Journal of eScience Librarianship
putting the pieces together: theory and practice

On the Horizon of eScience Librarianship

Jian Qin, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, USA

The wave of data deluge has been shaking up research libraries and changing organizational structures and paradigms for providing services to user communities. New organizational units have sprouted in the form of campus virtual groups, consulting service groups, and initiative projects. Library services have expanded beyond traditional library services to include activities revolving around research data. Research libraries who are engaged in eScience librarianship activities face questions as basic as "what is the nature of eScience librarianship?" and, "What does it take to practice eScience librarianship?" Although we know strategies, staffing, budget, and training are essential to initiate and sustain eScience librarianship, many practical and theoretical issues are waiting to be debated, clarified, and shared. Guidance on how-to documents and toolkits are needed for practicing eScience librarians.

The debut of the *Journal of eScience Librarianship* synergizes the emerging trends and practices in research libraries in the last few years. It is a proactive response to the two essential questions mentioned above. As eScience librarianship is rising from the horizon, it will be a requirement rather than an option to have a deep understanding, among other things, of the new science paradigm and technological impact on research culture and methods, as well as on scholarly communication in designing and developing new strategies and services to address the data deluge problems. This realization became clearer when I was sitting among the scientists of geosciences at the National Science Foundation (NSF) EarthCube Charrette meeting last week. The EarthCube is envisioned as "a knowledge management system and infrastructure that integrates all geosciences data in an open, transparent and inclusive manner" (NSF, 2011). During the three and a half day discussion, the terms metadata, repositories, semantics, ontologies, and controlled vocabularies were some of the focal points of discussion. While there is a great deal that libraries can do, and should be doing, in the near future to support data management, data curation, and scholarly communication in the digital data-dominant environment, there is also a great deal that librarians need to learn and retool in order to meet the new challenges. This new journal comes at a right time for the learning and sharing needs for practicing eScience librarians and researchers.

Congratulations! I look forward to this inaugural issue!

Correspondence to Jian Qin: jqin@syr.edu

References

NSF. (2011b). EarthCube guidance for the community. Available at: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2011/nsf11085/nsf11085.pdf

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