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Databrarianship: The Academic Data Librarian in Theory and Practice

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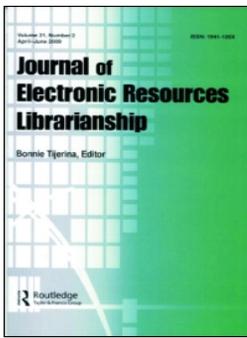
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Databrarianship: The Academic Data Librarian in Theory and Practice

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The cost of wearable technology is one of the barriers to adoption by libraries. To raise funds to become a Glass Explorer, the author enlisted interested departments outside the library as partners with whom he could share the cost as well as the opportunity. Another barrier may be, perhaps not outright resistance, but a certain amount of trepidation and lack of confidence by library staff in their ability to adopt new technologies. The author was fortunate in working a library that was already checking out a wearable technology, the GoPro Camera.

To help hesitant readers, he points out that traditional low-tech eyeglasses and wristwatches are also wearable technologies. Libraries can organize technology petting zoos for both staff and patrons to increase their comfort levels. Examples of existing projects are cited to encourage the doubtful. The University of South Florida has gone so far as to request permission from the Federal Aviation Administration to fly drones that will be controlled from a wearable technology.

Foreseeable problems are addressed, such as how to circulate wearable technology and evaluate project proposals. Keeping in mind that libraries need to showcase and promote interesting new services, suggestions are made such as creating videos and posting them on YouTube. Problems that might be less easily foreseen, such as the many ways in which an expensive technology could be damaged, are addressed with a suggestion that users sign up for insurance to reimburse unexpected costs.

Ideas are provided for other technologies in addition to Google Glass and GoPro Cameras, such as quick response (QR) codes, near field communication (NFC) tags, the Google Cardboard 3-D viewer, the Oculus Rift 3-D virtual reality headset, the Microsoft “Holo Lens” 3-D augmented reality viewer, and Apple’s iBeacon technology. The Orlando Public Library uses iBeacon to provide location-based services to patrons. A Google Cardboard kit in the \$30 range can be purchased to turn an Android smartphone into a 3-D viewer. More adventurous patrons can build their own, perhaps using a library Makerspace. The North Carolina State University Libraries turned a traditional scavenger hunt into a mobile scavenger hunt, and the concept could be expanded through the use of QR codes or NFC tags.

Technical issues are daunting for nontechnies, and parsing text instructions about them can be a slow and somewhat grim process. In this book, a refreshing sense of humor about technology combines with comprehensible explanations. In spite of the experimental nature of these types of wearable technology in libraries, the author concludes that “The only wrong answer is not to try.” The source of his enthusiasm for wearable and other useful technologies is revealed on the “About the Author” page: “In another life, Tom wanted to be an astronaut, and he eagerly looks forward to filling his first interplanetary interlibrary loan request.”

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Databrarianship: The Academic Data Librarian in Theory and Practice, Edited by Kristi Thompson and Lynda Kellam, Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2016, ISBN-13: 978-0-8389-8799-5

Fueled by the advent of big data, open data, and data curation, data librarianship is a reemerging field within academia—one that has sparked the creation of new positions that run the gamut of data services including research support and data management, as well as other positions related to the data lifecycle.

In *Databrarianship: The Academic Data Librarian in Theory and Practice*, the editors Kristi Thompson and Lynda Kellam, have assembled a rich collection of articles that take an informed look into the field of academic data librarianship.

The book consists of four major sections each designed to highlight a particular area of interest within the field. In Part I, *Data Support Services for Researchers and Learners*, the first two chapters, entitled *A Studio Model for Academic Data Services* and *Embedded Options: A Common Framework*, set the groundwork and tone for the book and are intended to serve as a “toolbox developing academic library services for data creators and consumers.”

In Chapter 3, *Data Reference: Strategies for Subject Librarians*, the author offers invaluable, sound, and practical advice on how self-directed learning can help data librarians become better-informed subject specialist. This article argues in great detail how librarians can position themselves as information experts who are able to communicate with scholars in the field, essentially arguing that if you know the subject, you can teach it better.

In the chapters that follow, 4, 5, 6, 7, *The Data Management Village: Collaboration Among Research Support Providers in the Large Academic Environment*, *The Data Librarian in the Liberal Arts College*, *Teaching Foundational Data Skills in the Library*, and *Technical Data Skills for Reproducible Research*, the focus shifts to establishing campus-wide data services, specialized data services, teaching novices the needs of new users, and developing technical skills, respectively. In the eighth and final chapter, *Restricted Data Access*, the author addresses helping researchers access data with limited access.

In Part II, *Data in the Disciplines*, the focus shifts to the areas of geospatial data, qualitative research, and data in the sciences in chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12. The first two articles in this session take a look into certain aspects of providing library services to support geospatial data. In chapter 11, entitled *Qualitative Research and Data Support: The Jan Brady of Social Sciences Data Services*, the author writes about the need for librarians to conduct qualitative research followed by an overview of the unique needs and challenges inherent in providing support for data researchers in the sciences. In Part III, *Data Preservation and Access*, Chapters 13–18, the authors focus on scholarly communication, research data management, data sharing policies, collection development, and the different forms of metadata and how it can be used in preservation and dissemination. In the fourth and final part, entitled *Data: Past, Present, and Future*, the authors look at the history of data librarianship in the United Kingdom and Canada in Chapters 19 and 20, followed by articles that examine the career paths that librarians can pursue and a course with a curriculum designed to educate the next generation of data librarians.

The book aptly covers the many aspects of data librarianship with vigor and acuity. It addresses the challenges of working with data by offering recommendations and perspectives to explore new service models for academic libraries of all types. If you read one book about data librarianship, this should be the one! This collection of articles captures the essence of this critically important field to academic librarianship. This book will help educate future generations of librarians interested in this reconceptualized field. It is sorely needed and greatly welcomed.

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