

Last week I attended the second Annual VIVO Conference in Washington, D.C. VIVO (vivoweb.org) is a Semantic Web application that enables the discovery of research and scholarship across disciplines in an institution with the potential to also link scholars and research across institutions. Despite an earthquake and a hurricane the conference itself was the real show-stopper—excellent, informative programming, engaging speakers, great networking and exchange of ideas. My institution is one of the core VIVO members so it was an opportunity to showcase our work, see what others are doing as well as learn more about trends in research, e-science and data discovery and collaboration initiatives.

Much of what I learned or rediscovered at VIVO will make it into my fifty-minute presentation on the subject at the LITA National Forum in St. Louis later this month. In fact the VIVO conference itself reminded me of our own National Forum in size, scope and content. It was a good mix of in-depth technical discussions coupled with broad coverage of issues and trends in scientific research. This attention to content balance is something that LITA consistently gets right at our annual forum—there is literally something for everyone from introductory concepts to technical details—and I look forward to seeing many familiar faces and meeting some new folks at this year's LITA National Forum in St. Louis "Rivers of Data: Currents of Change." I would also like to take this opportunity to personally invite each and every ITAL reader to the 2012 LITA National Forum. Building on this year's theme, the 2012 LITA National Forum will be "The New World of Data: Discover. Connect. Remix." I just signed off on theme this week and I am excited and impressed by the work completed by the National Forum Planning Committee so far. Please look for the call for papers and posters to come out in late December.

I love the forum because it is much more intimate than the much larger ALA meetings I always come away with new ideas and new friends. I am not alone in this feeling. A recent forum attendee commented, "the LITA Forum was one of the best conferences I have attended. I met a far greater concentration of peers—colleagues at other libraries doing similar work—at LITA Forum than I have met at other similar conferences." I don't think I could say it better myself.

The 2012 forum theme is one of great personal interest to me and I plan to extend the theme to the LITA President's Program on June 24, 2012, in Anaheim. In fact

hardly a day goes by in my professional life (and it sometimes creeps into my personal life too!) when I don't think about the issues of connecting people with data, and then how to present that data in ways that are relevant to their needs. The tides are shifting in health sciences library and likely in your library too. Ongoing changes in publishing and the changing nature of research have challenged the traditional nature of the library. It is no longer solely a repository for information, physical or virtual. As librarians move from collecting and cataloging bibliographic information new roles have emerged in data discovery, in its preservation, and in helping to make data more accessible. Important specialties include; knowledge management, data visualization, e-science and copyright. Librarians have valuable skills sets in mining and accessing data, human-computer interaction, computer interface design, and knowledge management that can be leveraged now.

It is inevitable that data discovery will quicken the pace of science and lead to collaboration and collaboration will in turn lead to data discovery and accelerate the pace of science and so on and so on. In short twentieth century data stored in individual scientists' notebooks or computers is largely inaccessible. Twenty-first-century data needs to be available 24/7 in a curated state for continuous analysis. Information overload and data deluge created by intersection of science and technology are two very real problems that the librarians have the skill and ability to deal with. And, as I talk of science, bear in mind that it extends beyond the biological and physical sciences to encompass the social sciences as well. Interdisciplinary studies in particular have intensive data needs. In fields such as public health and urban planning, government data alongside research data is used to predict trends, forecast, make decisions, etc. Government data is a particularly important part of the equation. Consider the recent NSF requirement for researchers to provide open access to their data for any NSF-sponsored grants. It is likely other government agencies will follow suit.

One of Taiga's provocative statements of 2011 is "#10. The oversupply of MLSs" which states that "within five years, library programs will have overproduced MLSs at a rate greater even than humanities PhDs and glutted a permanently diminished market."¹ As the alarming scenario of an over abundance of new MLSs in proportion to available library jobs presents itself, I encourage librarians to begin to envision themselves as digital information brokers or data scientists. The US Department of Labor in the 2010-11 Occupational Outlook Handbook, anticipates that librarian jobs in nontraditional settings will grow the fastest over this decade. Nontraditional libraries and jobs include working as information brokers for private corporations, nonprofit organizations, and consulting firms. "Many companies are turning to librarians because of

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their research and organizational skills and their knowledge of computer databases and library automation systems. Librarians can review vast amounts of information and analyze, evaluate, and organize it according to a company's specific needs." ² We have been seeing new job titles emerging to reflect these needs, such as data curation librarian, digital data outreach librarian, GIS librarian, etc. What is your library doing with data? How can you and your library address the data needs of the twenty-first century? What technology is needed to address data needs? How can LITA help you meet those needs? Consider this

column a call to arms for librarians of all backgrounds. The time to address data discovery is now!

References

1. "Taiga 2011 Provocative Statements," <http://taigaforumprovocativestatemts.blogspot.com/> (accessed Sept. 22, 2011).
2. United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010–11 Edition*, <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos068.htm> (accessed Sept. 22, 2011).

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EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION

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