

2007 is *ITAL*'s 40th volume. My 40th birthday was the occasion of a great deal of bizarre behavior by my work colleagues, who booby-trapped my office. I do not like cake but love radishes. My birthday "cake" at work was a cheese ball decorated with forty radishes stuck on toothpicks. Since I didn't have to blow them out, I ate them—all forty.

*ITAL*'s fortieth is no time for such shenanigans. Rather it is a time for reflection, celebration, and memoriam.

Fred Kilgour, the founding editor of the *Journal of Library Automation (JOLA)*, *ITAL*'s original title, died last summer. In planning for the 40th anniversaries of LITA in 2006 and *ITAL* in 2007, the Editorial Board and I wanted to honor Fred as founding editor. I called him and invited him to submit an article of his choosing. He thanked me but graciously declined. He was busy writing his memoirs and said that he needed to conserve his strength for that task.

To honor him as founding editor, I have invited a number of authors to submit articles describing their research or their seminal thoughts on our profession. Readers have, I hope, seen those articles that are so designated by notes. I have also invited all LITA members to submit such articles in previous editorials and in a posting to *lita-l*. Several articles have resulted from these invitations. This being the first issue of the 2007 volume, it is neither too late for me to reissue an invitation, nor too late for you LITA members and *ITAL* readers to respond with articles that commemorate our fortieth.

I'm old enough to know that it is a cliché to proclaim "there has never been a more exciting time to be a librarian." It was so when volume 1 of *JOLA* appeared in 1967. It is so today. Let us together peruse the tables of contents (TOCs) of the first two issues.

## Vol. 1, no. 1

Ned C. Morris, "Computer Based Acquisitions System at Texas A&I University"; Richard D. Johnson, "A Book Catalog at Stanford"; Robert Wedgeworth, "Brown University Library Fund Accounting System"; Richard E. Chapin and Dale H. Pretzer, "Comparative Costs of Converting Shelf List Records to Machine Readable Form"; Richard De Gennaro, "The Development and Administration of Automated Systems in Academic Libraries"

## Vol. 1, no. 2

Lawrence Auld, "Automated Book Order and Circulation Control Procedures at the Oakland University Library"; Donald V. Black, "Creation of Computer Input in an Expanded Character Set"; Frederick C. Kilgour, "Costs of Library Catalog Cards Produced by Computer"; R. A. Kennedy, "Bell Laboratories' Library Real-Time Loan System (BELLREL)"

Four things are immediately striking about those titles. Their authors described computer-based solutions and systems for big issues facing libraries forty years ago. Second, those problems were all administrative, i.e., they involved using computers to increase the productivity of major operations performed by librarians and library staff. To paraphrase an oft-cited goal, they were systems designed to attempt to control the rate of rise of library costs of operations—to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of internal library processes. Therefore third, they were not systems for library users per se. And fourth, they were harbingers of success. Global cooperative cataloging and well-integrated library systems have revolutionized our operations. We are devoting relatively more resources to direct services than we did forty years ago.

I do not mean that no thoughts or efforts were being devoted to improved user services. When these articles were published, Lockheed and the System Development Corporation (SDC) were in the process of developing the first commercially successful, general online database search systems. In fact, forty years ago, in a former life, as it were, I was present at what I believe was the first trans-continental online information search, from a Teletype machine in SDC's office in Dayton, Ohio, to a computer at its Santa Monica headquarters. (Aside to readers: As an impatient young man, I was struck less by the "magic" of the event than by an observation that I expressed on the spot: the response time was horrible—unacceptable. I opined that no one would put up with such a wait. I narrowly escaped with my scalp intact.) The National Library of Medicine (NLM) was perfecting the Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System (MEDLARS), MEDLINE's (MEDLARS Online's) predecessor. Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) services were already being provided using batch processes. Computers generated a myriad of printed article and technical report indexes.

We've come a long way in forty years. An article in the current issue describes what librarians need to know about "Facebook." Increasingly, in information-rich societies, our students and others want and need their information technology on the run.

The first five paragraphs of this editorial were composed three weeks ago using the word processor on my Palm Treo 650 whilst I sat in medical-center waiting and examining rooms in Portland, Oregon. I downloaded the TOCs of *JOLA* to my home desktop computer in Vancouver, Washington, two weeks ago. Yesterday, I

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12. If you answered "Yes" to question 11, please describe how Facebook could be considered an academic endeavor.

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13. Please check all answers that best describe what effect, if any, use of Facebook in the library has had on library services and operations?

- Has increased patron traffic
- Has increased patron use of computers
- Has created computer access problems for patrons
- Has created bandwidth problems or slowed down Internet access
- Has generated complaints from other patrons
- Annoys library faculty and staff
- Interests library faculty and staff
- Has generated discussion among library faculty and staff about Facebook

14. Is privacy a concern you have about students using Facebook in the library?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Please list any observations, concerns, or opinions you have regarding Facebook use in libraries.

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*Editorial continued from page 3*

extracted the paragraphs from my Palm to my desktop, and saved that document and the TOCs on a Universal Serial Bus (USB) key. Today, I combined them in a new document on my laptop and keyed the remaining paragraphs in my room at an inn on a pier jutting into Commencement Bay in Tacoma on southern Puget Sound. I sought inspiration from the view out my window of the

water and the fall color, from Old Crow Medicine Show on my iPod, and from early sixties *Beyond the Fringe* skits on my Treo.

Fred Kilgour was committed to delivering information to users when and where they wanted it. Libraries must solve that challenge today, and I am confident that we shall.