

An Ethos of Grace: Towards an Epistemic Growth in LIS as a Global Discourse

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Abstract

This paper is an introductory article for volume 6, issue 3 of *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion (IJIDI)*. In this article, IJIDI Editor-in-Chief Vanessa Irvin discusses ways in which within a post-COVID context, the idea of “work” has evolved for LIS scholarship.

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Introduction

The *International Journal of Information, Diversity, and Inclusion (IJIDI)* has experienced positive movement within its own confines this year. The IJIDI is now being published by East Carolina University’s (ECU) Master of Library Science Program, which is a unit of the ECU’s College of Education’s Department of Interdisciplinary Professions, in Greenville, North Carolina, United States. Barring any mitigating circumstances, this arrangement will be in effect for the next two volumes of the journal. The ECU Master of Library Science Program is excited to be in collaboration with the iSchool at Toronto (Canada) to sponsor and publish the *IJIDI*. This issue boasts a growing, active editorial team of 12 managing editors from Canada, the US, and Nigeria, led by two incredible senior managing editors from Canada and two amazing book review editors from the states of Ohio and Hawaii in the US.

The *IJIDI* editorial team has been working earnestly to establish a workflow towards a mindful focus of what it means to conduct research, publish scholarly communications, and build relationships in our corner of the world of library and information science (LIS). LIS scholarly communications involve patiently building relationships across multiple platforms in-person and virtually, as well as across the intricate miles of a global LIS discourse. Post-COVID, aspects of collaboration within LIS scholarly communications have shifted in ways that challenge embedded notions of who, how, and when a journal issue is published. The Early Access feed on the *IJIDI* has been a timely feature of our publication process that allows for important work to be published more quickly such that readers and authors can readily engage with papers via social media and professional networks.

I believe that COVID has created an ethos of grace for research, service, commitment, and time, and the interwoven synthesis between all these ideals.

During this post-COVID-19 adjustment phase, we are continuing to learn what “work,” “teamwork,” and “production” look like when collaboratively producing a peer-reviewed, open access, online scholarly journal. There are many outcomes of the pandemic that have yet to be realized. However, one clear outcome is what a new “busy” looks like, particularly in an online context. For the IJIDI this year, “busy” inconstantly hopped from one end of the production queue to another (e.g., from a feast of quality papers received, to a famine of reviewers to review them, to many papers ready for galley and final review). I believe that it is when we gracefully move one step at a time along the production continuum that we are able and ready to hit “publish” and broadcast peer-reviewed manuscript to the LIS world, at the right time – and not before or after.

There is an anxiety that walks with our new ethos, post-COVID. Yet that anxiety reflectively fuels our productivity in terms of our mindful concerns of: “Are we working together effectively?” “Are we getting things done *well* in good time?” Thus, our journey towards “publish” involves a graceful workflow that moves steadily like riverine ebbs and flows rather than like variable oceanic riptides and sudden breaker waves. Within our ongoing negotiations between publish-fast and publish-well, we work collaboratively with a peaceful and graceful approach to honor the trust that authors place in our care to escort their research, reports from the field, and book reviews through an ethical peer review and production process that gives the best presentation of their work to a global LIS audience. As a team, we take our time to care for IJIDI authors, reviewers, guest editors, one another, and ourselves, all the time, in time.

Towards an ethos of grace

In that vein, the papers in this compilation regular issue all share a common thread of LIS discourse flowing towards a central value of presence, agency, and reflectivity. This connection infers a peaceful stance that is needed in our field because moments of contemplative realization often lead to heightened ideas about ways in which we synthesize information, practice, knowledge, and identity. For example, Igboanugo, Yang, and Bigelow’s study of workplace diversity and inclusion practices reveals the power in practitioners devising their own assessment measures to look at the culture and actions of where they work.

Monica Colon-Aguirre, Nicole Cooke, and Lisa Hussey further this notion with their paper, “The Civilized War Within American Librarianship,” where they explore their own pedagogical approaches to LIS education to identify a tension between actualizing an equity-diversity-inclusion (EDI) pedagogy and falling into a colorblinded lens in the LIS classroom. Colon-Aguirre et al. prompt LIS educators, everywhere, to take the time to collaboratively and collectively reflect on the ways in which they teach. They emphasize that we cannot teach or practice in a vacuum or in silos, and that truly meaningful LIS pedagogy evolves to identify subtle tendencies of bias as a means of battling colorblindness or “the belief that the U.S. has moved into a post-racial world.”

Natasha E. Johnson and William Ledbetter’s intercultural competence piece is a bridge between Igboanugo et al.’s research that introduces a practice assessment tool and Colon-Aguirre et al.’s study of reflective pedagogy. Johnson and Ledbetter’s research employed two assessment tools with a group of academic librarians across three phases of intercultural developmental activities. Outcomes revealed that cultural competence in librarianship is an ongoing, iterative process that is simultaneously intellectually and emotionally reflective. Johnson and Ledbetter reveal that a holistic reflective stance in LIS praxis is effective and necessary so that LIS practitioners, faculty

and staff, “will create a culture within libraries that are interculturally responsive to the needs of the clientele.”

Colon-Aguirre also contributes a literature review study that explores the question, “How does personal social network gatekeeping influence the information behaviors of Spanish speakers in the United States?” This literature review conceptualizes a valuable lens for LIS that contributes to the LIS knowledge base within the tenet of cultural competency. Crosh, Hutton, Szumlas, Xu, Beck, and Riley’s field report on children’s book circulation in a public library branch in a midwestern American city illustrates how equitable access to libraries and the materials within them, when consistently applied across a geography, directly influences and impacts intersectionalities within communities.

Lastly, we are featuring five stellar book reviews that provide insight into important publications for public libraries, activism, social justice, and archives as liberatory memory work in LIS. With this issue, we are introducing a new look for our book reviews: we are now providing book cover images with the reviews as a means of reader engagement. This issue’s vibe reminds me of a softly spinning garden of whirligigs where all can spin at the same time or variedly, based on the natural response of the interactive element – in this case, not wind, but – you, the reader.

Conclusion

This issue is a good example of how our work towards epistemic growth in LIS as a global discourse involves a graceful locomotion that is in constant movement towards being better, doing better, and presenting our best - all in good time. As we, the *IJIDI* editorial team, continue to reflect on our work processes in order to further solidify the presence of the journal in LIS and the social sciences worldwide, we learn more about ourselves as a collective unit (the *IJIDI*) contributing to a global conversation with colleagues of diverse interests and understandings about what it means to be a LIS scholar, practitioner, staff, and student. We are here for it all and look forward to continuing to publish quality, substantive work that enhances the *IJIDI* as an indisputably esteemed scholarly journal built upon a secure, solid foundation that reflects a collective spirit of mindful collaboration and respect in LIS scholarly communication and publication.

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