

# Letter from the Editor

Kenneth J. Varnum

---

As 2018 draws to a close, so does our celebration of *Information Technology and Libraries'* 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In the final "ITAL at 50" column, Editorial Board member Steven Bowers takes a look at the 1990s. Much as for Steven, for me this decade was where my career direction and interests crystallized around the then-newfangled "World Wide Web." Taking a look at the topics covered in *ITAL* over those ten years, it's clear that *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*: the more things change, the more they stay the same. We were exploring then questions of how the burgeoning Internet would allow libraries to provide new services and be more efficient and helpful in improving existing ones. User experience, distributed data and the challenges that causes, who has access to technology and who does not.... All topics as vibrant and concerning then as they are now.

With the end of our look back at the last 50 years, we are taking the opportunity start something new in 2019. There will be a new quarterly column, "Public Libraries Leading the Way," to highlight a technology-based innovation from a public library perspective. Topics we are interested in include the following, but proposals on any other technology topic are welcome.

- Virtual and augmented reality
- Artificial intelligence
- Big data
- Internet of things
- 3-D printing and makerspaces
- Robotics
- Drones
- Geographic information systems and mapping
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion and technology
- Privacy and cyber-security
- Library analytics and data-driven services
- Anything else related to public libraries and innovations in technology

Columns will be in the 1,000-1,500 word range and may include illustrations. These will not be research articles, but are meant to share practical experience with technology development or uses within the library. If you are interested in contributing a column, please submit a [brief summary of your idea](#). I'm grateful to the *ITAL* Editorial Board, and especially to Ida Joiner and Laurie Willis, for their guidance in shaping this concept.

Regardless of whether you work in a public, or any other, library, I'm always happy to talk with you about how your experience and knowledge could be published as an article in *ITAL*. Get in touch with me at [varnum@umich.edu](mailto:varnum@umich.edu).

Kenneth J. Varnum, Editor

[varnum@umich.edu](mailto:varnum@umich.edu)

December 2018

