

## Introduction

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IN THE DECADE SINCE Felix Hirsch edited the October 1972 *Library Trends* on "Standards for Libraries," there has been considerable activity in the library and information science profession relating to the subject. Given the scope of these activities, it was decided to approach the subject of standards in two separate issues of *Library Trends*. This issue will concentrate on service or performance standards as related to specific types of libraries. The Fall 1982 issue of *Library Trends* will focus on technical and procedural standards that apply in many different library and information science settings, and will be edited by James E. Rush. There undoubtedly will be some overlap between the articles in the two issues, but the authors were asked to keep the focus of each issue in mind as they prepared their articles. It is the hope of the editors that these two issues of *Library Trends* will complement each other and provide a comprehensive view of developments and trends in standards relating to library and information science.

Felix Hirsch provides an excellent review of the definition of *standards* and related terms in his introduction to the 1972 issue.<sup>1</sup> No attempt will be made to duplicate his discussion here. Many of the concerns of the 1972 *Library Trends* on "Standards for Libraries" are still evident in the content of the articles written for this issue of *Library Trends*. The value of standards continues to be debated. In fact, the use of the term *standard* has been avoided by some, with *guideline* or *mission statement* a preferred substitute. The Public Library Associa-

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tion has, at least for the moment, rejected traditional standards entirely and has developed a planning procedure with evaluation based on output measures as an alternative to traditional standards. Other types of libraries will undoubtedly be watching this development with interest. Although there has been considerable movement away from quantitative standards, the debate over the desirability of quantitative or qualitative standards is far from over. If public libraries may serve as a model, one wonders if a "new federalism" in library standards might lead to qualitative national standards and quantitative state and regional standards. Concern over the method by which standards are developed was evident in 1972, and is evident in the current group of articles. The importance of a "research" base for standards has been emphasized by authors then as now.

But there have been many changes and new developments since 1972. Both the four-year and the two-year college library standards have been revised, and these revisions are discussed by David Kaser and James Wallace, respectively. Beverly Lynch reviews the development of the recent university library standards, and reports on a survey of perception of the usefulness of the new standards by directors of university libraries. Jane Hannigan provides an analysis of the development of school library media standards, and makes suggestions for possible future revisions. Robert Rohlf presents the story of the continuing evolution of public library standards from an emphasis on input measures to a focus on output measures. Rohlf reviews the revolution in orientation from uniform national public library standards to an individualized planning process that encourages each library to establish its own goals and guidelines. F. William Summers shares with us the deliberations involved in the development of standards for state libraries, including those relating to the recently abandoned effort to revise the existing standards for state libraries. James B. Dodd brings us up to date on standards—including the lack of standards—for special libraries. Stephen Prine and Kieth Wright review recent developments in standards for the visually and hearing impaired, and Richard Miller does the same for library services to people in institutions. Standards for health science libraries, including academic and special libraries serving the health sciences, are discussed by Ray Stinson. Catriona de Scossa and Mary E.P. Henderson review Canadian library standards, and Anthony Vaughan provides an overview of British library standards. International standards are discussed by Peter Havard-Williams.

It is hoped that this issue will provide the reader with a state-of-the-art report on library standards, and perhaps suggest some future trends in each of the respective areas covered. The issue editor wishes to thank

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the authors for their contributions and their ready acceptance of the task of developing the articles. A special thanks is extended to the authors of the articles on Canadian, British and international standards for cheerfully fitting the reviews of the developments of their respective topics into the limited space of a journal article.

### **Reference**

1. Hirsch, Felix E. "Introduction: Why Do We Need Standards?" *Library Trends* 21(Oct. 1972):159-63.

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