

This issue of *Information Technology and Libraries (ITAL)*, December 2007, marks the end of my term as editor. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the LITA membership and *ITAL* readership for the past three years. It has been one of the highlights of my professional career.

Editing a quarterly print journal in the field of information technology is an interesting experience. My deadlines for the submission of copy for an issue are approximately three and a half months prior to the beginning of the month in which the issue is published; for example, my deadline for the submission of this issue to ALA Production Services was August 15. Therefore, most articles that can appear in an issue were accepted in final form *at least* five months before they were published. Some are older; one was a baby at only four months old. When one considers the rate of change in information technologies today, one understands the need for blogs, wikis, lists, and other forms of professional discourse in our field.

What role does *ITAL* play in this rapidly changing environment? For one, unlike these newer forms, it is double-blind refereed. Published articles run a peer review gauntlet. This is an important distinction, not least to the many LITA members who work for academic institutions. It may be crass to state it so baldly, but publication in *ITAL* can help one earn tenure, an old-fashioned fact of life. It is indexed or abstracted in nineteen published sources, not all of them in English. Many of its articles appear in various digital repositories and archives, and these also are harvested or indexed or both. In addition, its articles are cataloged in WorldCat Local. Many of LITA's most prominent members—your distinguished peers—have published articles in *ITAL*. The journal also serves as a source for the wider dissemination of sponsored research, a requirement of most grants. And you can read it on the bus or at the beach (heaven forbid!), in the brightest sunlight, or with a flashlight under the covers (though there are no reports of this ever having been observed).

I am amazed at how quickly these three years have passed, though that may be at least as much a function of my advanced age as of the fun and pleasure I have had as editor. Certainly, these past three years have hosted some notable landmarks in our history. LITA and *ITAL* both celebrated their fortieth anniversaries. Sadly, the death of one of LITA's founders and *ITAL*'s first editor, Frederick

G. Kilgour, on July 31, 2006, at age ninety-two, was a landmark in the passing of an era. OCLC and RLG's merger, which Fred lived to witness, was a landmark of a different sort—one of maturity, we hope. *ITAL* is now an electronic as well as a print journal. This conversion has had some rough passages, but I trust these will have been ironed out by the time you read this.

When I became editor, I had a number of goals for the journal, which I stated in my first editorial in March 2005. Reading that editorial today, I realize that we successfully accomplished the concrete ones that were most important to me then: increasing the number of articles from library and I-school faculty; increasing the number that result from sponsored research; increasing the number that describe any relevant research or cutting-edge advancements; increasing the number of articles with multiple authors; and finding a model for electronic publication of the journal. The accomplishment of the most abstract and ambitious goal, "to make *ITAL* a destination journal of excellence for both readers and authors," only you, the readers and authors, can judge.

I thank Mary Taylor, LITA executive director, and her staff for all of the support they provided to me during my term. I owe a debt that I can never repay to all of the staff of ALA Production Services who worked with me these past three years. Their patience with my sometimes bumbling ways was award-winning. Thank all of you. The LITA presidents and other officers and board members were unfailingly supportive, and I thank you all. In the LITA organizational structure, the *ITAL* editor and the Editorial Board report to the LITA Publications Committee, and the editor is a member of that body. I thank all of the chairs and other members of that committee for their support.

Once more, and sadly for the last time, I thank all of the members of the *ITAL* Editorial Board who served during my term for their service and guidance. They perform more than their share of refereeing, but more importantly, as I have written before, they are the junkyard dogs who have kept me under control and prevented my acting on my worst instincts. I say again, you, the LITA membership and *ITAL* readership, owe them more than you can ever guess. Trust me.

To Marc Truitt, *ITAL* managing editor and the incoming *ITAL* editor for the 2008–2010 volume years, I must say, "Thank you, thank you, thank you!" Marc and the ALA Production Services staff were responsible for the form, fit, and finish of the journal issues you received in the mail, held in your hands, and read under the covers.

Finally, most of all, THANK YOU authors whose articles, communications, and tutorials I have had the privilege to publish, and you whose articles have been accepted and await publication.

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Not only is this the end of my term as editor, but I also have retired. From now on, my only role in the field of library and information technology will be as a user. Those of you have seen the movie *The Graduate* probably remember the early scene when Benjamin, the Dustin Hoffman character, receives the single word of advice regarding his future: “plastics.” (I don’t know if that scene is in the novel from which the movie was adapted.)

My single word of advice to those of you too young or too ambitious to retire from our field is: “handhelds.” I am surprised that my Treo is more valuable to me now in retirement than it was when I was working. (I’m not surprised that my iPod video is, nor that Word thinks that Treo and iPod are misspellings.) I just wish that more of the Web was as easily accessible on my Treo as are Google Maps and almost all of Yahoo!. Handhelds. Trust me.