Publishing of Research in Librarianship

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RESEARCH, WHETHER DEFINED simply as a systematic search for new knowledge or as the application of the scientific method to test a relationship, builds on what is already known. As the knowledge base of a field increases, the amount of publication of and about research in the field will presumably grow at a comparable rate. The maturity of any field of study is judged by the research activity that it supports. The extent of the field's research productivity is determined from the published record of that research; therefore, it is common to assess progress in a field of study through an evaluation of the quality and quantity of its published research. This paper, while not an evaluation of the quality and quantity of the published research in librarianship, will facilitate such evaluation by reviewing the most conspicuous trends during the past twenty years in the publishing of information about research in librarianship in the United States and the publishing of the results of the research itself.

Since scientific research builds on previous research, the system of communication among researchers is very important to the development of a field. The National Enquiry into Scholarly Communication, which issued a report on publishing and communication patterns in the social sciences and the humanities in 1979, identified seven "characteristics of an effective system of scholarly communication, applicable to all disciplines."[1] The first three characteristics seem appropriate points to consider in connection with the discussion of research in librarianship:

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1. *Access.* Readers should have access to a comprehensive bibliographic system that allows them to identify and locate material and to obtain it at a reasonable cost and without excessive delay.
2. *Entry.* Authors should find a variety of book publishers and journal editors willing to give a manuscript a fair reading and committed to a decision based on scholarly merit.
3. *Quality control.* The system should have the capacity to differentiate between works of greater and lesser quality, of greater and lesser importance, and to match the form of publication to these differences.[2]

Access

Bibliographies and Indexes

If we accept the National Enquiry's requirement that an effective system of scholarly communication provides a comprehensive bibliographic system that allows researchers to identify and locate material promptly, then scholarly communication in librarianship is probably adequate, but not outstanding. The person who wants to locate research reports in the literature of librarianship may start with one of the three standard indexing services in the field—*Library Literature, Information Science Abstracts (ISA),* or *Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA). Library Literature* indexes—by author and subject—journal articles, books, pamphlets, microforms, library school theses, and research papers. *ISA* offers classified indexing and title keyword indexing of journal articles, conference proceedings, technical reports, NTIS and ERIC documents and books. Only *Library Literature* is not currently available in an online version. *LISA* covers books, theses, reports, periodicals, and conference proceedings, as well as selected NTIS (National Technical Information Service) abstracts. Obviously, neither indexing service focuses on research exclusively, and the brief citations in *Library Literature* make it difficult to identify research reports. The abstracts in *LISA* and *ISA* ordinarily provide enough information to determine if the entry represents a research report. Both abstracting services, however, have the disadvantage of providing slower coverage than *Library Literature*—e.g., many of the items cited in the first printed issues in 1984 of *LISA* and *ISA* were published in 1982 or earlier.

A major development in the bibliographic control of research in librarianship was the establishment in 1966 of a Clearinghouse for Library and Information Sciences (now Clearinghouse for Information Resources) as a part of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), sponsored and financed by the United States Office of Educa-

tion. ERIC was created to improve the national dissemination of educational resources and research-related materials and to provide bibliographic control of government-funded research reports. Reports and other documents accepted by an ERIC clearinghouse are abstracted in the monthly issues of *Resources in Education,* and many of the documents are available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service in microfiche or paper copy. Certainly, not all of the documents included in the ERIC database represent scientific research, but a person with a research idea can often find relevant literature there.

Another research-oriented bibliographic service, designed to report "the more signinfant research, experimentation, and innovative efforts underway in the field," was launched from the University of Maryland in 1971 but ceased in 1975.[3] *Library and Information Science Today; An International Register of Research and Innovation,* more often cited as *LIST,* was published in annual volumes, first by Science Associates/International and then by Gale Research.

The Library Association in Great Britain recently expanded the coverage of its *RADIALS Bulletin* and renamed it *CURRENT RESEARCH in Library & Information Science* (1983-). Research in progress is reported in a faceted classification scheme, and research for doctoral theses, research grants and projects is included. This reporting service offers information transfer in the purest sense, for as is explained on the inside cover: "The Library Association hopes that, through the information provided in *CURRENT RESEARCH,* librarians, information scientists, archivists and documentalists will find that research can provide answers to everyday problems; that the freer access to this knowledge afforded by international coverage will generate new ideas and solutions of benefit to all.

Dissertations in librarianship are well-covered bibliographically. The *Journal of Education for Librarianship* has attempted since 1968 to provide a list of dissertation topics accepted in library and information science. The database of active dissertations is available for computerized searching upon request to the editor of the "Research Record" column. An annual list of graduate theses—master's as well as doctoral—accepted by library schools in the United States became a feature of *Library Quarterly* in 1950. The last two lists of theses appearing in *Library Quarterly* have cumulated reports for a three-year period. Charles Davis has produced a listing of 915 dissertations accepted by universities contributing information to the "Research Record" column of the *Journal of Education for Librarianship;*[4] while Gail Schlachter and Dennis Thomison have compiled two annotated bibli-

ographies of library science dissertations, one covering 660 dissertations (1925-72) and the other 1000 dissertations (1973-81).[5] Library science dissertations,and dissertations written in other fields whose contents have a bearing on library science—e.g., often history, education, communications—are also covered in *Dissertation Abstracts International*.

Bibliographies of library-based research, both annotated and unannotated and review articles on research reports appear from time to time as journal articles and as monographs. Examples of separately-published bibliographies are the biblography on American library history compiled by Michael Harris and Donald Davis and the annotated bibliography on research in children's literature by Diane Monson and Bette Peltola.[6] Bohdan Wynar published in 1971 a bibliographic guide to research methods in library science, with topical outlines for each chapter.[7] Charles Busha, who included a bibliographic guide with his reader on library science research published in 1981, emphasized that "literature *about* research in librarianship remains meager—despite the growing necessity for librarians and information specialists to collect and analyze various empirical data."[8] Shirley Fitzgibbons's recent review article covering research on library services for children and young adults is a good example of the type of review article found in journals.[9] It follows in the tradition of Marion Gallivan's annotated bibliography on research in children's services, and Marilyn Shontz's review of research related to children's and young adult services in public libraries, both published in *Top of the News*.[10] *School Library Media Quarterly* has also provided bibliographic reviews, publishing comprehensive articles on research related to school librarianship in 1972, 1977 and 1982.[11]

Research-Alert Columns

Keeping busy librarians informed about the most important and relevant research being conducted in their special fields is a problem that has been widely recognized. Several journals have answered the challenge by publishing regular columns designed to alert readers to recent research.

School Libraries (continued as *School Media Quarterly*; now *School Library Media Quarterly*) published its first column on "Current Research" in 1959, when Mary V. Gaver became research editor of the journal. The column, designed to be "a real reservoir of material of *potential* help to the practicing school librarian,"[12] appeared in almost every issue of *School Libraries* through 1967. Occasional columns

appeared from 1970 to 1972, when *School Media Quarterly (SLMQ)* replaced *School Libraries*. In fall 1976, Shirley Aaron became research editor of *SLMQ* and "Current Research" has appeared regularly since that issue.

The *Journal of Education for Librarianship (JEL)* started a "Review of Current Research," edited by Sidney Jackson, in the spring issue of 1964. The purpose of the column was announced in the next issue: "One major reason for conducting this new department is that it may help us to find out what is going on....Another function implicit in the establishment of this department is the encouragement of needed research."[13] Almost every issue of *JEL* since 1964 has carried the research column. It was edited from 1968 through 1972 by Guy Garrison, from 1973 through 1982 by Charles H. Davis, and is now edited by Gerald W. Lundeen.

The *PLA Newsletter*, continued as *Public Libraries*, started a "Research in Action" column in the fall issue of 1977. Originally edited by Mary Grace Donnelly and written by various researchers, the column continues under the editorship of Linda Lucas. In addition to "Research in Action," *Public Libraries* also published from 1979 through 1981 a column of "Reports from ERIC," with abstracts selected by Bernard Lukenbill. *RQ* carried a "Research in Reference" column from the fall issue of 1968 through the summer issue of 1970; all but one of the columns was written by Charles Bunge.

Annual Reviews

One important development of the past twenty years has been the appearance of annual reviews of research activity in library science. The *ALA Yearbook*, first published in 1976 with a review of the library events of 1975, contained an article on "Research" by Barbara Slanker. Each yearbook since then has contained a similar article, although authorship has changed from year to year. Coverage has varied slightly through the years, but generally information on research grants by agencies of the federal government and notes on important research projects have been included. Beginning with the twenty-fifth edition, published in 1979, the *Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade Information* has included an overview on research in libraries and librarianship, prepared by Mary Jo Lynch.

Although *Advances in Librarianship* does not focus exclusively on research and does not carry annual research review articles or individual research reports, it has included several useful contributions to the literature about research in librarianship. Examples are the review of

library history by David Kaser and the article on funding of research by George Whitbeck, Jean Major and Herbert White.[14]

Though it has a different publisher than *Advances in Librarianship*, the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology (ARIST)* might be termed a sister publication. *ARIST* is coordinated through ASIS and it consistently has featured reviews in four to five organizing themes: Planning Information Systems and Services, Basic Techniques and Technologies, Applications, the Profession, and Special Topics. Research articles may appear under any of these headings, but most frequently research is found under the first three.

Entry

Journals

According to the National Enquiry's criteria listed earlier, the effective scholarly communication system provides adequate and prompt research news and reports through the journals of the field. Librarianship presents a mixed picture when viewed against this criterion. Specialized journals have, in many cases, shown a definite movement toward extended coverage of research topics; but the treatment of reseach in the three most widely-circulated journals (*American Libraries, Library Journal* and *Wilson Library Bulletin*) has been inconsistent over the past twenty years.

Of the three general periodicals, *Library Journal* has probably devoted the smallest percentage of its pages to research reports or articles about research methods. With the exception of an occasional thoughtful piece such as Robert Muller's "The Research Mind in Library Education and Practice,"[15] *Library Journal* has not published many articles about conducting research. A number of *LJ* articles over the past twenty years have been reports of data-gathering projects; some may even have been reports of scientific research studies, but the popularized style of the report in *LJ* usually makes it impossible to evaluate the quality of the research.

The *Library Journal* summary of library news of the year noted in 1968 that library research was growing in importance and becoming of wider interest. This was attributed to the fact that 1968 was the second year of substantial government funding for library research. As a result of this, research studies on library problems were appearing and more were expected.[16] The *LJ* annual review for 1969 made these comments:

> Undoubtedly one of the areas of librarianship suffering most from the lack of "packaging" to make it really accessible to the working

> librarian is research, which is just beginning to proliferate....But too
> often the only way to find the tiny kernel of knowledge in a huge
> report is to read the whole thing, at unconscionable expenditure of
> time....[17]

The review went on to hint at the *LJ* editorial policy in regard to
research:

> Although *LJ* can occasionally find the time and space to render the fat
> of a really important report into English, this function is largely just
> not being performed....[18]

The 1969 summary was the last *LJ* review of the year to use "Research"
as a subheading.

In the late 1960s, the *Wilson Library Bulletin* published two sub-
stantial articles about research—one a review of "Significant Research
Studies for Practicing Librarians" and the other a compilation of state-
ments about needed research by twenty-five leaders in the field.[19]

American Libraries (AL) has done more than the other two to keep
the subject of research before its readers. In the late 1960s, *AL* published
several articles on writing proposals, getting research grants, and using
the research that has already been completed. Since 1980 *AL* has given
more regular attention to research. Several "Research Alerts" by the
Director of the ALA Office for Research, Mary Jo Lynch, have high-
lighted recent research reports, and an irregular "Research and Reality"
column by Herbert White carried more general comments about
research methods and the uses of research until it ceased in 1982 for
financial reasons.

In the 1964 issue of *Library Trends* devoted to "Research Methods
in Librarianship," Leon Carnovsky noted the close relationship
between the progress of research in a field and its professional journals
and the condition of the relationship in librarianship:

> Research, of course, logically precedes the establishment of journals
> for reporting its results. Once the journals are established they require
> a steady flow of manuscripts; if the flow is sluggish the journals may
> have to suspend publication or change their character to become
> hospitable to articles of a descriptive or speculative sort, and this, in
> fact, is what has happened in the library field. It is doubtful if we can
> point to a single periodical whose major articles are devoted exclu-
> sively to reserach reports; once established, the journals go on, broad-
> ening their scope, and in the process compromising their emphasis on
> studies that qualify as original investigation. If the research interest
> dries up entirely, some journals may go out of existence, and those
> that remain will obviously lose the characteristic that led to their
> original creation.[20]

Since Carnovsky wrote, more than a dozen new journals have been started, aimed at a national or international audience of librarians within a particular specialty. Many of these journals have indicated in their announcements of editorial policy that they will be concerned with research in the field. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* (1980-) announced in its lead editorial that it would, among other things, "emphasize full-length research and review articles...."[21] To illustrate these good intentions, the first article of the first issue was a report of a classification research study. In the first issue of *Collection Building* (1978-), the editor pointed to the journal's subtitle—"Studies in the Development and Effective Use of Library Resources"—as an indication that it would publish research and would "also commission such studies, and award research grants."[22] Another journal in the same specialty, *Collection Management* (1978-) announced as its objectives, "the dissemination of information relating to the theories, practices, and research findings involved with the management of library collections."[23] In the 1975 inaugural issue, the editor of the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* announced: "We will feature the results of research studies."[24] According to the editor of the *Journal of Library Administration*, started in 1980: "Theoretical pieces, data-based studies, practical and didactic works, and case analyses should all find a home in the journal."[25] As the *Journal of Library History* shifted to new editorship and a new publisher in 1977, its commitment to research was emphasized: "Major articles will most often consist of carefully developed papers, reports, and essays based on original research and primary sources...."[26] Editorial policy stated in the first issue of *Public Library Quarterly* (1979-) pointed out: "Articles included will be as wide ranging as the public library world. Some will be research reports...."[27] While the lead editorial of *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian* (1979-) did not specifically mention research, the first article of the first issue was a review of published information transfer studies in the social and behavioral sciences 1974 through 1978.

One new journal, *Library Research* (1977-83), now titled *Library & Information Science Research* (1983-), was started with the specific aim of featuring the application of social science research methodologies to librarianship. The lead editorial announced:

> The Editors believe that much of the significant research currently being done is not adequately disseminated to the profession, that *Library Research* is needed to bring the results of that research to the attention of the library world, and that journal will encourage librar-

ians to undertake research projects that will be important in leading
to improved planning, management, and operation of libraries. We
are convinced that research in librarianship, basic as well as applied,
is growing, both in volume and in level of sophistication....[28]

Although all of the new journals cited indicated that they would
give some attention to research, some journals have provided more
research reports, reviews of research and discussions of methodology
than others. As Carnovsky observed twenty years ago, no matter what
the original editorial policy, journals change in character to accommo-
date the supply of manuscripts they receive. Only *Library & Informa-
tion Science Research*, in line with its announced policy, has featured
research exclusively.

Mention should also be made of one serial publication started in
the past twenty years to feature research in librarianship that did not
survive. In September 1972 the Graduate School of Library Science of
the University of Illinois started a *Newsletter on Library Research*
"designed to serve those who are active, concerned, or just interested in
research in librarianship," with an announced emphasis on research
methodology.[29] The *Newsletter* provided annotations of new books and
articles on research methods, reports of unpublished research, news of
organized research, suggestions for research, and occasional reviews of
published research. Seventeen issues of the *Newsletter* appeared
between September 1972 and September 1976, when it announced that it
was ceasing publication.

Twenty years ago Carnovsky listed seven journals as outlets for
library research: *American Documentation* (superseded by the *Journal
of the American Society for Information Science*), *College & Research
Libraries, Journal of Education for Librarianship, Library Quarterly,
Library Resources & Technical Services, Library Trends*, and *Libri*. All
of these journals appear to have continued the same editorial policies;
but, of the seven journals named, *College & Research Libraries, Journal
of the American Society for Information Science, Journal of Education
for Librarianship*, and *Library Quarterly* probably publish more
reports of scientific research than the others named.

Library Trends, with its theme issues, is not so much an outlet for
research reports as a place to find research cited and summarized.
Library Trends issues often include an article summarizing research on
the theme of the article. Some issues have featured techniques that may
be used in research (e.g., bibliometrics and systems analysis) and others,
such as this issue, have simply reviewed the state of research in
librarianship.

College & *Research Libraries* is directed toward the needs of academic librarians. Occasional articles discuss research methods, but reports of data-gathering or research projects appear frequently. Soon Kim and Mary Kim analyzed articles published in *College & Research Libraries* between 1957 and 1976 and identified the following trends: "Publications on college and research librarianship have become more quantitative. While some experimental/quasi-experimental studies have been reported, descriptive research, specifically survey research, continues to be most prevalent."[30] The Kims also noted an increased sophistication in data analysis during the second decade of their study period.

The *Journal of the American Society for Information Science (JASIS)* emphasizes theoretical and experimental articles on the various fields of documentation and information science. Some of the reports included in *JASIS* feature library-based research as do articles in other serial publications covering research in information science (*Proceedings of the ASIS Annual Meeting, Proceedings of the ASIS Mid-Year Meeting, Information Processing and Management* [formerly *Information Storage and Retrieval,* published by Pergamon, 1963-74], *Information Technology and Libraries [ITAL]* [formerly *Journal of Library Automation,* 1968-81, ALA], *Aslib Proceedings, Program* [the Library Association journal of library automation], *Journal of Librarianship* [an independent journal, Library Association Publishing], *Journal of Information Science* [North-Holland], and *Journal of Documentation [Library Association]*).

The *Journal of Education for Librarianship* focuses on library school programs—their curricula, teaching techniques, faculty, students, administration, alumni, employers, etc. The content of *JEL* has changed over the past twenty years in easily-observable ways. An inspection of issues from 1964-68, 1969-73, 1974-78, and 1979-83 reveals a steadily decreasing percentage of articles presenting opinions and proposals or descriptions of courses, programs, and teaching methods. During the same period, the percentage of articles with quantitative treatment of empirical data has increased. Articles appearing in *JEL* over the past five years have tended to be longer than in earlier years and give evidence of more sophisticated analysis of data.

The oldest of the journals emphasizing library research, *Library Quarterly* reflects the full range of research methods used to study library problems, from historical narrative to mathematical modeling. During the past twenty years, there appears to have been an increase in the proportion of the journal devoted to historical reports of one sort or

another and to surveys using empirical data. Literature reviews, theoretical discussions, bibliographies and other articles of that type have decreased in volume though it continues to be a source of commentary on the uses—good and ill—of statistical methods, sampling and research techniques.

Certain journals not mentioned in Carnovsky's article have given increasing attention to research over the past twenty years. *Top of the News,* a quarterly journal aimed at librarians working with children and young adults, has reported on surveys, published bibliographies of research studies, and provided several recent articles on research methods. *School Library Media Quarterly* has also featured articles on research and school librarianship in recent issues. The *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* is another example of a specialized journal that includes articles on research methods, as well as reports of research projects.

State and regional journals feature research, from time to time, usually in the form of reviews of research or papers from a conference with a research focus.[32] In 1965-66, *Southeastern Librarian* ran a series of articles on the research being conducted at the library schools in the region.[33] In 1978 *Illinois Libraries* devoted an entire issue to short reports on "all of the major studies of Illinois libraries and librarians undertaken during the past several years."[34]

Monographs

In 1979 Patricia Schuman and Andrea Pedolsky identified "at least ten companies and organizations" that "devote a significant portion of their publishing programs to library science texts, anthologies, and other monographs."[35] A quick scanning of the current catalogs of these publishers (plus several others that have entered the field since then) indicates that most of the emphasis in library science monograph publishing is on bibliographies, other reference tools, and "how-to-do-it" manuals.

The American Library Association (ALA) probably provides more outlets for works of or about research than any of the commercial publishers. In addition to publication of individual reports on data-gathering projects and explanations of data-gathering techniques, ALA has two series—ALA Studies in Librarianship and ACRL Publications in Librarianship—that publish research reports. Scarecrow Press from time to time publishes library science dissertations and other research studies. Libraries Unlimited has a series called "Research Studies in Library Science," which has included in its list several individual

dissertations and two bibliographies of dissertations. Greenwood Press
has published several dissertations in monograph form, as well as the
results of other research studies. Publishing a mix of conference pro-
ceedings, reference books, library and information science textbooks,
books on professional issues, and basic and applied research are JAI
Press, K.G. Saur, Learned Information, North-Holland, Marcel Dekker,
Elsevier, Wiley, and Academic. Ablex Publishing Corporation, only
recently entering the field with its "Libraries and Librarianship Series,"
has already published two books based on dissertations and also pub-
lishes the journal *Library and Information Science Research*. Another
relative latecomer to the field of library science publishing is Lexington
Books, which, in its "Special Series in Libraries and Librarianship,"
has published the results of several descriptive studies of library policies
and procedures.

Serving a need not fulfilled by either journal or monograph pub-
lishing are occasional papers series, such as the one published by the
Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University
of Illinois, which publishes reports of original research and also reviews
of research studies on a particular topic.

Textbooks and Readers

During the past twenty years, several textbooks and readers on
research methods in librarianship have been published. The two text-
books with the broadest coverage are the ones by Herbert Goldhor (1972)
and by Charles Busha and Stephen Harter (1980).[36] Both books stress the
basic principles by which research in librarianship can be conducted,
discuss commonly-used data collection techniques, and introduce the
scientific method as an appropriate investigative approach to library
problems. Busha and Harter also devote several chapters to statistical
applications. A *Reader in Research Methods for Librarianship*, edited
by Mary Lee Bundy and Paul Wasserman, was published in 1970; a
Reader in Operations Research for Libraries followed in the same series
in 1976.[37] Busha produced a library science research reader in 1981 with
six essays and a bibliography of library science research (1931-79).[38]

Two other potential textbooks for the study of research methods in
librarianship have narrower objectives than Busha and Harter or Gold-
hor. Jeffrey Katzer, Kenneth Cook and Wayne Crouch have produced a
guide for evaluating social science research aimed at students in a
variety of fields, including library science. Unlike most textbooks for
research methods courses, *Evaluating Information* is written from a
consumer's, rather than a producer's point of view.[39] A less comprehen-

sive approach to research methods is *Investigative Methods in Library and Information Science* by John Martyn and Wilfrid Lancaster, the purpose of which is "to describe straightforwardly the major investigative techniques relevant to research and evaluation in the fields of library and information services and to indicate the applications for which such techniques seem most appropriate."[40] A further contrast between this book and the others is indicated in the introduction: "*Investigative Methods* is more concerned with techniques that will give a manager insight into a situation than with techniques that will support a hypothesis."[41] *Investigative Methods* complements but does not supersede the earlier review of applied research and methodology by Lancaster, *The Measurement & Evaluation of Library Services* (Arlington, Va.: Information Resources Press, 1977).

Since scientific research usually involves statistical analysis, it is important to note that at least three introductory textbooks in statistics have been produced for librarians during the past ten years. In 1975 I.S. Simpson published the first edition of *Basic Statistics for Librarians*, intended to provide a simple, concise introduction to the essentials of statistics.[42] A second edition of this work, considerably expanded, was published in 1983. In 1977, Srikantaiah and Hoffman offered an introduction to quantitative research methods with what the authors called "a narrative, non-mathematical approach to research methodology, stressing logic and the reasoning underlying...the basic methods of quantitative research."[43] The American Library Association published in 1978 Ray Carpenter's book on statistical methods for librarians, designed "to give a basic understanding of statistics, statistical analysis, and its usefulness in library science."[44]

Conference Proceedings

Conference proceedings provide another outlet for reviews of research, discussions of research methods, and—in some cases—reports of research projects. The University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science sponsored conferences on research methods related to measurement and evaluation in 1967 and historical and bibliographic methods in 1970. Proceedings of both conferences were published.[45] The University of Illinois also publishes the proceedings of the Allerton Institutes, some of which include papers that assess the state of research in the specialty being featured that year. Like those of the Allerton institutes, the proceedings of the University of Illinois' Annual Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing feature research reports relevant to the conferences' themes. Through Univer-

sity Microfilms International, the American Library Association's Library Research Round Table published the proceedings of its "Research Forums" at the 1977 ALA Conference.[46] This practice has not been continued, although audio tapes of the presentations are sold by ALA. Papers presented at the first (1978) annual conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries, were published in monograph form by K.G. Saur in 1979.[47] Papers presented at the second (1981) were published by JAI Press in 1982.

Other examples of relevant conference proceedings have been published in journals. The Thirty-Fifth Annual Conference of the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, held in 1971, featured "Operations Research: Implications for Libraries"; proceedings were published in the January 1972, issue of *Library Quarterly*. The 1979 annual conference of the Association of American Library Schools focused on research. Several papers from that conference appeared in the fall 1979 issue of the *Journal of Education for Librarianship. College & Research Libraries* (May 1980) published three papers from a conference on "Library Research for Librarians" held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in March 1979. Another contribution from the University of North Carolina was the special 1982 issue of *The Bookmark*, containing lectures delivered at the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the School of Library Science—a celebration that emphasized research in librarianship, as well as developments in library education.

Dissertations

Although not examples of publishing in the conventional sense, doctoral dissertations—by custom the reports of original research—represent one of the basic sources of information about research in librarianship. Dissertations not only report in detail on individual research projects, but most also provide a review of relevant previous research.

Schlachter and Thomison, who crompiled two (previously-cited) bibliographies of library science dissertations, also analyzed the primary methodology used in dissertations they listed. Of the 660 dissertations in the earlier bibliography (1925-72), they found 44.2 percent to be survey research, 30.0 percent to be historical; and 4.0 percent to be experimental. More than half (56.1 percent) of the 1000 dissertations cited in the later bibliography (1973-81) were classified as surveys, and only 15.4 percent were historical. The percentage of dissertations classified as experimental had risen to 5.3 percent in the later list. The compilers concluded that library science dissertations were becoming

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more quantitative in method. "Since 1972, only 16.8 percent (historical and theoretical papers) of the completed dissertations were clearly non-quantitative in design or analysis, compared to 32 percent between 1925 and 1972."[48] In the first bibliography (1925-72), the four universities responsible for the most dissertations were Chicago, Columbia, Illinois, and Michigan; in the second bibliography (1973-81), the top producers of doctoral dissertations in library science were Case Western Reserve, Florida State, Indiana, and Pittsburgh.

Quality Control

Earlier in this article, the suggestion was made that any effective scholarly communication system ought to have the capacity to provide judgments on the quality and importance of the work being produced in the field. Publishing of and about research in librarianship has increased in volume over the past twenty years and, to some extent, has improved in quality, but there is evidence that librarianship has not yet established effective quality-control procedures. Not all that purports to be research in librarianship can meet the standards of scientific research.

An example of this situation is furnished by the collection of papers given at the 1978 national conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a conference with an announced scholarly focus.[49] Caroline Coughlin and Pamela Snelson applied content analysis to these ACRL conference papers to determine the proportion that might deserve the adjectives "scholarly" and "scientific." "Scientific" was defined as "based on the scientific method," and "scholarly" was app-lied to "papers based on the research traditions of humanists."[50] Cough-lin and Snelson found "of the 66 contributed papers in 1978 only 33.3 percent were research reports. A clear majority of the papers were not research reports. These include position papers, nonoriginal progress or status reports, and the ever present 'how we did good' paper."[51] The authors also note that "the findings do not change greatly when the 1981 conference papers are examined."[52]

Dissertation writers have attempted to find significant patterns in the research and publishing activity in librarianship. Brace analyzed the citations from 202 doctoral dissertations in library and information science, written between 1961 and 1970, and could not find a core group of authors or of research literature in the traditional sense.[53] Taking a sample of research papers published in certain basic journals of librar-ianship (1950-75), Peritz analyzed these to determine characteristics of authorship, content, method, and citation patterns.[54] Palmer also

looked at similar characteristics in a group of journal articles from law, library science, and social work, published 1965-74. Among his findings was this generalization: "Practice articles dominate the literature of library science (36.7 percent) and social work (48.6 percent) but trends indicate a shift in both fields to systematic research, especially in the form of empirical research."[55] Starting from an interest in how much the research reported in dissertations is really used, O'Connor took 1206 library science dissertations accepted from 1925 through 1975 and checked the degree to which they were cited, as recorded in *Social Sciences Citation Index*. She found that only 25.6 percent of the dissertations had been cited in a journal from 1970 through 1976.[56]

It is true that several library journals use referees to select manuscripts for publication and that efforts have been made in some journals—*Public Libraries, Top of the News,* and *School Library Media Quarterly,* for example—to provide nonresearch-oriented librarians with the highlights of important research studies relevant to their specialties. Few journals, however, provide the opportunity (or few librarians attempt to make the opportunity) for detailed, critical discussion of research already completed. The type of reactor panel used by the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* in the May 1979 issue to discuss the "Pittsburgh University Studies of Collection Usage" is one pattern that might be followed. The "Letters" sections of *College & Research Libraries* and the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* are sometimes used to comment on previously-published research reports. In the January 1978 issue, the editor of *JASIS* specifically encouraged readers to make use of the "Letters to the Editor" column to engage in debate about the papers published in the journal. Wider use of the "Letters" section in other journals could be a significant move toward improving the quality of scholarly communication in library science.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The system for scholarly communication in librarianship has clearly improved over the past twenty years. In the first place, access to information is greater. Better bibliographic control of research reports has been provided by ERIC. Lists of dissertation topics are published in the *Journal of Education for Librarianship* before the research is completed and abstracts are provided within a reasonable period of time after completion in *Dissertaiton Abstracts International.* In the second place, authors of manuscripts based on research studies can usually find entries into the communication system. New journals have been started

with the avowed purpose of publishing research results; and established journals have, in some cases, begun to give more attention to research concerns. Monograph publishing still tends to emphasize manuals of practice rather than results of research projects, but some publishers provide outlets for the scholarly manuscript. Quality control of the scholarly communication in librarianship has not kept pace with the access and entry. This may be due, to some extent, to the fact that many librarians have not been trained to be critical consumers of research.

A major problem with the publishing of research in librarianship is that so small a proportion of librarians have the time or the inclination to follow it closely. Although this generalization is based on subjective impressions in regard to American librarians, there is evidence to support the contention in regard to British librarians. A study conducted in 1980 by Aslib found that only 4 percent of a sample of 854 representatives of the library-information profession in Great Britain felt really "well informed" about current research in their field.[57] More than 30 percent of the sample felt "not really really informed" about current research. One can only guess how a comparable sample in the United States might have responded.

Suggestions for reaching the nonresearch-oriented practitioner may be gleaned from the British study. Analysis of responses by type of employment produced this finding: "From a practical viewpoint of publicising and disseminating research, the market is...most usefully segmented by employer group. Different employment groups really would seem to have different research needs."[58] This generalization, combined with the finding that journals were preferred over other forms of publication emphasizes the importance of the research-alert columns and the comprehensive review articles found in some specialized journals.[59] Those librarians who are primarily consumers, rather than producers, of research could benefit from fewer popularized reports of isolated projects and more omnibus reviews of research on a particular topic. An important step in this direction would be the regular inclusion of a research article in any "theme issue" of a journal.

Not all librarians are indifferent toward research. Those who already engage in or would like to engage in research also have needs not fully met by the present communication system. More introductory and intermediate-level articles about research techniques would be useful. Those already engaged in research also need more opportunities to exchange ideas about possible research topics and appropriate methods for investigating library problems. The informality and potential timeliness of the newsletter format would be particularly appropriate for

this purpose. The "Research Notes" section in *College & Research Libraries,* which was started in 1981 to provide brief reports of selected current research, might well be adopted by other journals serving other specialties. Columns that highlight important unpublished dissertations or that identify the research reports hidden in ERIC would be equally useful.

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