

# Editorial: Eleanor Mitchell – modeling core competencies for LIS journal editors and more!

Library and information science (LIS) journals are the main route for disseminating the results of LIS-related research. They are also the main route for disseminating case studies, conceptual papers, technical papers and literature reviews related to the field.

Despite this, their editors operate largely without formal training or certification. To my knowledge, no body of literature systematically identifying core competencies for LIS journal editors exists. Conducting a scoping review to determine what is known on the competency requirements for editors of LIS journals might be a worthwhile endeavor – sometime, and for someone else!

The purpose of this editorial is twofold – first, to suggest an alternative approach to identify possible competencies for LIS journal editors and, second, to recognize the contributions of one of the best in our field – RSR’s co-editor, Eleanor Mitchell. Indeed, this issue is the last one under her co-editorship.

Data and information about journal performance demonstrate whether a journal is thriving. *Reference Services Review*’s journal performance reports affirm that the journal is thriving. The diverse contributions of the journal’s editorial advisory board, ad hoc reviewers, authors and readers are key to the journal’s performance. As co-editor, I suggest that Eleanor’s contributions have also been key to RSR’s status. Her work with the board; dealing with peer reviewers, authors and our publisher; knowledge of journal publishing; meticulous editing; and standards, ethics and integrity have made a difference to all who have had the privilege of working with her. Most importantly, her commitment to quality content ensures the journal’s continued relevance. Our readers have a right to expect their journal’s editors to implement all reasonable actions that could lead to best practices within the journal, as well as the journal having processes in place to ensure the quality of the papers we publish. Eleanor’s qualities and characteristics have ensured that these expectations are met.

On November 6, 2005, Eleanor and I spoke with then-editor Ilene Rockman to arrange the passing of the RSR editorial baton, just weeks before Dr Rockman’s death. Dr Rockman had been editor of RSR for 20 years and had firmly established the reputation of the journal as a central resource for the profession and as a publishing venue with a strong tradition of editorial support, particularly for first time authors. Eleanor and I have co-edited *Reference Services Review* for these 13 years, during which she and I have tried to maintain the journal’s reputation for excellence and continue the tradition of editorial mentorship.

Fast forward to 2019! One foot in front of the next, and with the support of a wonderful board, ad hoc reviewers, dedicated authors and readers and our publisher, we have carried on. Special issues increased downloads and CrossRef citations, and an increase in the number of articles published per year are some of the indications that the journal is thriving. Recently, we learned that as a result of the Clarivate Analytics (formerly ISI) evaluation of RSR, the journal has been accepted for inclusion in the Social Sciences Citation Index. Inclusion will be from Volume 44(1) 2016. The journal can be expected to appear with an Impact Factor and related metrics in the June 2019 release of the Journal Citation Reports (JCR), provided that all necessary content has been indexed by Clarivate Analytics in time



---

for calculations to begin. Eileen Breen<sup>1</sup>, our Publisher, writes that this is a great result with which to sign off on Eleanor's co-editorship. I could not agree more!

While the journal is a collaborative effort through and through, I suggest that we pause to appreciate Eleanor's complete dedication to the journal; provision of excellent contact with our board, ad hoc reviewers, authors and with our Emerald colleagues, as well as useful ideas for improving our administrative and editorial process and a lens through which to see our successes. On a personal note, working side by side with Eleanor has been an honor and a privilege. She is a damn good editor with a fierce devotion. We both know that there are times when I need someone to point me in a different direction and delete the numerous rhetorical questions that generally pepper my first or second "takes" on our editorials! For all the times we would tango through to a better draft and a better understanding – a most sincere thank you!

Finally, I want to welcome Tammy Ivins (University of North Carolina Wilmington) as Supporting Editor. I wish her as much pleasure as Eleanor and I have had in the daily contact with LIS scholarship and practice that editorial work brings and the vision to continue to expand our journal in new and exciting directions.

**Sarah Barbara Watstein**

*Lemieux Library, Seattle University, Seattle, Washington, USA*

#### Note

1. Publisher Eileen Breen extends her own thanks to Eleanor, for 13 years of journal development, support of Emerald, and responsiveness to the change which has occurred in journal publishing during that time.