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Reflecting on This Issue

Robert Schroeder
Portland State University, schroedr@pdx.edu

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In 2000, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) released its Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. Now this document—henceforth referred to as "the *Standards*"—is up for review. Over the next few months, an ACRL task force will be soliciting input from librarians and working on a revision of the *Standards* (for more information on the task force and their timeline, see http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/taskforces/acr-tfilcshe). As Steven Bell (2013) writes, "It is time for our association to engage in a process to rethink and reimagine them for the next generation of academic librarians, college students and the faculty." This special issue of *Communications in Information Literacy*, "Reflecting on the Standards," is meant to bring multiple voices and viewpoints to the lively discussion before us.

First, I must thank my co-editors, the founding editors of *Communications in Information Literacy* (CIL): Christopher Hollister and Stewart Brower. They and the CIL team made this special issue possible. Not only did they let me run with the idea for the issue, they provided the editorial support, and they all performed the everyday magic that is necessary to get an issue of CIL published—no small feat.

Many readers will remember the days before information literacy, when librarians provided bibliographic instruction. If you are as old as me, you will even remember libraries before bibliographic instruction (yes, we all spoke Latin then). By the year 2000, however, through the hard work of many librarians, the *Standards* appeared. At that time, the information technology revolution was in full swing. Digitized resources were changing our collections, our physical spaces, and our provision of library

instruction. Budgets for material and computer upgrades were falling behind demand. Librarians were redefining their roles as they began to participate in SPARC and other open access initiatives, and they began to rise to the myriad challenges engendered by the proliferation of distance and distributed education on our campuses (Wood & Walther, 2000).

As informed librarians know, all of ALA's standards undergo periodic review, and now is the time to look at those for information literacy. What are the issues that face academic libraries and academe today? What in our environment has changed since the genesis of the *Standards* at the turn of the millennium? One might say, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. Library budgets are still falling as prices for electronic materials and the demand for computer services continue to rise. As blogs, Twitter, and Facebook become part of our users' lives, librarians rush to harness these newest media. Distance education grows even more rapidly than before, and the era of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) seems to be upon us. In higher education in general, a new business model of education is rapidly crashing down upon us; a smaller and smaller percent of public higher education is funded by the public each year; contingent faculty positions are estimated to have reached 70% nationally; and students graduate burdened by huge debts (Goldstene, 2013; Jashick, 2013). The humanistic view of a liberal arts education as part of a public sphere, and as a public good, is giving way to a corporate model of higher education. This is the larger environment in which instruction librarians find themselves, and it is in this environment that the *Standards'* revision is taking place.

This special issue of CIL does not consist of

a single comprehensive program or plan to revise the *Standards*; instead, it includes a wide range of worthy and provocative ideas from our colleagues in the information literacy community. Some contributors to this issue have written extensively about information literacy in the past, and some may be new to readers. Some of the contributed ideas dovetail nicely, while other suggestions are mutually exclusive.

In this issue, readers will be introduced to the ways in which the information search process and threshold concepts might inform new standards. Readers will see how metaliteracy, digital literacy, and e-science intersect with information literacy; they will learn what the British models of information literacy and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) *Standards for the 21st Century Learner* might add to the conversation. Readers will also find articles that look at the *Standards* in the larger contexts of assessment, politics, values, or marketing. In addition, readers will encounter authors who advise caution with any revision of the *Standards*.

All of these contributors share one thing: They were invited by me to write articles for this issue. I am extremely grateful to them for taking the time and energy to write these thoughtful pieces. But as this issue reflects my experience with information literacy and librarianship, it is limited by the boundaries of my understanding. I invite readers not only to engage with the ideas in the issue, but to go further and find other voices and other ideas that need to be part of this historic discussion. Who is not heard in this issue, and who needs to be heard? Is it you?

There are many ways that your voice can be heard. The ACRL Task Force will be providing forums for input, and library and information science (LIS) journals regularly accept opinion pieces for publication. Many of you have personal blogs where new discussions can be sparked, and we all can, and do, contribute to many LIS professional blogs as well. Let the dialogs begin!

Read these pieces and see where their ideas lead. Add to the discussion, and together, we will create new standards that will carry us, our students, and our libraries through the next decade.

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