




Journal of eScience Librarianship

putting the pieces together: theory and practice

David Bowie Had it Right: Challenges and Opportunities in Research Data Management

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Focus

Changes in the academic research enterprise environment come with challenges and opportunities for librarians in data services. From integrating AI literacy into information literacy classes, to creating services addressing the current volatile research environment, or embracing the opportunities of practicing, accessing, and interpreting data, change is happening, and librarians must meet it head on...including the *Journal of eScience Librarianship* team.

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*I watch the ripples change their size
 But never leave the stream of warm impermanence and
 So the days float through my eyes
 But still the days seem the same*

*Strange fascination, fascinating me
 Ah changes are taking the pace I'm going through*

*Ch-ch-changes
 (Turn and face the strain)
 Ch-ch-changes
 (Oh, look out you rock 'n rollers)*

*Time may change me
 But I can't trace time
 I said that time may change me
 But I can't trace time*

If you know David Bowie's hit song, "Changes," I'm sure you've chimed in on the chorus, but without necessarily knowing, or even comprehending, the rest of the lyrics. As a teen I know I didn't, I was just happy to be able to sing the refrain at the top of my lungs while driving to work in my 1965 Ford Mustang on Rt. 130 in Delran, New Jersey. However, with maturity comes the willingness to stop and listen to what Bowie is communicating: change is here, it's now, it will impact you, and you've got to "face the strain" – and the strain has been real, sometimes welcomed, sometimes not, and sometimes with surprising changes.

For the *Journal of eScience Librarianship*, the change has been to our editorial team: Lisa Palmer, Distribution Editor, and one of the founders of *JeSLIB*, retired in December 2024 from the Lamar Soutter Library, UMass Chan Medical School, and from the editorial team. Lisa was our journal's backbone – she knew everything about publishing platforms, the people who developed these platforms, and she developed strong, positive working relationships with them – they admired and respected her. She launched and managed three (3) journals: *Journal of eScience Librarianship*, *Journal of Global Radiology*, and *Graphic Medicine Review*; along with the Morningside Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences theses and dissertations (ETDs) and the Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing dissertations (ETDs).

In 2017, *JeSLIB* proposed to change the default license to CC BY – attribution only for all articles moving forward. Lisa led the charge of contacting our authors of previously published articles with the option to change their license. At the time, the journal had 84 articles with CC BY-NC-SA. From the survey, we received 32 (38%) authors wanting to update their license to CC BY. With these changes, Lisa meticulously updated all article metadata and recontacted all our authors, displaying amazing engagement to advance dissemination and use of *JeSLIB* content.

In 2022, Lamar Soutter Library moved to the publishing platform Janeway, meaning a migration for *JeSLIB*, and the other journals. Lisa was the key person in the migration, organizing all the discovery, trialing, decision-making, and then implementation, and more, in preparing the library and its publishing services for going live on Janeway. Our launch on a new platform was only successful with Lisa's determination and project management expertise.

Lisa's attention to detail, her recall, and creation of meaningful policies and procedures was extraordinary, and all was used and designed to make it easier for the editor's team and the authors to publish and be published – and for us to carry on in the future without her. Most importantly, Lisa made sure open access content was accessible and that it mattered. Lisa was my “sounding-board editor,” every editorial or *JeSLIB* document I wrote I sent to her for comments, copy edits, and guidance that was always constructive and supportive of my ideas. A more friendlier, steady, thoughtful, and caring person could not be had.

As much as I miss Lisa and yearn for her presence, I know that she is happy exploring all the National Parks she hasn't visited with her dear husband, Brad, following her sons on their career journeys in film and music, and going on adventures with family and friends. Rock on, my friend.

*Time may change me
But I can't trace time*

Changes to the academic research enterprise are occurring in real time for librarians in the field of data librarianship. The articles in this issue of *JeSLIB* all focus on challenges faced and opportunities realized through [the] services for their users provided or developed by libraries and their collaborators. The authors used various types of tools to measure the changes and challenges to providing data management services to their respective communities in a turbulent environment. The data gathered provided insights and identified opportunities for meeting the challenges and enhancing services.

Two articles from Uganda and Nigeria present how research data management and Artificial Intelligence (AI) create challenges due to lack of data literacy, poor perceptions and awareness, and uncertain institutional support. [Mukiibi and Bukirwa](#), explored research data management practices at a medical research facility in Uganda. The authors surveyed the institution's research community members. The mixed methods survey instrument uncovered data that identified challenges such as lack of institutional data storage facilities, poor legal framework, and inability to write successful data management plans. From these challenges, the authors identified several opportunities to educate their research community in proper research data management practices. [Alao et al.](#) using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), created a study investigating artificial intelligence (AI) literacy and AI adoption readiness among 102 staff in private university libraries in Osun State, Nigeria. The authors discuss how the data that was gathered will inform strategic planning for technology integration in resource-constrained academic libraries, with implications for global-south contexts.

Binghamton University's [Halie Kerns](#) writes about opportunities to enhance engagement with faculty, staff, and graduate students by using focused interviews to identify support gaps and developing strategic initiatives to strengthen interdisciplinary data science programming within the library.

[Sandi Caldron and Yali Feng](#), along with [Kristin Briney](#) look at the challenges of teaching data information literacy and research data management and techniques at their respective institutions. To address these challenges, the Research Data Service and the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign partnered to develop a new data management learning activity, the data drill. This activity helped researchers and graduate students stress-test how well their data is organized and documented, providing facilitators with a window into the researcher-data relationship and a unique opportunity to provide highly individualized support with immediate and long-term benefits. Briney discusses how the necessity of addressing the challenges of limited opportunities and resources led to the development of [The Research Data Management Workbook](#), a tool that supplements one-shot instruction and helps students implement specific data management tasks. Both articles show how developing active learning modules can address the challenges faculty, researchers, staff, and students face when trying to incorporate strong data management principles into their research.

Contributing to the issue's theme on challenges and opportunities, is [Heather Soyka's and Angela Murillo's](#) research on how factors, such as diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts impact the data librarian workforce. The assembling and evaluation of these various factors contributes to data professionals' workforce development.

Facing unrelenting change and volatility on a sometimes-daily basis is exhausting and often leads to inaction and a strong desire to return to more reliable activities. It's a comfortable and protective strategy, but not necessarily a time of learning and growth. Using tools such as collaboration, forecasting, surveying, interviewing, and others, will give data librarians the information that is necessary to face current and future challenges and inevitable changes. And now time to put my sunglasses on, hop into the Honda, and get back to my 60's and 70's playlist.

Ch-ch-changes

(Turn and face the strain)

Ch-ch-changes

(Oh, look out you rock 'n rollers)

Lyrics from: "Changes" by David Bowie

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