

A new library world and more

“Combining the new and the enduring in information, learning and libraries”

Welcome to ILS

Welcome to the first double issue of *Information and Learning Science (ILS)*. Given the change in the journal title (but not the volume or issue numbering), I thought it a good idea to write an explanatory editorial giving more detail about why there has been a refocusing of *New Library World*.

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Context

Anything and everything can now be connected to the Internet. Information and communications technology (ICT) is fundamentally changing the ways in which information is created, stored and delivered and how learning processes are developed, provided and experienced. But this is only one aspect of the latest developments in information and learning as part of a broader, significant shift in the way people live and learn, work and play. Societies are being transformed through democratisation, globalisation and consumerisation; changing demographics are affecting the needs and wants of user groups; global and regional economic forces are driving what is available to whom, when, where and how. Library provision – of all types and across all sectors – is also being transformed.

Recent work by David Baker in the field

I have long been involved in digital library development, strategic technology management and information service provision and staffing, as the bibliography at the end of this editorial will testify. But recent trends have been especially brought home to me through working on two recent publications: “Innovation in Libraries and Information Services. Advances in Library Administration and Organization” (Bradford: Emerald, 2016) and “The End of Wisdom? The Future of Libraries in a Digital Age” (Oxford: Chandos, 2017), both written and edited in collaboration with Wendy Evans. “The End of Wisdom” focuses on the hypothesis surrounding “the end of libraries” and “the end of the book”, looking at what many term a “crisis of identity” for “the library”. We argue that:

not only is the future of “the library” irrevocably bound up with the future of mankind and civilised society more broadly, but its fate will also be an indicator of the kind of world in which we live in the coming years.

Batt (2016) sums up the current trends and future challenges well:

There was a time when a steam engine was an iron horse and a motorcar was a horseless carriage. So it is that the badge of library is now attached as a metaphor of transition to digital asset collections of whatever stripe. It is certainly the case that digital assets now form key building blocks for libraries and information services in both private and public sectors. It is positively not the case that every organisation building and maintaining collections of digital assets would consider itself to be a library. This may be self-evident, but it raises important issues concerning the relationships between traditionally separate institutions and the ways in which service boundaries in the digital space may need to be drawn in the future. The difference between popular ideas of the library – a place with physical collections managed by librarians – and what may in future be implied by the notion of the digital library is not merely a matter of semantics. It underlines the possibility that, in the long term, success in the digital space may require radical redefinition of institutional roles and structures.



As I have written elsewhere:

We are experiencing a paradigm shift, not only in terms of a “fundamental change in the basic concepts and experimental practices of [the] discipline” of library and information provision (*qua* librarianship) with most [...] of the innovatory work being done outside the established or prevailing development frameworks (Baker, 2016).

Broadening the scope

The aforementioned context thus explains the broadening of scope from *New Library World*. *Information and Learning Science (ILS)* aims to be one of the premier scholarly and research journals in the field of information and learning science. *ILS* continues and broadens the work of its predecessor journal, *New Library World*, a prestigious journal set up in 1898 and one of the oldest publications of its type in the world and whose aims, objectives and scope will remain embedded in *ILS*.

ILS aims to embrace and explore all aspects of the creation, collection, discovery and use of all types of information, knowledge, learning and research resources, as well as the interdisciplinary study of teaching and learning across key fields within information and learning sciences and beyond. Account will be taken of social, cultural, economic, ergonomic, ethical and sectoral issues. As previously, published papers will be based on high-quality, peer-reviewed, verified research in the fields described and listed.

Key topic areas will therefore now include:

- developments in information architectures;
- learning and information system design and use, including learning analytics;
- the provision, discovery, delivery and use of learning objects;
- the role of information and learning spaces – digital and physical;
- human information behaviour;
- human information processing;
- information experiences in teaching and learning;
- reading, information and learning;
- information transformation and learning;
- work, learning and continuing development;
- digital and “post-digital” futures;
- intellectual property rights, privacy and security in the digital environment;
- collaborative, competitive and integrative working; and
- evaluation and appraisal of digital information objects and learning;

End note

This, then, is the new scope, incorporating all the best of *New Library World* while rightly re-orientating the journal for the next decades of the twenty-first century. Submissions will be welcome on the wide range of key themes and topics that constitute information and learning science in the twenty-first century.

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References

Batt, C. (2016), "Strategic futures for digital information services", in Baker, D and Evans, W. (Eds), *Digital Information Strategies: from Applications and Content to Libraries and People*, Chandos, Oxford, pp. 21-38.

List of relevant publications by David Baker, and by David Baker with Wendy Evans

Baker, D. (2016), "Making sure things can never be the same again: innovation in library and information services", *Advances in Library Administration and Organization*, Vol. 35, pp. 1-44.

Further reading

Baker, D. (1992), "Access versus holdings policy with special reference to the University of East Anglia", *Interlending and Document Supply*. Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 131-137.

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Baker, D. (2007), "Combining the best of both worlds: the hybrid library", in Earnshaw, R. and Vince, J. (Eds), *Digital Convergence: Libraries of the Future*, Springer, London, pp. 95-106.

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Baker, D. and Evans, W. (2013a), *A Handbook of Digital Library Economics*. Oxford: Chandos.

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