President's Message

<div align="right">Michelle Frisque</div>

I know the President's Message is usually dedicated to talking about where LITA is now or where we are hoping LITA will be in the future, but I would like to deviate from the usual path. The theme of this issue of *ITAL* is "Discovery," and I thought I would participate in that theme.

Like all of you, I wear many hats. I am president of LITA. I am head of the Information Services Department at the Galter Health Sciences Library at Northwestern University. I also am a new part-time student in the Masters of Learning and Organizational Change program at Northwestern University.

As a student and a practicing librarian, I am now on both sides of the discovery process. As head of the Information Systems Department, I lead the team that is responsible for developing and maintaining a website that assists our health-care clinicians, researchers, students, and staff with selecting and managing the electronic information they need when they need it. As a student, I am a user of a library discovery system.

In a recent class, we were learning about the Burke-Litwin Causal Model of Organization Performance and Change. The article we were reading described the model; however, it did not answer all of my questions. I thought about my options and decided I should investigate further.

Before I continue, I should confess that, like many students, I was working on this homework assignment at the last minute, so the resources had to be available online. This should be easy, right?

I wanted to find an overview of the model. I first tried the library's website using several search strategies and browsed the resources in Metalib, the library catalog, and LibGuides with no luck. The information I found was not what I was looking for. I then tried Wikipedia without success. Finally, as a last resort, I searched Google. I figured I would find something there, right? I didn't. While I found many scholarly articles and sites that would give me more information for a fee, none of the results I reviewed gave me an overview of the model in question. I gave up.

The student in me thought: *It should not be this hard!* The librarian in me just wanted to forget I had ever had this experience. This got me to thinking: Why is this so hard?

Libraries have "stuff" everywhere. We access "stuff," like books, journals, articles, images, datasets, etc., from hundreds of vendors and thousands of publishers who guard their stuff and dictate how we and our users can access that stuff. That's a problem. I could come up with a million other reasons why this is so difficult, but I won't. Instead, I would like to think about what could be.

In this same class we learned about Appreciative Inquiry (AI) theory. I am simplifying the theory, but the essence of AI is to think about what you want something to be instead of identifying the problems of what is.

I decided to put AI to the test and tried to come up with my ideal discovery process. I put both my student and librarian hats on, and here is what I have come up with so far:

- I want to enter my search in one place and search once for what I need. I don't want to have to search the same terms many times in various locations in the hopes one of them has what I am looking for. I don't care where the stuff is or who provides the information. If I am allowed to access it I want to search it.
- I want items to be recommended to me on the basis of what I am searching. I also want the system to recommend other searches I might want to try.
- I want the search results to be organized for me. While perusing a result list can be loads of fun because you never know what you might find, I don't always have time to go through pages and pages of information.
- I want the search results to be returned to me in a timely manner.
- I want the system to learn from me and others so that the results list improves over time.
- I want to find the answer.

I'm sure if I had time I would come up with more. While we aren't there yet, we should continually take steps—both big and small—to perfect the discovery process. I look forward to reading the articles in this issue to see what other librarians have discovered, and I hope to learn new things that will bring us one step closer to creating the ultimate discovery experience.

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