

HOW PUBLIC LIBRARIES BUILD SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Edited by Kaurri C. Williams-Cockfield
and Bharat Mehra

ADVANCES IN
LIBRARIANSHIP

VOLUME 53

**HOW PUBLIC LIBRARIES BUILD
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN
THE 21ST CENTURY**

ADVANCES IN LIBRARIANSHIP

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HOW PUBLIC LIBRARIES BUILD SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

EDITED BY

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan
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Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2023

Editorial matter and selection © 2023 Kaurri C. Williams-Cockfield and Bharat Mehra.
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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80382-436-9 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-80382-435-2 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-80382-437-6 (Epub)

ISSN: 0065-2830 (Series)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This book is dedicated to the steadfast and brave librarians of the Ukraine and to Ms Larysa Luhova, Director of the Lviv Regional Library for Children and Vice President of the Ukrainian Library Association at the time work on this publication began. Ms Luhova was selected to submit a chapter about public library ecological projects for children that were in development prior to the start of the Ukrainian War. Once the war began, Ms Luhova had to stop working on her chapter for this publication and devote her time to preserving Ukrainian culture. Our hope is that she will share this story with the library profession at some time in the future.

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SERIES EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to take this opportunity and introduce myself as the new Series Editor of *Advances in Librarianship* since January 2021. In this capacity, I plan to extend the series' impact via integrating a critical perspective that spotlights social justice and inclusive praxis from the shadows to become an emerging canon at the very core of who we are and what we value as legit in Library and Information Science (LIS) scholarship and practice. This strategic vision requires destabilizing of entrenched hegemonies within our privileged ranks and external communities to alleviate intersecting political, economic, social, and cultural anxieties, and power imbalances we witness today. As we move toward the quarter-century mark, we also need to effectively document such paradigmatic shifts in LIS, serving as a foundation of inspiration upon which, together in our multiple identities and diversities, we can proudly contribute to the building of a meaningful society toward a brighter future for our children to inherit.

New stimulating models reimagining (or extending) the roles for cultural memory institutions (e.g., libraries, museums, archives, schools, etc.) and the field of information are much required to develop symbolic and real infrastructures for moving us forward. We also need to better tell our stories of information activism and community mobilization in the face of overwhelming challenges to human existence, from forces of neoliberal corporatization, political ransacking, media irresponsibility, climate change, environmental degradation, pandemic dis/misinformation, etc. What do the contemporary threats of human extinction and cultural decay mean for LIS professionals, be it scholars, researchers, educators, practitioners, students, and others embedded in a variety of information settings? Not only does it require actions in the "doing" of resistance via information to decenter dysfunctional powerbrokers and their oppressions and entitled privileges. However, disseminating a forward-thinking agenda and narrative beyond our internally focused bastardized institutional bastions is equally important, as we adopt an active stance to promote fairness, justice, equity/equality, change agency, empowerment, community building, and community development.

Advances in Librarianship holds a special place in the hands, hearts, and minds of readers as a key platform to support creative ideas and practices that change and better articulate the vital contributions of libraries and the impact of information on diverse multicultural communities in a global network information society. Moving forward, my aim for the series is to engage our diverse professional communities in critical discourse that enable real transformations to occur. It is important to propel progress in shifting entrenched positionalities in LIS, while making visible content related to the "margins." Decentering canons and practices toward equity of representation, inclusivity, and progressive change will

naturally occur. Intersecting social, cultural, political, and economic upheavals in recent times demand an urgent response from the LIS professions in this regard.

I am truly honored and privileged to build on the legacy of Paul T. Jaeger, who served as Series Editor of *Advances in Librarianship* since 2013. His research helped to mobilize LIS in addressing concerns surrounding equity, diversity, and inclusion more substantially beyond past lip service, also shaping the focus of the book series. I plan to operationalize new directions for single- or multi-authored book-length explorations and edited collections by shifting focus on understudied spaces, invisible populations from the margins, and knowledge domains that have been under-researched or under-published in what we consider as high impactful venues in LIS and beyond. Examples might involve a reflective journey that established, or newly emerging LIS scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students critically reflect, assess, evaluate, and propose solutions or actions to change entrenched practices and systemic imbalanced inequities in different library and information-related settings. It might also involve decolonizing LIS publication industries in their biased Euro/Anglo-centricities with inclusion of content from geographical diversities around the world.

I am reaching out to our multiple audiences for their support toward these goals in spreading the word for proposals to new volumes in the series. Let us find our “collective voice” in the LIS professions to make us all uncomfortable as we continue to “push the buttons,” thereby, becoming stronger in our quest to further social justice and develop our humanity, human dignity, respect, and potential to the fullest.

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