subscribed journals and on other types of publications is maintained through different means such as a RSS feed aggregator, requests on PubMed and Web of Science and related alerts, Update Scanner (a Firefox extension), newsletters, and Twitter. The selection of interesting articles to be indexed in the catalogue is related to the OFDT’s topics of interest. Since 2010, the annual increase of the bibliographic database is about 1,200 records, which is a satisfactory progression as it was 2,000 when Toxibase was operational.

Since the OFDT’s documentation center is not open to the public, the Opac (Online Public Access Catalogue) of PMB is available to anyone, graphically embedded in the OFDT's website\(^{20}\). This website provides access to all the OFDT’s publications and describes its projects. Thematic syntheses are available including links to references in the bibliographic database, with the possibility to rebound on other references. Today, the database includes almost 61,000 records, it is easily searchable and the records are indexed by Google.

One of the PMB’s functions is the selective dissemination of information (SDI). The OFDT’s staff and partners (130 subscribers) receive an update by e-mail with new references every three weeks. Those references are also available on the Opac.

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\(^{18}\) [http://www.sighb.net/](http://www.sighb.net/)

\(^{19}\) [http://www.koha.org/](http://www.koha.org/)

\(^{20}\) [https://www.ofdt.fr](https://www.ofdt.fr) and [https://bdoc.ofdt.fr/](https://bdoc.ofdt.fr/)
Besides this service, students, researchers and other members of the public can send requests by email, which are replied directly by an information specialist or with the assistance of OFDT’s staff members.

As participating in a network is a rich experience, the OFDT’s documentation center takes part since 2011 in the BDSP21, the national database on public health, as Toxibase did before. Each month, references on addiction are sent to this database, which accounted 524,000 references in August 2018. The collaboration between the OFDT’s documentation center and other French centers is amply facilitated and invaluable.

**Conclusion**

Toxibase case is not unique in France nor in the world. SALIS and ELISAD membership decreasing trends are relevant indicators of the dramatic closures of specialized libraries and documentation centers for several years. Nevertheless, and even if all its missions are not fulfilled anymore, some of the networks activities are still completed.

Finally, the OFDT’s move to new premises in autumn 2018 (in the same building as the MILDECA, not far from the Prime Minister services) should allow researchers to be admitted to the documentation center with preserved historical collections.

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Fig 1. Map of the Toxibase network

Graph 1. OFDT budget dedicated to journal subscriptions

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Reporting on Addictions Trends Using an Established Current Awareness Service

Chad Dubeau

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction

As Information Professionals, we spend much of our time working on routine tasks (responding to information requests, managing current awareness services, reporting, etc.). It can be valuable to reflect on what information is gathered during such tasks and leverage this work for monitoring and reporting on trends. The author demonstrates how the results from a current awareness service (Addiction News Daily) is being used to report on recent and emerging trends in the substance use and addiction field.

Keywords
Monitoring, Reporting, Media, Substance Use

Introduction
The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives. Addiction News Daily (AND) is CCSA’s news service; a compilation of stories pulled from various sources and focusing on
topics concerning alcohol, drugs and their related harms (including alcohol and drug prevention, treatment and recovery, addiction, and substance use policy and political dialogue). Articles are identified by scanning the results of a search string submitted to a media monitoring service (Meltwater) as well as additional content received via RSS feeds and Google News Alerts.

AND can be accessed via [website](#) or by subscribing to an email distribution list which currently has over 2800 subscribers. The posts consist of hyperlinked headlines that lead to the original story on the publisher's website, as well as a listing of the article's publisher and date of publication. In the process of managing and curating AND, an impressive amount of information is gathered in the form of headlines. Over 2000 headlines a year are posted to the service and subsequently archived internally.

**Monitoring Drug Trends**

Part of CCSA’s mandate is to monitor the drug situation in Canada. CCSA has a history of informing Canadians about emerging drug use trends through initiatives such as the Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use ([CCENDU](#)).

Since AND monitors stories from all across Canada, it was determined that the existing information we already gather for the news service could be applied to monitor developing trends relating to alcohol and other drugs.

**Tracking Trends**

The first step in establishing this new monitoring system was to create a tracking sheet of topics covered by stories posted in AND. The tracking sheet is composed of broad themes (main topics) and specific subjects within those themes (sub-topics).

When a story is selected for AND it is sorted into the proper sub-topic in the tracking sheet. If no matching sub-topic exists, a new one is created and that topic is highlighted to indicate that it is an emerging topic for further reporting. Data from the tracking sheet is analysed every six months and is published in the internal, biannual Emerging Trends Report.

**Reporting**

The goal of the Emerging Trends Report is to inform the organization on how our current priorities align with reported trends in the media, particularly in relation to strategic directions and business planning. The focus of the report is on general trends (the most reoccurring broad themes) and specific trends (sub-topics with ten stories or more). Geographical distribution of general trends, trends by population, and emerging trends (topics that were not included in previous reports) are also covered.

The report is then distributed internally and feedback is requested. Individuals can also suggest additional areas of interest to include in subsequent reports. The first Emerging Trends Report was published in 2014 as an annual report; in 2018 the frequency of publication was changed to twice a year to increase the relevance of the information.

**Results**

Feedback received so far by CCSA staff has been very positive. It is encouraging to know that the reports are consulted when assessing the corporate alignment of the organization’s priorities with reported trends. The Emerging Trends Report also helps inform the planning of our priorities moving forward and provides insight into public and media perceptions of emerging issues. In addition, the report is also used to identify topics for some of our
products such as *Substance Use in Canada* and *CCENDU bulletins*.

**Conclusion**

The Emerging Trends Report is a valued product and an important component of CCSA’s ongoing monitoring work. There is an increased desire for monitoring initiatives in the field of substance use and addiction and Information Professionals are well equipped with the necessary skills and access to information to assist in that work. Information Professionals are encouraged to examine the information they gather on a regular basis to assess if it has the potential to be developed into similar monitoring products that will be of benefit to the substance use and addiction field.

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It was five short years ago, at the 2013 SALIS Conference held in Berkeley, California, that attendees arrived with one carefully selected book to kick start The SALIS Collection to be hosted by the Internet Archive (IA). These books were taken to the IA headquarters in San Francisco where SALIS members were given a tour and had the opportunity to meet with IA founder Brewster Kahle. The experience was almost surreal, and the project seemed daunting. With perseverance and a lot of detailed work by the Digs (Digitization Project) team, The SALIS Collection grew to 1800 books by the end of 2017, the targeted goal. This paper updates previous presentations at SALIS conferences and highlights successes gained in 2017 including: the digitization of publications of the former Addiction Research Foundation funded by the University of Toronto Libraries; application and receipt of a grant from the Society for the Study of Addiction (SSA), UK; a successful Giving Tuesday crowd funding campaign through Razoo.com. There continue to be challenges: administrative challenges, both physical and in record keeping to monitor the status of books being digitized; consistency of meta data; decision making in collection development policy; ongoing fundraising with our partners; exploring new funding sources. Both successes and challenges are highlighted as well as future goals.

Keywords
Digitization, Preservation, Alcohol History, Drug Abuse History, Substance Abuse, Recovery, Addiction
Introduction

The SALIS 2018 conference held in Berkeley, CA, provided an opportunity for the annual The SALIS Collection, http://archive.org/details/salis, Digitization (Digs) Project update. It marked the 5th anniversary of the Collection, a time to reflect on key accomplishments over the years and celebrate successes to date. By 2013, it had already been decided that a digitization project was the way to preserve the ATOD literature in the wake of library closures and downsizing and the loss of databases that included seminal textbooks and reports. The Internet Archive (IA) was selected as host as it is one of the largest digital repositories in the world, with its headquarters in San Francisco, near SALIS Home. SALIS Executive Director, Andrea Mitchell, organized a tour of the IA as part of the 2013 SALIS Conference. IA founder, Brewster Kahle, staunch supporter of the freedom of information and the value of libraries, was welcoming and enthusiastic. SALIS members attending the tour each brought one carefully selected book which became the first books digitized and added to the collection.

The 2018 SALIS conference presentation provided a brief history of the collection’s first year and then focused on a review of 2017:

- Growth & Usage
- Fundraising
- Promotion
- Plans: Expectations & Challenges.

In the Beginning… 2013 – 2014

With less than 50 books collected and delivered to the IA to be digitized and an ambitious goal, drafted at the 2013 conference, The SALIS Collection was born.

The Goal, **one web page and one digitized copy of every alcohol, tobacco and other drug book ever published** was set at the conference meeting. By year end, the SALIS Digs (Digitization Project) Team was at work and our members at the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute (ADAI) Library had set up a database, the Digs Project Database, to enable tracking the progress of books being added to the collection and to avoid duplication. Book by book, 86 were added to the Digs Database; by the end of 2014 / early 2015 the first books appeared in The SALIS Collection. At the 2014 SALIS Conference at Rutgers University, NJ, the collection was formally named **The SALIS Collection: Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs** and the collection’s IA description was crafted.

Growth & Usage

The SALIS Collection grows both through the digitization of books at IA sites and the uploading of documents by dedicated SALIS Digs Team Members. Sources of books to be digitized include SALIS members, libraries that are closing or downsizing, and private collections of researchers and other professionals. Books donated by the NIAAA Library on its closure, backed by funding from NIAAA, were foundational in initially building the Collection. Scanning costs on average $30 per book and requires fundraising. Also, to be considered is the time and costs involved in processing: documenting, sorting, and shipping. Most books scanned are in copyright; these become part of the larger IA Books to Borrow collection; books can be borrowed for a period of up to two weeks. SALIS Home Office deals with boxes of books. All books must be added to the Digs Project Database and, once digitized and uploaded into the Collection, the records must be updated to reflect this. The IA scanners use metadata from WorldCat records as a default but in some cases, Digs Team members are able to or must provide meta data such as subject headings. Members of the Digs Team have authorization to upload born digital or
previously scanned resources. They are responsible for determining the copyright status, and if documents are in copyright, IA must be contacted to restrict access to ‘Borrow’. The work of those uploading documents has enriched the Collection considerably, by adding collections from diverse sources. For example, Marc Wauters, VAD, Belgium, has uploaded over 400 Belgian documents which are heavily accessed. Barbara Weiner from the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation Library has uploaded Research Updates from the Butler Center for Research as well as core NIDA and NIAAA series. Isabelle Michot, OFDT, France has uploaded valuable resources from France as well as EMCDDA monographs. With SALIS members uploading from Europe, including the UK, Canada and the US, the geographic scope has been enhanced.

The goal of 1800 books by the end of 2017 was reached. Figure 1 shows growth over time. The surges of growth reflect intensive digitization or uploading.

Usage, Figure 2, is based on views which could be influenced by web robots, ‘bots’, so it is not clear if this reflects human usage. However, there are other indicators. Books in copyright must be borrowed. Many had been borrowed over 200 times, and some exceeding 300 times. When checked early in 2018, Jellinek’s *Disease Concept of Alcoholism* had been borrowed 293 times and there was a wait list, *Les addictions* by Sylvie Poulichet had been borrowed 319 times and Terence Gorski’s *Staying Sober*, 228 times. Usage of the European resources in Dutch appeared to be heavy. The Digs Team is confident that, yes, the collection is being used.

**Fundraising**

In 2017 it was evident that a boost in funding would be required to meet the goal of 1800 books by year end. Success was met from two major initiatives. One was a successful funding request from the Society for the Study of Addiction (SSA) in the UK. The other was a fundraising campaign through a crowdfunding platform.

SSA offers regular funding opportunities and SALIS has the advantage of having members in the UK. The SSA’s annual meeting of November 2016, in York, UK, provided an opportunity to raise awareness of SALIS and the Collection to members of both SSA and the Alcohol and Drugs History Society who met jointly (Goodair and Lacroix, 2017). Spring 2017 Mitchell, Lacroix and Goodair worked on the
SSA grant proposal and in the fall, 2017, Mitchell met with SSA representatives to discuss the benefits of the Collection to the SSA membership. SSA committed to promote the Collection and support its growth and provided the funding for the scanning of 250 books.

The Giving Tuesday, November 28, 2017 campaign was SALIS’ first venture in crowdfunding. It took considerable planning and promotion but was a success. Over $6,600 was raised. SALIS Board members matched the first $1000. SALIS members were encouraged to personally network with colleagues, researchers, and other contacts and use their social media contacts and other information dissemination routes to promote the fundraiser. Benefits over and above the funds were: renewing relationships and receiving some books and reports to upload; pulling together a contact list of SALIS Donors. Overall, these specific fundraising efforts covered the cost to scan the remaining books that had been selected from the NIAAA Library, which donated its holdings on closure, as well as donations from: Drug Policy Alliance, NY; Prevention Research Centre, CA; Hazelden, MN. NIAAA continues to provide funding for scanning and has provided $8500 to date. Having this steady, reliable source of funding has contributed enormously to the growth of the Collection.

Promotion

All SALIS members are encouraged to promote the Collection through their websites, reference work, social media channels, and at conferences. Christine Goodair offers engaging, creative tweets to the SSA membership to both encourage use of the Collection and solicit help to build the Collection through recommendations or actual donated resources. Building and maintaining networks within the research community is another means to continually promote and disseminate. SSA and NIAAA have already been noted. Other organizations whose members are a target audience are the International Society of Addiction Journal Editors (ISAJE) and the International Confederation of ATOD Research Associations (ICARA). Mitchell presented at the 2017 annual meetings of both ISAJE and ICARA. She tirelessly promotes the Collection through many networks and connections.

Challenges, Plans, Expectations

The main challenges are threefold. Administration: The administration including developing protocols and procedures and ensuring they are followed for a project of this magnitude, given that most involved are volunteers, is a challenge. Tracking the work flow is time consuming and requires a reliable, accessible tracking database. Some problems are beyond our control and require IA staff to intervene. Follow-up and auditing must be ongoing. Examples of problems that had to be resolved through working with IA staff: a series of historical books were erroneously added to the Collection; books being incorrectly tagged to borrow when they could be downloaded, and vice versa. There are always records to be cleaned up and metadata must follow established guidelines. Subject Headings come from many sources and are...
inconsistent and in some cases incomplete. Collection Development: The goal is to expand the Collection to include more resources on drugs of abuse, such as cannabis and opioids. Many jurisdictions are legalizing or decriminalizing marijuana and the opioid crisis in North America is a serious public health issue. Fundraising: Collection growth cannot be sustained without ongoing funding; relationships with current funders must be maintained and new sources and relationships must be found.

In summary, core plans include expanding the scope of the collection, maintaining and developing new fundraising partnerships and using the developing SALIS Sponsors list to fundraise, and finally, reaching the target: 2500 books in the Collection by the end of 2018.

2017 Highlights

There was much to celebrate for the 5th Anniversary of The SALIS Collection.

- The SSA Grant and resulting partnership,
- The successful crowdfunding campaign.

During 2017, there were several additions to the Collection to note: 260 publications of the former Addiction Research Foundation (ARF) digitized by IA Canada with the cost covered by the University of Toronto Libraries; the building the collection of relevant series including NIDA Monographs, NIAAA Monographs and NIAAA Reports to Congress.

We acknowledge the leadership of Executive Director Andrea Mitchell and the dedicated work of the Digs Team, with ongoing support of the SALIS membership and the SALIS Executive. All have played an essential role in the amazing growth of The SALIS Collection over just five years!

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Let’s Get Critical
Critical Librarianship as the Way Forward
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Recognizing that everything we do is necessarily political, critical librarianship rejects the notion that librarians can or should be unbiased, “neutral” stewards of information, and instead, calls on us to examine our own political, social, and historical biases, as well as those of our institutions, and how those biases impact our services, collections, databases, and approach to information literacy and instruction. This article provides an introduction to the core concepts of “critical librarianship” with a focus on critical information literacy, offers some examples of how it applies to mental health and substance use disorder librarianship in particular, and ends with some suggestions on how library and information specialists can “get critical.”

Keywords
Critical librarianship, Information literacy, Diversity

The Influence of Stereotypes on Our Profession
Librarian stereotypes have been around as long as librarians have and have played an integral role in the shaping of our profession over time. When we think of librarian stereotypes, particularly in pop culture, the image that typically comes to mind is that of a very severe-looking woman. She is usually depicted as angry, shushing, rule bound. She is often depicted as unmarried, older, and white. The job this stereotypical librarian does is nothing terribly specialized: she stamps due dates and reshelves books. This is how the public often perceives us.

We have been frustrated by these stereotypes for a long time. We insist that we are nice, we want to help, we do more than read books all day, etc. But these are actually pretty superficial interpretations of the impact of this stereotype on our field. The primary problem is not that the stereotype makes us seem unattractive and stern; it’s that it is rooted in and perpetuates misogyny, impedes diversity in our profession, and also creates actual anxiety in our users that can prevent them from getting access to information that could
be helpful to them. It costs us, and it costs our communities.

The origins of this stereotype are important to be aware of because they directly impact so many aspects of modern librarianship. Dee Garrison, a women’s historian at Rutgers who did a lot of research on working women in the 1970s, once wrote, “It is important that librarians assess the basic meaning of feminization and give precise attention to their early history, for the dominance of women is surely the prevailing factor in library education, the image of librarianship, and the professionalization of the field” (Garrison, 1972).

This stereotype has a lengthy history. The first female librarian, technically a library clerk, was hired in 1852 by the Boston Public Library. Just 26 years later, in 1878, two-thirds of American library workers were women, and by the 1920s, that figure had reached nearly 90% (Rubin, 2016). That number hasn’t really changed much in the intervening century; it’s about 80% nowadays (US Dept of Labor, 2017). Perhaps not surprisingly, most of the actual leadership at those libraries were men, but most of the staff that a library user encountered were women (Simon, 1994).

The stereotype shifted during this period of time, from 1852, when the first woman was hired, to the early 1900s, when the modern version took root. Librarians in the late 1800s were typically depicted as men, often dressed in black, and severe, academic, or bookish in appearance. By 1905, that image had changed to that of a “spinster,” with all the related connotations that come along with that term.

Librarianship was one of the few careers of the era that was considered suitable for women, and as women began to dominate the field, the perception of the nature of library work began to shift away from academia to what is generally considered to be “women’s work” (Gaines, 2014). This is where the focus on service provision, listening skills, and caregiving came into play, and it was an expectation of women librarians in particular. As the perception of librarians continued to erode, so did the number of men who became librarians in the first place, feeding further into the feminization of the field (Mars, 2018). The men who did enter the profession were typically fast-tracked into management positions with higher salaries, while women remained at the lower levels of the hierarchy, positioned as cheap labor to help stabilize declining library budgets. In fact, male library directors “openly acknowledged the desirability of hiring talented women because they worked for half the pay” (Rubin, 2016).

Since that era, things have not improved much, and this is certainly reflected in modern librarian stereotypes. For example, consider the character of Mary in the 1946 holiday film *It’s a Wonderful Life*. At the beginning of the film, Mary is a charming, beautiful, happy young woman in love with her husband George. Without George, however, in the alternate timeline, she is forced to become a spinster librarian. She wears glasses and drab colors, frowns all the time. And she is described by the narrator like this, “She’s an old maid. She never married... She’s just about to close up the library.”

The 1980s brought us the librarian from *Ghostbusters*, a stern older woman who wears her hair in a bun and has a chain on her glasses, which she wears low on her nose so she can glare at patrons over them. And the modern era has given us Tammy on the sitcom *Parks and Recreation*, a librarian who has things like a big rubber stamp on her desk that just reads “NO” in giant letters. In one episode, she greets a library patron by announcing loudly to all who can hear that she owes $3 in fines, something she knows without having to look it up first. When another patron doesn’t have the money to pay for their fines, Tammy...
shames them by loudly yelling out the title of the book they owe the money for, a book about sexuality.

The stereotype of librarians as lacking specialized skills is also problematic. Academic faculty, for example, tend not to see academic librarians as their peers, even if they have PhDs and do research. Librarians are mostly women, and academic faculty, especially tenured faculty, are still majority men (TIAA Institute, 2016). In 1994, Robert Ivey surveyed professors at Memphis State, where all the librarians had faculty status, and found that 90% of the professors surveyed did not believe the librarians were their academic equals, deserving of their faculty status, and were instead “professionals” or even “semi-professionals” (Ivey, 1994). Even if we achieve equal rank in the academic hierarchy, in other words, academic faculty do not see us as their peers.

Importantly, this stereotype has also been a major player in the overall lack of diversity in our field. The stereotypical librarian is a white woman. If you search the stock photo database Shutterstock for the word “librarian,” what you find is dozens upon dozens of images of white women of varying ages, and almost no people of color at all. This stereotype shows the public who is “supposed” to be a librarian, and what they are “supposed” to look like. In 2018, according to the Department of Labor, over 85% of librarians were white, with only 6.6% black or African American, 8.4% Hispanic or Latinx, and 4.7% Asian (US Dept of Labor, 2018).

All of these aspects of the librarian stereotype are tied to power structures that have worked for centuries to oppress various types of people, and there is a clear relationship between the representation and treatment of women, and the low status of the field in which we work.

Put all of this together, and what we have is a tremendous need for us to take a good, critical look at this stereotype and ourselves, and to begin trying to change our image, not simply because we want to be taken more seriously and retain our funding, but because by not pushing back on all of the elements that go into maintaining this stereotype, we are essentially contributing to systems that disadvantage students and other patrons and maintain harmful power structures in our libraries and institutions. It’s not the stereotype itself that is the problem, in other words; it’s everything that goes into that stereotype’s creation and persistence over time.

Critical Librarianship

Critical librarianship is a concept that has been increasingly entering discussions about the role of librarians in the modern era. It is the perfect way for us to start shaking loose from these stereotypes and begin to forge for ourselves a new role and identity that has the potential to greatly expand our ability to assist and serve our users.

Critical librarianship is an approach that turns a critical eye inward, on our institutions, our practices, and ourselves, and at the power structures within all those things. It incorporates social justice and applies critical theories, including race theory, genderqueer theory, feminist theory, and others, to question, examine, and challenge the status quo.

One of the long-standing traditions of our field that critical librarianship has especially focused on is the concept of “neutrality,” a concept usually described in these terms:

- Information in libraries is “free” for all users.
• No one is silenced because of their race, beliefs, gender, sexuality, or any other factor.
• And librarians, similar to journalists, are expected to serve as neutral conduits of information, presenting “all sides” of an issue and letting our users evaluate those sides for themselves.

D.J. Foskett in 1962 described this last tenet as part of the “creed of a librarian,” writing, “During reference service, the librarian ought virtually to vanish as an individual person...” (Foskett, 1962).

The problem with this notion is that while many of us take pride in these truths about libraries, none of these things are actually true about libraries. Information is not free for all, and marginalized people are silenced all the time in our institutions. In the case of the third one, it is not only impossible, but it may not necessarily be a good goal in the first place.

Consider as one example a librarian who is asked to provide information about the safety of vaccinations. Would we expect that librarian to provide “bias-free” information about things they knew to be factually incorrect (for example, a document inaccurately connecting vaccines to autism)? Taking it one step further, what about a librarian who is asked to provide information to support the argument that the Holocaust never happened? That information certainly exists, and “neutrality” would suggest that this librarian should simply provide the materials requested without comment, or at least provide materials arguing the opposite position in equal measure, as though the two “sides” warranted equal weight. Is that really something we want to hold up as a hallmark of our profession, however? Are we really serving our communities of users when we segregate our values and beliefs, not to mention actual facts, from our professional duties and “vanish as an individual person”?

Importantly, there is also nothing neutral about neutrality in the first place. Neutrality is taking a side – the side of the status quo. When you look at it that way, especially when you also consider the overall “whiteness” of our profession, it becomes evident fairly quickly just how much of the notion of librarian neutrality is rooted in and perpetuated by privilege.

Privilege is a term used to refer to unequal power relations that lead to one group profiting at the disadvantage of another, and it is often working behind the scenes without our being aware of it when we make all kinds of decisions and choices about our libraries and services. Consider:

• Our pedagogy, especially the way we teach information literacy: For example, librarians tend to believe that we are the experts on information literacy, and that our way is the only “correct” way to approach finding and vetting information, even as our knowledge of newer systems and skills begin to lag behind those of our users.
• Our materials: not just in terms of collections and book selection, although certainly there too, but also our websites and databases, which many times are designed without input from actual users because, again, we feel that we “know best” how to present information for all. Every decision we make related to materials, from acquisitions to organization, is a decision that effectively prioritizes one piece of information over another.
• Our services: for example, many academic libraries are open to the public, but we often do not actively market those services to the public because we do not consider them “appropriate” users of our resources.
• Our language and classification terms and hierarchies: Subject headings, for example, frequently assume academic vocabularies and Western ways of organizing or thinking about concepts.
Critical theory is how we can dig more deeply into all these things. It can be used to evaluate:

- Our education systems,
- Our positions in those systems,
- Our physical and digital spaces,
- What our library does,
- What we do in our library,
- How our information is organized,
- How it’s shared, and
- How source authority is established.

It is through this evaluation, using the lens of empathy, social justice, and critical theory, that librarians can begin to transform their image and vastly improve their value to their communities.

**Critical Information Literacy**

In the past, one of our greatest roles as librarians, particularly special librarians, was to provide expert searching assistance for those seeking information. As professionals, we knew which databases to use, which sources were valid, and the best approaches to constructing queries, and we would put that knowledge to use, perform searches, and provide our users with curated results.

In the modern era, however, as information has increasingly been made available online, this role for librarians has dropped to the wayside. Our users have begun to do their own searches, and not always using the platforms or methods we would suggest. As our role as “helper” for information acquisition has dropped, however, our role as “educator” for information literacy has risen.

Information literacy is another aspect of our profession where the application of critical theory has the potential to greatly improve its effectiveness and value to our community.

Author and librarian Barbara Fister describes critical information literacy thusly:

> In these days of mass surveillance and the massive transfer of public goods into private hands, citizens need to know much more about how information works. They need to understand the moral, economic, and political context of knowledge. (Fister, 2013)

Information literacy instruction in libraries, for example, has often been limited to simply teaching users what we believe to be the best or most reliable sources for valid information, and how to use those sources efficiently. For example, we say the best sources for information are:

- peer-reviewed journals, especially those with high impact factors;
- approved websites, such as those by professional societies or established institutions; and
- sanctioned, specialized databases such as PubMed and PsycINFO.

We teach a user how to search PubMed, show them how to access the articles they find there, and largely consider our work done.

But in order to truly evaluate information critically, one must go deeper than this. For example, we should also be teaching our users about the commodification of information in our society and the impact that has on what research gets published, not to mention what research gets funded in the first place. We should be telling our users about the flaws inherent in the peer review system, which is arguably a vitally important process, but inarguably a tremendously problematic one. We should also be telling our users about the similar issues with Wikipedia and Google Scholar, which are used a lot by the average person and can definitely be very helpful tools, but which suffer from a lot of bias and revenue-focused issues, just like everything else. How might we present these issues to our users?
**For-profit publishing models**

The for-profit publishing model is a highly problematic one. For-profit publishers are in publishing to make money, and to make money, they have to successfully compete with other publishers, and they have to win those competitions. That means they select articles to be published that they think will make them money, a determination they make based on a wide range of factors outside of simply whether or not the paper is reporting on valid and reliable science. This is not necessarily their fault – this is the nature of capitalism, the system we are all operating in. But it is important to recognize that before articles even get to the peer review process, they have been evaluated for other criteria, including their marketability and potential popularity. Articles that do not meet those criteria may not make it to the peer review stage in the first place. A human being makes those decisions, and that inherently makes them open to bias.

The private appropriation of public resources and information and the evolution of information into a commodity that is for sale has global ramifications because it offers opportunities for the censoring of science through private, third party interests. Academic publishers are now having to make decisions about what to publish more on the basis of the market and an article’s potential as a commodity than on the basis of science.

Once the science does get published, for-profit publishing models then go to work keeping that science out of reach to all but the most privileged – people who have access to academic libraries, for example. For someone in a rural area not near a university or college? Their primary option for obtaining new research is paying $54 for 24 hours of access to a single PDF of a single article – that is the going rate to rent an article for one day from *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*. And that is only if they have the technology needed to access that PDF, as well as the knowledge needed to find it in the first place.

Though digital technologies were supposed to have helped information transcend some of those boundaries, they haven’t really done as much as we might have hoped they would in that regard. Not only are rural and urban areas in our individual countries, states, and regions still segregated, but the Global South is still very much isolated from the Global North because of economic and other factors.

**Peer review**

At the next level of gatekeeping, we have peer review. Once an article gets here, a whole additional set of issues come into play. A lot of people believe that if an article passed peer review, that means it is presenting sound science. But think of all the damage a single paper about autism and vaccines has caused; that was a peer-reviewed paper.

In one analysis of the efficacy of peer review, researchers found that the top 14 most-cited papers in medicine had been rejected by peer reviewers in the top 3 medical journals. (Siler, K., Lee, K., & Bero, L., 2015). There’s also a famous economics paper, “The Market for Lemons” by George Akerlof, which was rejected, and quite harshly, by 3 of the top economics journals at the time, one of which described it as ‘trivial’ (Gans, J.S. & Shepherd, G.B., 1994). The paper finally got published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (1970;84(3):488-500), went on to be one of the most influential papers in the field, and Akerlof eventually won the Nobel Prize for the work it reported on.

In April 2018, Times Higher Ed asked people on Twitter to post about the worst comments they’d ever heard from a peer reviewer. Dozens of people responded, describing incidents driven by misogyny, racism, and ableism:
“The male editor-in-chief said it wasn’t the kind of thing the journal was interested in publishing, but that his wife would probably find it very interesting (it was a discursive study on femininity and family foodwork).” @drkaylouiseday

“Received very high praise for the manuscript, only to have the reviewer refer to me, the author, throughout as he/his. Probably didn’t believe women could write about security...” @psephy

“I was told we can’t publish your qualitative paper as there is no comparative white sample in your study...” @akileahmet1

“I was told that I clearly understood nothing about deafness.” @safeandsilent (a deaf professor)

Peer review is done by busy, usually unpaid volunteers, who are mostly white and male (the same is true for people who edit Wikipedia pages), and bias and time constraints both come into play in that process. Peer reviewers are human beings, and they have all the same flaws the rest of us do – they just also have a lot of power as gatekeepers of science.

As librarians, we believe that information is a public good, and that everybody should have access to the information they need. But what are we doing to actually ensure that access for our users? We buy subscriptions to exorbitantly priced journals and databases that our users could never pay for themselves, and we offer those materials and systems to users who come into our buildings or somehow otherwise obtain our approval to access them, and that is often where we stop.

But does this really ensure equal access to information for all? Of course not. Not everybody can come to our physical library to access these journals and databases, and we don’t grant online access to them to just anybody, either. In an academic library, you typically have to be faculty, student, or staff to access materials from off-site. At the public library, you have to have a library card to access digital materials, which often requires proof of residency, something that can be a barrier for those experiencing challenges with housing.

The movement toward open access publishing was partly developed in an attempt to push back on this model. But open access comes with its own challenges. Some open access models are great and are contributing to the dismantling of these harmful systems by making information more available to the public, decentralizing it, and helping it transcend geographical boundaries. But for-profit publishing corporations are not just sitting back and letting that happen. Instead, they are putting out revenue-based models for open access that cause many of the same problems. If greater openness and transparency still leave the same power structures in place, then the open access movement is not achieving the goals of social equity that it set out to.

Why is it important that our users be aware of all these issues? Because the commodification of information has a dramatic impact on what science gets funded, what science gets published, which scientists get tenure, what science a student learns about, what science the public hears about, and what science policymakers hear about, which then takes us all the way back to funding, starting the whole cycle all over again. This repeats on and on, with decisions based on money at the core. Knowing about this is a vital part of information literacy.

Some ways librarians can enact change in this regard include:
• teaching our library users about these power structures as part of our standard education about evaluation of information;
• teaching the researchers we work with about these power structures and how they can push back on them by thinking more critically about where they publish in the first place, including educating them about the different open access models and the use of repositories for pre-print manuscripts; and
• having these conversations with each other as library and information specialists.

Instead of focusing our information literacy instruction on how and where to search, in other words, let's start teaching our users ways they can apply critical theory to the evaluation of both content and sources. Doing this could have real benefits not just to those users, but to society as a whole. It can not only empower individuals to begin to push back on some of the harmful structures in the information “marketplace,” but also increase their awareness of their own biases when presented with information that contradicts views they already have. It is the kind of education that can impact someone in ways that go well beyond the walls of the library.

Critical information literacy is just one component of critical librarianship, but it's one that can have a truly lasting effect on our communities. As librarians and information specialists, we have a responsibility – and a mission! – to regularly reevaluate our role in our communities, so as to ensure we are truly providing our users with the support and tools they need. It's time for us to shake off those old, outdated librarian stereotypes and “get critical”!

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