

Letter from the Editors

Kenneth J. Varnum and Marisha C. Kelly

UPDATES FROM THE EDITORS

In the spirit of wrapping up 2024, we're pleased to share a few updates on projects that have been going on behind the scenes.

ITAL Backfile is Nearly Complete

First, we are excited to announce that we have filled in large gaps in the backfile of ITAL and JOLA (the *Journal of Library Automation*, ITAL's predecessor, published from 1968-1981). Herein lies a tale. Back in winter 2021, the editor was contacted by Sandy Roe, a librarian who had in her possession a collection of 93 printed issues of the journal spanning a thirty-year period, from 1975-2004. She asked if the journal might have use for them. She generously shipped them to us for eventual digitization and OCRing.

Larry Wentzel, a colleague of the editor's at the University of Michigan Library's Digital Conversion Unit (DCU), agreed to process these issues, fitting them in during otherwise slow periods in their routine work. Fast forward to this summer and the project was done: all 93 issues were digitized and processed through OCR software. Huge thanks to DCU staff Lara Unger, Keith Larsen, and Emma Haldy for their contributions to this effort. The digitized journals are now available in the [ITAL archives](#).

We still have a few gaps to complete the set: 8 issues of *Information Technology and Libraries* (vol. 10, nos. 2-4; vol. 12, no. 2; and vol. 13, nos. 1-4) and 13 issues of *Journal of Library Automation* (vol. 9, no. 1; vol. 16, nos. 1-3; vol. 17, nos. 1-4; vol. 18, nos. 1-4; and vol. 23, no. 2). If you're the type who might have paper copies of journals in your office or basement, take a look and let us know!

Revised Editorial Process

We are amending the article review workflow we put into place about a year ago. At that time, we instituted a new step in the article review process, giving the ITAL Editorial Board a formal role. In our original implementation, this Editorial Board role came between peer review and final acceptance of articles. That timing proved challenging to adopt, in practice, because suggestions that could improve articles came after the peer review process.

Effective in January 2025, the "desk review" process—in which the Editor and Assistant Editor review articles for fit with the journal's scope and offer suggestions to authors to address questions about articles—will include an Editorial Board review. Members of the Editorial Board will be invited to read articles the editors recommend for peer review and offer any comments or suggestions for strengthening the article prior to peer review. Our hope is that this additional editorial review will further strengthen the quality of articles that advance to peer review.

For a full outline of the review process, please see the [Author Guidelines](#) section of the site.

Public Libraries Leading the Way Column

We are still accepting proposals for the "Public Libraries Leading the Way" column, a regular contributed feature in this journal that highlights IT in a public library setting. If you are involved in public libraries and IT, please consider [submitting a proposal](#) for a 1,000-1,500 word column for 2025.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue sees the inauguration of our third regular column, “From the Field.” Edited by ITAL Editorial Board member Cindi Blyberg, this column highlights technology-based projects, practices, or innovations from any library in the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) community. Our first edition of this column is “[Beyond the Bookshelf: Bringing the Library to Distance Learning Students through Technological Innovation](#),” contributed by Richard Cleverley, Librarian at the Open College of the Arts. He presents a case study exploring innovative approaches to digital librarianship within a distance learning higher education institution based in the UK.

This new column joins our other two regular features:

- “[How Kilgore Memorial Library Fostered County-Wide Collaboration through One Shared Calendar](#),” by Deb Roberts, recounts the development of the “One County, One Calendar” initiative.
- “[Beyond the Minimum: New Rule Requires Web Content \(I’m Looking at You, LibGuides\) to Meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA Standards](#),” by Urszula Lechtenberg and Helene Gold, describes what libraries using Springshare’s LibGuides product should now consider to ensure their LibGuide content meets the new rules.

Peer-reviewed articles in the current issue are listed here:

- “[An Examination of Academic Library Platforms & Systems during COVID-19](#),” by Cole Hudson and Paul Gallagher, examines the use and subsequent trajectory of academic library technologies due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- “[Coding with Those Who Show Up: Two Methodologies on Technical Committee Work](#),” by Mark E. Eaton, considers a library’s attempt at applying a “laissez-faire leadership” model to technical committee work.
- “[Raspberry Pi-Based Offline Digital Library for Indonesian Villages Without Stable Power and Internet Access: A Case Study on Implementing Raspberry Pi-Based Offline Digital Library in Indonesia](#),” by Edward Evannov Santo Wiguna et al., describes the creation of a digital library based on the Raspberry Pi minicomputer and how it provided library materials even in areas with unreliable power and network connectivity.
- “[Improving the Student Search Experience in LibGuides](#),” by Clayton Crenshaw and Melissa Johnson, outlines a sequential series of user research projects and subsequent changes to reduce the percentage of LibGuides searches with no results.
- “[Pure Client-Side Data Wrangling: Building a Strongly Single Page Web Application in an Academic Library for Production of a Catalog-Ready Patron File](#),” by Jason Bengtson, describes a novel application built to manipulate catalog patron data using only JavaScript running in a browser.
- “[Text Analysis of Archival Finding Aids: Collection Scoping and Beyond](#),” by Anne Bahde and Cara Key, examine the suitability of text analysis as a method for analyzing collection scope strengths across a repository’s physical archival holdings.

We hope you enjoy this issue and wish you the best for 2025.

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