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## Recovery

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### Abstract

The Editors-in-Chief of *Communications in Information Literacy* discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on scholarly production and on the information literacy community more generally. They propose the need for a period of recovery, and they recommit to the values and the ethics of care that drive all facets of the journal's operations.

*Keywords:* COVID-19 pandemic, trauma, recovery, scholarly publishing, ethics of care

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## Recovery

From its inception in 2007 through March of 2021, *Communications in Information (CIL)* enjoyed a remarkably consistent flow of manuscript submissions. From one volume year to the next, and even from month to month, there was a steady and almost predictable flow of submission activity with an overall arc of manageable growth. It was a prolonged time of stability, reliability, and progress. Interestingly, however, there was a spectacular uptick in submissions from April of 2020 through June of 2021. This surge in activity was so intense that it was a real challenge for *CIL*'s editors to keep pace, and it was necessary, for example, to increase the ranks of our manuscript reviewers. On reflection, we attributed this unexpected wave to the COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting mass pivot to remote work, and the newfound flexibility that many librarians experienced, which appeared to facilitate greater capacity for writing and research productivity.

The first fourteen months of the pandemic were followed by another period—the flip side, if you will—which was characterized by a gradual decline in submissions. We learned anecdotally by way of conversations with other journal editors that *CIL* was not alone. The submission well was running low for many journals, particularly it would seem, for those in the humanities and the social sciences. To some extent, we believe this was the result of authors clearing their proverbial desks of research and writing projects during the first year of the pandemic; for some, this may have also been a coping mechanism. We have come to learn, however, that COVID fatigue has also had a significant impact on the overall production of scholarship. Simply and plainly, people are exhausted. They are tired of being cooped up, tired of being hyper-vigilant, and tired of being anxious or scared. This fatigue extends to the workplace, where many librarians have taken on additional responsibilities following the departure of colleagues who cannot be replaced due to financial stress the pandemic has caused at their institutions.

We also understand the particular challenges faced by scholars in a field that is predominantly female identifying. The additional COVID-related burdens of childcare and homecare and the persistent issue of women assuming disproportionate professional service responsibilities has sapped mental and emotional energy and diminished time to think, write, and publish. Together with nonstop reminders of the world's bitter divisions and its existential worries, it is easy to see why there may be reduced enthusiasm for producing scholarly papers about information literacy or anything else.

We understand. We feel it, too. We totally get it.

The main messages we wish to convey in this editorial are those of empathy and understanding. *CIL* was established as a values-based journal, reflecting the best qualities of the information literacy community. We, the editors, are driven by ethics of care, which inform relations with all our constituent communities. We understand the pandemic has been a prolonged period of trauma for many, thus calling for a period of recovery. We also understand the pandemic affected people differently and gave greater exposure to societal inequities and to ongoing struggles in vulnerable communities. This gives us greater motivation than ever to continue the work that inspired the creation of *CIL*: to develop a more inclusive and equitable professional literature.

Insomuch as this is an editorial, we hope you will enjoy the articles included in this spring issue of 2022. More importantly, however, we hope you will be kind to yourselves and kind to one another. As ever, we look forward to hearing from you.

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[ EDITORIAL ]

*Hollister et al.*  
*Recovery*