

As I started planning this column, I looked back over my other columns for the year and discovered that they have a theme: the connection that runs from our past, through our present, and into our future.

In my first column, I talked about the first issues of ITAL: Henriette Avram founding MARC right here in these pages. Early LITA hackers cobbling together the technologies of their age to make streamlined, inventive library services — just as LITA members do today.

In my second column, I talked about conferences where we come together today — LITA Forum 2017 and 2018 — and encounter the issues of today — Data for Black Lives. I can close my eyes and I'm in Denver, chatting with long-time colleagues and first-time presenters ... or I'm at the MIT Media Lab, watching algorithmic opportunity and injustice spar with one another, while artists and poets point us toward the Wakandan imaginary.

And in my third column, I talked about the possibility of LITA, LLAMA, and ALCTS coming together to form a new division: a potential future. This possibility both knocked my world off its axis and let me see it in a new light; I didn't imagine that I'd spend my presidency exploring the options for large-scale organizational transformation, and yet I can see how this route could not only address challenges all three divisions face, but also give us opportunities to be stronger together.

I believe in this roadmap, but I also want us all to grapple with the question of identity. What's peripheral, and what's central, to who we are as library technologists? What's ephemeral, and what endures? What's the through line we can hold on to, across that past and present, and carry with us into the future?

Today, here in the present, I'm preparing to turn over my piece of that line to President-Elect Bohyun Kim. She has been unfailingly brilliant and diligent in the years I've known her, and I know she'll ask insightful questions, advocate for all that's best in LITA and its people, and get things done.

But I'm also cognizant that it was never really my line; it was yours. I had the immense privilege of carrying it for a while, but as we hear every time we survey our members, the best part of LITA is the networking — it's you. We will have many chances to discuss our through line in the months to come and I urge you to bring your voices to the table: ask your questions, tell us what matters, and depict your imaginaries.

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