Best laid plans

The beginning of the year is always a good time to plan and consider the direction one is heading. This is not related to resolutions but to the trajectory of one's career, one's life, or even an organization or project.

But for all the preparation, it seems that things almost never go according to plan.

Apparently, I need to be reminded of this periodically, even in my own work and scholarship. A prime example was the collection of papers I was putting together last year—which also took over a year longer than it should have.

It started with a paper I gave at a political science/international security conference that was fairly well-received. When I was there I conceived of a monographic collection and started recruiting authors. It went along fairly well, and I even secured a book contract with a university press.

Then it kind of went off the rails—some of the authors who had committed didn't follow through, and some of the submissions were more career vignettes than analytical papers or instructive cases. I tried to recruit new authors and faced similar problems. Ultimately, I ended up writing a number of the chapters in areas that really needed experts within international affairs or political science. After some back and forth with the press, it finally died. The author submissions were released to go somewhere else. That definitely did not turn out like I planned (and it was frustrating and embarrassing, as well), but I also took away knowledge about myself, about that process, and about what is needed in collaborative projects.

Sometimes, though, the result is better than planned.

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About the same time as the other collection, I was invited to coauthor a book. It was somewhat late in the process, but there were some concerns about the book. We worked on restructuring the table of contents, adding some additional material, and reframing some of the chapters. In the end, it came together fairly well, and is in print.

In a more casual example, I have been working on making an accent table for my mother. It started with a 3-inch thick, 5-foot long slab of rough-edge cedar. I had this great idea for a table with a waterfall edge and metal legs. It was going to be a great blend of natural wood and edgy design.

First of all, I will freely admit that I have not made anything like this before but am pretty handy and not afraid of power tools. Second, a 3-inch slab of cedar is actually thicker than most consumer table saws and planers can handle. Who knew?

This project took me a year longer than anticipated (seems to be a trend), but it is now almost done. It actually looks pretty good. It's not as refined as I would like (see comment on skill set), but it is sturdy and instead of being an inside accent table, I think it may go on the front porch—both as functional table and as a statement piece.

I learned a lot, not the least of which was the reminder that you need to keep trying, even if there are difficulties and things don't go as planned. Sometimes you have to change the plan to address unforeseen factors or to respond to new information or situations.

So sometimes things don't always turn out the way you think. Sometimes they turn out even better. This issue of *College & Research Libraries* is like that. The contents of most journal issues (unless they are special issues) is really a matter of

timing—when papers get accepted, copy edited, proofs returned, etc., and *C&RL* has great a lot of valuable content. This issue, however, demonstrates the diversity of topic, rigor of method, and commitment innovation that epitomizes our profession. The articles examine trends as well as priorities in engaging ways, from accessibility studies by Adina Mulliken and Joanne Oud focusing on the implications for the services we provide and the work we do, to reports on disciplinary perspectives on database utility and information literacy competencies, to investigations of how libraries may approach promoting data replicability or frame an outreach strategy based on curriculum mapping.

"Eighteen Blind Library Users' Experiences with Library Websites and Search Tools in U.S. Academic Libraries: A Qualitative Study" by Adina Mulliken. Telephone interviews were conducted with 18 blind academic library users around the United States about their experiences using their library and its website. The study uses the perspective that blind users' insights are fundamental. A common theme was that navigating a webpage is time consuming on the first visit. Issues identified include the need for "databases" to be defined on the homepage, accessibly coded search boxes, logical heading structure, and several problems to be resolved on result pages. Variations in needs depending on users' screen-reader expertise were also raised. Suggestions for libraries to address these issues are offered.

"Systemic Workplace Barriers for Academic Librarians with Disabilities" by Joanne Oud. Although studies related to diversity within librarianship as a profession are increasing, few have examined librarians with disabilities—and none so far have included their voices or perspectives. This qualitative study involved interviews with ten academic librarians with disabilities in Canada. With a grounding in the social model of disability, it examines their workplace experiences and concerns and the barriers they face within the context of cultural assumptions about disability and work, finding that the major barriers encountered are lack of awareness of disability issues and negative cultural stereotypes of disability.

"Discovery and the Disciplines: An Inquiry into the Role of Subject Databases through Citation Analysis" by Alexa L. Pearce. Libraries have adopted web scale discovery services with the goal of providing their users with a streamlined research experience. However, the single search box that characterizes web scale discovery is one option among many that libraries continue to provide, including subject databases and other legacy tools. Libraries lack evidence regarding which of these tools are best suited to the various stages and levels of expertise that may characterize a user's research process. A case study approach, focusing on the field of academic history, is employed to test the discoverability of a subset of scholarly work across several search platforms.

"Self-learning of Information Literacy Competencies in Higher Education: The Perspective of Social Sciences Students" by Maria Pinto, Rosaura Fernández-Pascual, and Francisco Javier García Marco. Preference for autonomous versus directed learning for the acquisition of information competencies (ICs) was analyzed among undergraduate social science students according to gender, degree program, belief in importance, and self-efficacy. Data were gathered using the IL-HUMASS (Information Literacy Humanities Social Sciences) online survey from students at five public Spanish universities enrolled in audiovisual communication, education, information science, pedagogy, journalism, psychology, social work, and tourism undergraduate programs during the 2013–2014 academic year. Mann-Whitney

U, Kruskal-Wallis, and chi-square tests, as well as discriminant analysis, were performed. The results revealed a higher preference for the directed learning style in the four IL competency categories: searching, evaluation, processing, and communication-dissemination. Audio-visual communication, education, and journalism students showed a predilection for autonomous learning, whereas information science and psychology students preferred directed learning. Higher scores in belief in importance correlated with a greater preference for autonomous learning. In contrast, higher levels of self-efficacy were associated with a greater preference for directed learning.

"Experiences of Academic Librarians Serving as Interim Library Leaders" by Kathy M. Irwin and Susann deVries. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers explored the experiences of 108 academic librarians who served as interim library leaders at U.S. institutions of higher education between 2012 and 2017. Statistical analysis showed no associations between gender, type of institution, or degree-granting level with the duration of interim service or whether a respondent applied for or was hired as the permanent leader. The authors provide recommendations for future interim library leaders and the university executives who appoint them. Serving as an interim library leader can be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity well worth the experience.

"Replicable Services for Reproducible Research: A Model for Academic Libraries" by Franklin Sayre and Amy Riegelman. Over the past decade, evidence from disciplines ranging from biology to economics has suggested that many scientific studies may not be reproducible. This has led to declarations in both the scientific and lay press that science is experiencing a "reproducibility crisis" and that this crisis has consequences for the extent to which students, faculty, and the public at large can trust research. Faculty build on these results with their own research, and students and the public use these results for everything from patient care to public policy. To build a model for how academic libraries can support reproducible research, the authors conducted a review of major guidelines from funders, publishers, and professional societies. Specific recommendations were extracted from guidelines and compared with existing academic library services and librarian expertise. The authors believe this review shows that many of the recommendations for improving reproducibility are core areas of academic librarianship, including data management, scholarly communication, and methodological support for systematic reviews and data-intensive research. By increasing our knowledge of disciplinary, journal, funder, and society perspectives on reproducibility and reframing existing librarian expertise and services, academic librarians will be well positioned to be leaders in supporting reproducible research.

"Mapping Out a Strategy: Curriculum Mapping Applied to Outreach and Instruction Programs" by Sarah LeMire and Stephanie J. Graves. Academic libraries use two common methods to reach first-year students: outreach activities and library instruction. The purpose of this study was to discover if curriculum mapping techniques commonly used in library instruction could be applied to outreach to explore the synergies and differences between programs. The project demonstrated that mapping was an effective tool for gaining insight into interrelated outcomes, resource allocation, consistency of library messaging, and students reached by each program. Curriculum mapping proved a useful method for creating strategic and intentional instruction and outreach programs that complement rather than compete with each other. ⓝ