

President's Message:

Open Access/Open Data

Colleen Cuddy

I am very excited to write this column. This issue of *Information Technology and Libraries (ITAL)* marks the beginning of a new era for the journal. *ITAL* is now an open-access, electronic-only journal. There are many people to thank for this transition. The LITA Publications Committee led by Kristen Antelman did a thorough analysis of publishing options and presented a thoughtful proposal to the LITA Board; the LITA Board had the foresight to push for an open-access journal even if it might mean a temporary revenue loss for the division; Bob Gerrity, *ITAL* editor, has enthusiastically supported this transition and did the heavy lifting to make it happen; and the LITA office staff worked tirelessly for the past year to help shepherd this project. I am proud to be leading the organization during this time. To see *ITAL* go open access in my presidential year is extremely gratifying.

As Cliff Lynch notes in his editorial, “the library profession has been slow to open up access to the publications of its own professional societies, to take advantage of the greater reach and impact that such policies can offer.” As librarians challenge publishers to pursue open-access venues, myself included, I am relieved to no longer be a hypocrite. By supporting open access we are sending a strong message to the community that we believe in the benefits of open access and we encourage other library organizations to do the same. *ITAL* will now reach a much broader and larger audience. This will benefit our authors, the organization, and the scholarship of our profession.

I understand that while our members embrace open access, not everyone is pleased with an online-only journal. The number of new journals being offered electronically only is growing and I believe we are beginning to see a decline in the dual publishing model of publishers and societies offering both print and online journals. My library has been cutting back consistently on print copies of journals and this year will get only a handful of journals in print. Personally, I have embraced the electronic publishing world. In fact, I held off on subscribing to *The New Yorker* until it had an iPad subscription model! I estimate that I read 95 percent of my books and all of my professional journals electronically. The revolution has happened for me and for many others. I know that our membership will adapt and transition their *ITAL* reading habits to our new electronic edition and I look forward to seeing this column and the entire journal in its new format.

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Earlier this week saw the Research Works Act die. Librarians and researchers across the country celebrated this victory as we preserved an important open-access mandate requiring the deposition of research articles funded by the National Institutes of Health into PubMed Central. This act threatened not just research but the availability of health information to patients and their families. As librarians, we still need to be vigilant about preserving open access and supporting open-access initiatives. I would like to draw your attention to the Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA, HR 4004). This act was recently introduced in the House, with a companion bill in the Senate. As described by the Association of Research Libraries, [FRPPA](#) would ensure free, timely, online access to the published results of research funded by eleven U.S. federal agencies. The bill gives individual agencies flexibility in choosing the location of the digital repository to house this content, as long as the repositories meet conditions for interoperability and public accessibility, and have provisions for long-term archiving. The legislation would extend and expand access to federally-funded research resources and, importantly, spur and accelerate scientific discovery. Notably, this bill does not take anything away from publishers. No publisher will be forced to publish research under the bill's provisions; any publisher can simply decline to publish the material if it feels the terms are too onerous. I encourage the library community to contact their representatives to support this bill.

Open access and open data are the keystones of e-science and its goals of accelerating scientific discovery. I hope that many of you will join me at the LITA President's Program on June 24, 2012, in Anaheim. Tony Hey, Corporate Vice President of Microsoft Research Connections and former director of the U.K.'s e-Science Initiative, and Clifford Lynch, Executive Director of the Coalition for Networked Information, will discuss data-intensive scientific discovery and its implications for libraries, drawing from the seminal work *The Fourth Paradigm*. Librarians are beginning to explore our role in this new paradigm of providing access to and helping to manage data in addition to bibliographic resources. It is a timely topic and one in which librarians, due to our skill set, are poised to take a leadership role. Reading *The Fourth Paradigm* was a real game changer for me. It is still extremely relevant. You might consider reading a chapter or two prior to the program. It is an open-access e-book available for download from Microsoft Research (<http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/collaboration/fourthparadigm/>). I keep a copy on my iPad, right there with downloaded *ITAL* article PDFs.