Welcome to issue 190 which is themed around research – what it is, how to do it, what resources to use, how to promote what you have done, and examples of it. If you’ve always thought that research wasn’t for you, or wasn’t something that figured in your day to day work – then Claire Sewell will make you think again. She discusses ways that cataloguers can fit research into their role, and offers examples of ways to promote the research once it has been done. She reminds us that research is not just for academics, and we all have something to offer.

Once we’ve done the research, or worked on a project, then the next step is to share it, and one way is via a conference presentation. If you’ve never spoken at a conference before then the premise can feel very daunting. Katrina Clifford talks us through her first time, which was at the CIG conference in 2016 in Swansea. She was learning as she went along, and passes on some useful hints and tips regarding preparation and speaking. Her paper is also a timely reminder that there is a first time for everyone, and not every speaker you hear at a conference may be as confident as you perceive them to be. It can be very rewarding to conquer your nerves and give it a go!

Jane Secker discusses the idea of librarians as researchers and gives lots of good reasons why librarians should do research. She offers 9 excellent tips for doing research, as well as addresses some of the potential barriers that librarians might face when considering doing research. This reflective article offers advice for those in various stages of the research process, and is also very persuasive about the benefits of being a librarian researcher.

Viola Voß tells us about the research she initially did for her masters, that was subsequently expanded into a practical project, on the reclassifying of German university libraries.
This example demonstrates that sometimes an in-house project or piece of research can have a much wider application, across other libraries, and can prove to be really useful.

Anastasia Kerameos raises questions about professional journals and access, or lack or access, when your library doesn’t subscribe to what you need. She highlights the services that CILIP does offer, including *Library & Information Science Abstracts*, whilst making us think about what we should perhaps be asking for. We would like to hear about other resources that you find useful, and that perhaps others don’t know about.

Following on from this, we have the “Why I love…” mini articles where Simon French, Amy Staniforth, Karen Pierce and Fotis Mystakopoulos share their enthusiasm for their favourite resources in a lighthearted way.

To round the issue off we have a look at what it takes to bring an issue of C&I together written by one of our editors, Karen Pierce, and some more ideas on how you can contribute.

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For those outside academia, the word *research* can offer a scary image. People often picture a scientist in a lab surrounded by test tubes or a historian pouring over ancient documents which can seem miles away from the daily role of a cataloguer. However as the Harlem Renaissance writer Zora Neale Hurston says in the quote above, research is really just a formal way of being curious. It offers a chance to find out about something following a defined set of guidelines. Given that cataloguers are known problem solvers who enjoy following rules, workplace research is a great fit for their skill set.

This article will look at how cataloguers can fit research into their role, what they can investigate and showcase some different ways they can communicate their results to the wider world.

**Why do research?**

There are several benefits to both the individual and the wider organisation of doing research. Perhaps the main reason that practitioners undertake research is to help them solve a problem. Although this is not always seen as research it has a lot of the same steps – a problem is identified, the cataloguer looks around to see what options there are, chooses and implements a solution and then evaluates that solution. If you take a step back from the terminology this process feels a lot like research. Carrying out research also offers backup to what librarians know and helps to make the case to stakeholders – whether this is asking for more money or the introduction of a different process. Having solid evidence as a result of research can be hard to argue with!

Producing research can also help with career advancement. It helps to make a job application stand out in the pile and gives the candidate some great examples to bring to interview. Perhaps the biggest benefit of doing and sharing research is that it helps others to learn from what you have done. Like many other sectors of the profession, cataloguing and classification has a lot of the same problems no matter which institution you are based in. Instead of working to reinvent the wheel over common problems, research helps to share the solutions with the wider community so that others can build on them and develop new ideas.

**Fitting research into your role**

For many cataloguing practitioners the main concern around doing research is how they will fit it into their existing role. It is unlikely that you will have dedicated time built into their job description unless you have academic responsibilities so something else will need to be sacrificed, especially as formal practitioner research can take a significant amount of time.

The good news is that cataloguers are likely to be doing some form of research already. As discussed above, research and problem solving are essentially two sides of the same coin.

Cataloguers work to solve problems every day and research is just an extension of this. These problems can be used as a good jumping off point for more formal research projects. Try talking to your manager about the possibility of taking work time to carry out research. Be careful to outline what is in it for them as well as for you. Will you help to develop a new process that will benefit the department or solve a longstanding problem? Imagine you are building a business case to justify the cost to them in releasing you from your duties. What will they be getting in return for their investment?
Sometimes carrying out a research project by yourself can seem daunting so why not team up with colleagues in the same or even a different department? This can be a really great way to spread the load, promote good working relationships and get a different perspective on problems. If none of these approaches work and the research is something you feel passionate about then you may need to accept that you will have to do it in your personal time. This may be for a one-off project or the start of a longer term sideline in research. Although it can feel harsh having to do work in your own time consider how important the research is to you. If it is important then you may feel that the sacrifice is worth it. If you want to pursue research longer term then it may be that you have to work on the first piece in your own time but once you have proved the benefits to the department you may find that your manager thinks differently!

**Communicating your research**

Once you have done your research then it’s time to think about how you will share it with both your peers and the wider cataloguing community. There are lots of different ways to share research depending on the type of research it is and your own personal preferences.

When we talk about communicating research most people think of formal routes such as peer reviewed journal papers and conference presentations. These are great ways to talk about research but they require a lot of effort. You need to find the right venue and then it could be months before the research is actually published. On the plus side they are recognised methods of sharing research and are likely to open your work up to the audience who is most interested in research.

Peer reviewed journals and conferences are seen by some as the gold standard of sharing but this view is based on a time when they were the only option to share research. Today there are many more routes available, both formal and informal. Giving a speech at a conference can be intimidating, especially for the novice presenter, so why not consider a poster presentation instead? This will give you a chance to showcase your research in both a textual and visual form to a conference audience. Although you will have to present your poster by talking to attendees this is much less pressured than a formal presentation as you mostly speak to people one on one. If you want to write about your work then why not try the professional press (like Information Professional or C&I!). These publications will have a targeted audience who are likely to be interested in the topic of your work. You might also want to look at any institutional publications which showcase research. These can be an excellent way to make a local audience aware of your work and promote the library at the same time. If your research is really in-depth then you might consider contributing to a book on the topic, although again this can be time consuming.

Social media has had a huge impact on the way that research is shared. As well as sharing links to published papers or presentations it can be used to share other aspects of the research process. You could blog about how you are approaching your research, the differences from your day job and any difficulties you come across. This can really help to demystify the research process and encourage others to get involved. Social media can also be a useful way to get feedback. Next time you are stuck on a problem why not tweet about it and see how fast the solutions flood in?

The most important thing to consider when choosing a communication method is what is appropriate to that particular piece of research. We’ve all seen research presented in hour long conference papers that would have worked better as a poster or a blog post so think about your choice carefully and let that guide you.
Ideas of areas to research

Another common question for those new to research is *what would I talk about?* Most people assume that their problems are so local that they couldn’t possibly be of interest but in a discipline such as cataloguing it is likely that there will be a lot of crossover. Most departments are tackling similar issues and looking for solutions to the same problems. Even if your department does things in a very specialised way it may still have applications to other institutions.

With that in mind there is really no end to the areas you could cover. Have you overcome a problem in your department? Perhaps you have trialled a new way of working or reaching out to library users? Maybe you want to challenge the way things have always been done or apply a theory you have recently heard about to the cataloguing process? Consider everything you do in your department and see whether it could be the start of a research project. You could also look to the wider information world for inspiration. The introduction of new technologies and their influence on libraries always provides a solid basis for research, for example with innovations such as Linked Data moving towards the mainstream perhaps this has implications for the future of metadata? It’s also worth considering that RDA cataloguing rules have been around for a while now so perhaps the time is right to assess the impact of the new standard on catalogues and their users.

As well as looking forward you could examine some long standing practices in the light of new ways of working. There has been a great deal of discussion in the cataloguing community recently about the use of certain terms in subject headings and classification. You could undertake research and build on that discussion. Or maybe you want to look at the changing role of the cataloguer over time? If you are unsure of the topic you want to explore then it might be a good idea to look on social media. Many events and conferences use Twitter hashtags meaning that you can see the sort of areas that are being discussed and this could help to inspire you.

So what next?

Although people often have an uneasy relationship with the term *workplace research* it can offer a lot of benefits and opportunities for those in the cataloguing community. It can afford a chance to really sink your teeth into a problem which in my experience is something that a lot of cataloguers relish. It is important to share the outcomes of this research with both your peers and the wider library world. We are often told that cataloguing and metadata is a dying specialism but showcasing our research is a great way to demonstrate that we have a lot to offer. This is your chance to make an impact on the information profession and the good news it that it is likely to be easier than you think. The only thing holding you back is choosing which project to get stuck into first!

References


Further reading


It is always difficult to know what to say when writing about giving a conference paper, after all, everyone is different. Some people reading this will be able to write an abstract, give a paper and write it up afterwards without stopping to think about it. Others may have never presented before and are quite happy to share their knowledge in other ways. All I can do is tell you my experience and hope it might be vaguely interesting!

I gave my first full-length conference paper at the Cataloguing and Indexing Conference, held at Swansea in 2016. I emphasise the ‘full-length’ as in 2012 I presented a lightning talk of 10-15 minutes. Also, it was not the first time I had stood up in front of a CIG conference audience. Having been on the committee, I had chaired a couple of sessions at a conference and given the ‘housekeeping’ type notices at the start of the day. I will say though, that giving a conference paper was very different to anything I have done before and getting to that point took a little bit of work and preparation.

There had never been any big intention or burning desire to speak at the conference. With the 2016 paper and the lightning talk in 2012, it was more thinking that the work I had done might be interesting/useful to other people. Of course, there are always (hopefully) elements about our jobs that are interesting! After a training event where we were encouraged to be more vocal about sharing what we do, I started to wonder whether a small project I was undertaking on workflows and reducing unnecessary tasks might be something I could write/speak about. After all, I had written up and talked over quite a few reports for internal committees, so a lot of the work was already done and I was familiar with the language used to describe what was going on. I ran the idea past a librarian friend as I was aware that my solutions and work might be very standard practice to others and thus appear boring. They assured me that it would be interesting and another friend suggested writing for a publication such as SCONUL Focus. Looking over all the reports and data made me realise that whilst I had a lot of it written up, there was a lot that people external to my organisation would need to understand and trying to explain all the charts in written form would take up quite a chunk of any word count! Therefore, the only logical conclusion was I would have to present it.

By this point the 2016 CIG Conference was on the horizon and when the call for papers came out I submitted an abstract. I think I picked CIG as it was so familiar to me. Of course, all conferences should have supportive delegates and CIG is certainly not the only forum I could have presented it to. I think though that being on what felt like ‘home turf’ would help allay some of the fears I had about presenting.

When I sent off the abstract, the conference seemed a long way off and I thought I would ‘get around’ to writing the presentation at some point. However, as time grew closer and my inspiration for what to actually put on the slides seemed to fade, I began to panic that I would stand up with a totally blank screen. Even if I did have slides, I did not trust that I would be able to pull it all together and just present it without running it though – perhaps my amateur dramatics side kicking in, feeling I needed a ‘dress rehearsal’.

To give myself both a deadline to work to and a chance to run it, I asked about 5 or 6 colleagues from work if I could present it to them. I picked people who I knew would be supportive but constructively critical, and mostly from different teams so the material would be relatively unfamiliar.

Trying to decide what to put on the slides was difficult – 40 minutes feels like ages but I did not want to talk for the full time, mostly to allow plenty time for questions. Of course there is the obligatory ‘stuff about my institution’ slide. I felt it was also important to introduce how we do things (relevant to the topic) as I know from previous discussions at conferences that the division of tasks in the ordering process differs from many university libraries.
I found a visual way to explain some parts of the process was best, with arrows going all over the place (and added to my point about it being confusing and inefficient!). I tried to keep text to the minimum, with enough to keep people on track, but not so much that I would have to give them lots of time to read it. With about 3 years of data, there were a lot of graphs I could have included but I chose ones that showed trends – especially those going over key points in the timeline where benefits could be seen. I was not afraid though to include graphs where things had not quite gone to plan. Putting them in gave me a chance to show how processes had to be refined further or where unintended events affected the results.

There was, when it came down to it, very little that I had to create from scratch. Most of the graphs existed in internal reports, as did many of the key figures. Most of my time was spent thinking about how much to explain to those people unfamiliar with either the team’s work or the institution – this can come right down to what we call collections or teams (and what is unique or unusual about each).

I will admit that I was incredibly nervous when I came to talk to my colleagues. I thought it would be of little interest to them or I was going to be wasting everyone’s time but it was honestly the best thing I could have done. I got great feedback that helped on practical things. One suggestion was to alter the layout of a couple of slides and another to change some of the colouring in the graphs. Also, when I did practices on my own, I did not have to be as clear in my explanations as my brain filled in the rest, but actually running it with others showed areas where I was not being clear or that needed a bit more detail. From an internal communication point of view, it had the additional benefit that we discussed how their teams could help this work too.

Finally it was conference time. I was presenting on the first day, but was presenting after a break so I had time to settle into the room a little first. Again the familiarity with CIG helped in that I knew the chair of the session, and even though I had a back-up USB I could trust that they would have the slides already loaded. I was also blessed to have a very supportive colleague with me who ran and got me a drink so I did not have to queue up in a different room instead of preparing. They also went and sat at the back of the room to make sure I could be heard and watched whilst I whizzed through the slides in the break to make sure they were legible on the very huge screen they had there (and I had time to change them if needed). Having people ‘on your side’ does help me a lot – when I had presented the 10-minute talk in 2012 I got a friend to sit in the audience and signal if I was speeding up too much (a fault I have when I get overexcited about what I’m talking about!).

I had not known that the presentation lectern was a bit fancier than what was used to and had the ability to show the speaker notes separately so I still had scribbled handwritten notes and I worried that the rustling would get picked up on the microphone. However, once I got started I realised I barely needed them. I knew the layout, I knew what the content of the slides and the work that lay behind it. That is not to say I wasn’t nervous or shaking quite a bit inside though! Hopefully it was not evident to anyone watching and it sounds clichéd, but it really was over before I knew it. I had a few questions which were fine – enough to reassure me people were interested, but not the sort that meant it was not clear. I have even had people ask me questions via email after the event, so that has been a lovely bonus.

All in all, I am glad I did it. It was great to have a chance to pull together strands of a project that had spanned about 3 years and realise just how much work had been achieved. Presenting felt like a wonderful way to round it all up, something I had not realised I needed to do. Of course, as I said at the start, my experience is likely to be very different from yours, but if presenting at a conference is something that tempts you, then give it a go!
Introduction

In the last 7 years I have done several talks and workshops about librarians as researchers. I will be honest, given my background (I have a PhD in history and information studies), the two professions have always seemed well aligned to me. Some of my first jobs were on research projects, funded by Jisc, the British Library and various internal pots of money at different universities. I became a librarian in the late 1990s when there was a lot of funding into developing digital libraries and online learning in higher education, so I feel very lucky to have gained so much research experience. However, I know for many librarians, they may believe they do little research in their day jobs, and if they did a dissertation as part of the library qualification, it may have been their only venture into the world of research.

This is article is a personal account about why I think doing research is central to librarianship, what might get in your way and some tips for overcoming the challenges. I hope I will inspire you to view yourself as a researcher more too. Librarians’ identities are changing quite dramatically. Viewing yourself as a researcher may be helpful to establishing your credibility and reputation, but more importantly I hope it might give you a reason to get up every morning and really love your job!

Background

When I was offered the chance to take a sabbatical from my job at LSE in 2011 and spend a term at Wolfson College, Cambridge, you might have thought I jumped at the chance. Of course I was excited and flattered to be asked to do research as part of Cambridge University Library’s prestigious Arcadia Programme, but I was also pretty scared about the idea of being away from my job for a sustained period of time. I was particularly scared of having to, in a relatively short period of time, make a ‘contribution to knowledge’. I was worried about the loneliness, for despite having a PhD, in many ways what four years of independent research taught me, was I liked to work with other people. It was no coincidence that the year I started my PhD I got involved in founding the Postgraduate Society at LSE, which was an opportunity for PhD students to socialise and network, often over cheese and wine events that I organised! I was also very lucky to have a taught first year during my PhD as the university introduced a mandatory research training course, which I found hugely beneficial.

So I was incredibly lucky during my Arcadia Fellowship to be paired up with a fellow librarian, Emma Coonan, who at the time was the Research Skills Librarian at Cambridge University Library. Emma and I eyed each other up slightly cautiously at our first meeting, and I launched straight into ‘so what do you think information literacy actually is’ and we never looked back and went on to develop A New Curriculum for Information Literacy (Secker and Coonan, 2013) and the rest is history! We have also been speaking about the idea of librarians as researchers ever since, as it is something we both feel strongly about. We have run a number of workshops for librarians wanting to do research or wanted to get published and always been really impressed with the amazing range of subjects that librarians are interested in.
This article is partly reflective but I also wanted to offer some practical advice to librarians undertaking research, whether it be for a masters dissertation, or a piece of research or evaluation for their employer. Research is exciting; it is about finding things out, it is about learning and for me it has been the most rewarding part of my job. There is endless scope with research in librarianship as well, because you can actually find things out that help you do your job better and lead to tangible benefits. Doing some research into what your library users think of a particular aspect of a service, evaluating the information literacy workshops you run, carrying out some user experience research to improve the functionality of your website. The possibilities are endless. And if you are lucky enough to be able to choose your own topic, for example for a masters dissertation, then choose something that makes your heart sing! Choose something you care about. For me my research into information literacy was about improving my own teaching, improving student learning and understanding what motivated academic staff. I have also carried out research into librarians’ attitudes towards copyright, to help improve knowledge about this important topic in the profession. Your topic is whatever matters to you though!

Why do research?

In recent years the idea of librarians as those who support research seems to have taken centre stage, partly in my view, to the detriment of the idea that librarians are researchers themselves. Just think for a moment of how many scientists, researchers or academics would be unable to do their research without your work as a librarian? Not only do we preserve and make collections available, but we guide researchers. In health sciences librarians undertake systematic reviews, and those of us who look after special collections, preserve, catalogue and make available these materials which is indispensable to the research process. You may have got used to calling this ‘research support’ but it is librarians who allow researchers in all disciplines to take existing knowledge and transform it into something new. We are a vital part of research already! I found an article by Claire McCluskey particularly inspiring, about the work she does as an embedded librarian (McCluskey, 2013) where librarians ‘co-create knowledge’ with academic staff. She also touches on issues related to the identity of librarians and she convinced me of the value of research and evidence-based librarianship when she says:

“As a profession which promotes evidence based practice in other arenas (such as health), it seems contradictory that librarians do not live out the value of critical engagement in their own work.” (McCluskey, 2013 p. 12)

In certain roles in libraries it is also common to get involved in projects, whether these are the implementation of a new library management system, or an externally funded digitisation project. These are opportunities to do some research and we should seize them as a chance to learn some new skills and work with others. Most research projects I worked on were a chance to meet new people, at my institution and elsewhere and sometimes provided an opportunity to visit new places. If like me you believe in lifelong learning, then research is your opportunity to develop both personally and professionally. Getting involved in research can also be a boost to your self-esteem and can improve your credibility in your own institution. When I worked at LSE, the institution wanted to be the best social science institution in the world, and it needed library and online learning staff that were the best in their field to support them (or that was my argument anyway!)
What might get in your way?

So if research is so great, why aren’t librarians doing it all the time? Well, as with anything finding the time is probably one of the biggest barriers. In my experience the day job gets in the way of doing research, even if it is research that will help us do our job better. You simply have to get through each day’s round of meetings and tasks and often are not given the time to reflect on what you are doing, to question if there is a better way to do it and review your processes. That in my view is a big mistake and professional development time built into your job should be mandatory, each week too. I also think we have a big problem with research simply not being recognised as part of a librarian’s remit. However, as with all professions, it is only through taking time to reflect and review what we are doing we can make improvements. A lot of the problems can come down to a lack of support from senior management and/or colleagues who do not place a high regard on research or reflection. And of course in many public sector jobs, where budgets are tight, professional staff can be hard pressed to justify doing something that takes them away from delivering a front line service. This is the reality and I do not have a magic bullet, but by being aware of these barriers you can help try to avoid them. I hope my tips for success may help you find ways around some of the challenges you will face along the way.

Tips for Carrying out research

During the workshop Emma and I have run on librarians as researchers we shared our tips for carrying out research from the practical to the more philosophical. I hope these help and inspire you. For me research has been what has got me up in the morning every day. The Japanese have a concept called ikigai (Kavedžija, 2017), which I learnt about relatively recently. It translates into ‘what makes life worth living’ and I realised that research was my ikigai. I have found subjects that have kept me intrigued and interested for over 15 years: information literacy and copyright. I am not necessarily saying you should be as obsessed about your work as me, but librarianship offers so many opportunities to learn things every day, to help people and to contribute meaningfully to the world. I hope you will be a little bit inspired, but I also hope you will think about the need for an evidence-based approach to your work as a librarian.

1) Find your thinking place: finding time to think is difficult but for me it was often about finding a place to think. I often find myself thinking about problems and issues at the strangest times; in the bath, when gardening furiously, when I am in the middle of a particularly difficult gym session. For me my brain works when I stop trying to force it to think about a problem. You will no doubt have your own places or spaces but I also think more and more space and physical comfort is so important when you want to think.

2) Modify your attitude to time: this is probably the tip that causes the most controversy to others, because I find separating my life into down time and work time increasingly difficult (see above about what happens to my brain when I try and switch it off!) However, carving out time to work on ideas (on the train, while waiting for an appointment) is now integral to how I work. If an idea occurs to me at a time when I am not supposed to working, I have my phone with me so I make a note in Evernote (my memory is terrible) and it is amazing what I find I can get done with some time management techniques!

3) Find Your Niche / love your research: there must be a reason why you became a librarian. Try to remember what it was that inspired you in the first place, because that is a great place to start doing research. For me, I found information literacy and teaching students to critical evaluate sources was that thing. I also found copyright bizarrely fascinating and teaching others to realise it is not a horrid scary thing has become my latest hobby. It might be a collection of 18th century pamphlets in your library, or your desire to improve the functionality of your library website, whatever it is, find your niche!
4) **Find a research partner:** I have been really lucky finding research partners over the years, people who share my interests and who have had the patience to work with me, but also to inspire me. Emma and I found the work two people could achieve together on a research project was far more than if we had worked separately. The same is true with the copyright literacy work I do with Chris Morrison. Passing drafts of written work backwards and forwards and running workshops with someone else who gets what you get, is so much more fun than working on your own.

5) **Look for funding opportunities:** if you really want to justify your time spent doing research, finding some funding to support you may buy you time. This may sound impossible but there are all sorts of organisations and charities and CILIP groups (such as the Information Literacy Group) who give out research bursaries. There may also be small pots of money in your organisation for innovation or evaluation projects, so make some enquiries!

6) **Develop your online identity:** it is amazing how much you can learn from social media and for me Twitter has helped me build an online community of like-minded colleagues all around the world. I find out about all sorts of new projects, new ideas and interesting initiatives from Twitter. Having an online identity can bring new opportunities your way once you start doing research – it is a great way of doing research, or getting some advice and support if you run into a problem.

7) **Develop a robust methodology:** if you are going to do some research, I suggest you learn a bit about research methods. Surveys make my heart sink. Or feedback collected from all the people who attended your training session. Of course these can give you some data but what about all the people who do not use your services, and what about talking to some people to delve deeper? I really like qualitative research methods (interviews, focus groups or case studies): yes, they take up more time, but they give you much richer data. So do spend some time thinking about how you will do your research and what data you really need.

8) **Share your findings widely:** If you have done some research into an aspect of your work as a librarian then please share it with others! It is fairly unlikely you are the only one to have experienced this problem, so telling others about the issue and how you approached it is a great opportunity. Why not present at an internal staff meeting or take your work to a conference. If you think what you have found out is interesting, I bet others will too.

9) **Write the research up for publication:** and do not stop with just speaking about your research, write it up! There are so many library journals out there and we need to add to the evidence base in the profession. Ideally publish it in an open access journal so all your colleagues can read it, but writing up your work formally is a great opportunity to develop your skills and to raise your profile. Who knows where it might lead?

So what is stopping you? Start planning your research project now! And if you are looking for some inspiration, start with having a think about your day job and what would make it so much better.

Jane set up a Google Group called [Doctor Librarians](#) for those interested in doing research as a librarian, following a presentation at LILAC 2016. The group isn’t currently very active, but is a forum for those who might be interested in this topic and re-starting the discussions!
References


Acknowledgements

With thanks to Emma Coonan. This article is based on the ideas we used in several workshops we developed for librarians from 2012 onwards.
Many German university libraries form a so-called two-track system with one central library and a range of decentralized institute or faculty libraries. The books in these libraries are often organized according to an in-house classification scheme that has been in place for decades, fitting more or less well the collections. But when it comes to merging several libraries, e.g., in a new university building, there is a problem: n formerly independent libraries means n different classification systems under the new roof, making integrating the collections or finding your way among the shelves a challenging task. Some years ago problems like these started occurring at some libraries of Münster University. A solution was found in a library further south: in Regensburg.

When four become one: merging the Münster German Studies libraries

The Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität (WWU) Münster is one of the biggest universities in Germany, with about 670 professors and an academic staff of 5,000 educating around 45,000 students in over 280 degree courses in 120 subjects. There is no central university campus in Münster: about 240 buildings are spread throughout the entire city.

The University and Regional Library (ULB) Münster is the central literature and information supply institution for the WWU, open to all students and staff of Münster University, to members of the many other educational institutions in Münster, and to all other users interested in the collections and services. Having counted 210 libraries in 1989, today the ULB library system consists of one central library and about 100 departmental and institute libraries. The collections amount to 6 million volumes with 2.6 million located at the central library and 3.4 million at the decentralized libraries.

Among the libraries merged during the last 30 years are the ones belonging to the Institute of German Philology that was re-established from four formerly independent units – German linguistics, Medieval German Literature, Modern German Literature, and Didactics of German language and literature – in 2008. The new library\(^1\), opened in 2010 with about 142,000 volumes, faced the problem that each of the four units had used a shelf classification of its own. Although these classifications covered different key subjects there were numerous thematic and shelf mark overlaps so that they could not easily be used side by side for arranging the library holdings. Moreover, the classifications were partly outdated, their hierarchical structures were very heterogeneous, and the shelf marks were formed according to disparate principles. This situation called for the use of a different classification scheme which would allow consistent shelving of the library’s media and which would be updated on a regular basis.

A thesis on a change of classification

When I took on the management of the new WWU German Studies library (GSL) in 2011, I was doing an extra-occupational master’s degree in library and information science. The GSL classification problem turned out to be a possible topic for my master’s thesis, allowing me to “kill two birds with one stone”. So I plunged into library classification studies.

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1. For information about the library see [https://www.uni-muenster.de/Germanistik/Bibliothek/](https://www.uni-muenster.de/Germanistik/Bibliothek/) (only available in German).
The first part of the thesis (Voß 2013) analyses the four classifications that had been used in the former unit libraries “since time immemorial” and examines the strategies of other libraries that have had or have to deal with similar problems. A survey of several classification schemes comes to the conclusion that the old “home-made” classifications should be replaced by the so-called Regensburger Verbundklassifikation (RVK), a system developed at the university library of Regensburg. The second part of the thesis then lays the foundation for a reclassification project, considering aspects like determining GSL-specific uses of the RVK, comparing possible variants of book-processing workflows, or looking for possibilities to re-use classifying data available from other libraries.

To compare the fit of possible classification schemes, I compiled 16 criteria with regard to the content of the classifications and to formal/technical and organisational aspects, as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C.1</th>
<th>Relations between the GSL subject areas and the classification’s classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.2</td>
<td>Ongoing maintenance of the classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.3</td>
<td>Structure and documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.4</td>
<td>Registers/Indices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.5</td>
<td>Concordances/mappings to other classification schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.1</td>
<td>Practicability of the scheme as shelf classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.2</td>
<td>Possibilities of thematically searching the collection via the classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.3</td>
<td>Electronic/online version of the scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.4</td>
<td>Notations/class marks: hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.5</td>
<td>Notations/class marks: shortness and memorability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.6</td>
<td>Notations/class marks: structural transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.7</td>
<td>Shelf marks: IT suitability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.8</td>
<td>Shelf marks: shortness, clarity, and structural transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.1</td>
<td>Central editorial office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.2</td>
<td>Number of libraries using the scheme › availability of classifying data for re-use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.3</td>
<td>Suitability for daily use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

criteria with regard to C = content, F = form, O = organisation

Table 1.
Compared to other countries the “classification scheme landscape” in Germany is very diverse: there are only a few schemes that are used nationwide, while many libraries still use in-house, stand-alone solutions – like the WWU libraries in Münster. My comparison covered classification schemes of three different types: in-house classifications, specialized classifications used within German Studies (e.g. in bibliographies like BDSL\(^2\)), and universal classification schemes like the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), the Library of Congress Classification (LCC), the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC), or the RVK.

I collected information about the schemes from literature and from the classifications’ web-sites, and I tried to find class marks and build shelf marks on my own. Each scheme was then assessed according to the 16 criteria. The RVK was the clear winner for the purposes of the GSL.\(^3\)

For the ensuing collection of thoughts on how the reclassification of the GSL to RVK could be carried out, I was able to fall back on a number of concepts and reports published by other libraries – e.g. Oberhauser and Seidler (2009) was helpful for their model of calculating the time needed for processing different types of books in a collection – but most information was gathered via “industrial espionage”: by asking colleagues in libraries that had already undergone or were just undergoing a reclassification. They provided very helpful tips and lessons learned.

**A glimpse of the Regensburg Classification**

I cannot go into detail here – an appreciation of the RVK could easily fill a complete issue of Catalogue and Index! – but I would like to give at least some background information. The RVK scheme started in the 1960s as an in-house classification for the newly established Regensburg University library in Bavaria that kept its holdings in open shelves (not yet the norm for German university libraries in those days). The scheme was then adapted by other libraries, at first mainly in Southern Germany. Up until today over 140 libraries in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, or Italy (South Tyrol) have joined the RVK user group, with many more using the classification without being formally registered.

The editorial office is hosted by Regensburg University library. It collects, for example, the proposals for changes or additions to the classification that every library in the user group can contribute and that are accepted or rejected following a defined and transparent standardized process. The Regensburg colleagues also maintain the technical infrastructure for the online version of the scheme and a wiki with information for the user-group members.

The classes are organized in 34 sub classifications according to the main subjects taught at German universities. RVK class marks consist of two capital letters and 3 to 5 digits. For example, in the sub classification CA – CK “Philosophy”, you’ll find CC 2000 “History of Logics”, or in E “General Linguistics and Literature”, ER 945 is the class for “Language awareness and language skills”.

The shelf marks add a location number in front and author marks (3-digit Cutter-Sanborn numbers) and holdings information after the class marks: e.g. KC/ER 945 L192 for a copy of “Women, fire, and dangerous things” by George Lakoff held at the GSL, or “KC/GE 4001 B724-3,1(3)+2” for the second copy of the third edition of volume 3,1 of a history of German literature edited by Helmut Boor. The scheme can be used either for shelving books according to the classification or for subject-indexing media using only the class marks. For more information on the RVK, see e.g. Lorenz 1998, Lorenz 2003, Voß 2017a, and the RVK website.\(^4\)

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\(^3\) Interested readers can find the full matrix in Voß 2013:40. Due to their relevance for the practical usage of the schemes criteria C.1, C.2, F.1, F.8, O.1, and O.3 were doubled in the final account.

\(^4\) Cf. https://rvk.uni-regensburg.de/. For a bibliography of (mostly German) publications about RVK see http://www.bibliothek.uni-augsburg.de/sw/rvkbibliographie.html.
From thesis to real life, or, we are not alone

With my master’s thesis, I had presented a classification scheme that suits the collections and needs of the GSL, and I had planned the first steps to reclassify the library. But then, in the hurly-burly of everyday library life, this proof of concept began to collect dust: “We will start the project next month. Or the next but one. Or …”

Meanwhile other libraries in the ULB system started encountering the same kind of problems: old in-house classifications that had not kept up with the development of their subjects, plans for pooling two or more libraries in new or refurbished buildings – different libraries, different subjects, but the same difficulties. So, in June 2015, we decided to set up a “ULB RVK task force” with 12 colleagues representing 10 libraries from the departments for Catholic Theology, Chemistry & Pharmacy, Educational Studies, German Studies, History, Jewish Studies, Psychology, and Social Sciences – a broad WWU cross-section.

Luckily for us, the ULB had hired a subject specialist for Social Studies who had worked in libraries in Southern Germany that use the RVK – so we had a “fluent RVK speaker” in our team helping us a lot during our first steps into the practical work with the RVK. The goals of the RVK working group were “bundling” the different reclassification considerations undertaken so far in the respective libraries and developing joint procedures for using the RVK in WWU libraries. The to-do list covered four main tasks:

- establishing rules for adding RVK class marks and shelf marks in the local catalogue,
- developing a system of location numbers for all WWU libraries,
- developing a “planning grid” for the reclassification of WWU libraries, and
- developing an RVK manual for WWU libraries.

Beside my master’s thesis, we were able to base our discussions and planning on the outcomes of another group: because of the fact that more and more German libraries were starting to use the RVK – and all were having the same kind of questions – a colleague from the library of Greifswald University set up a “Network ‘Changeover to RVK’” in 2015. To date members of this network have met in three workshop meetings; there is also a mailing list for exchanging questions and experiences. The topics discussed and advice provided by experienced colleagues were collected in an Excel spreadsheet. It contained many aspects to consider when changing a library classification to RVK and was available for every library to use for its own purposes.

The ULB working group filtered and sorted this extensive list according to the needs of WWU libraries and published a three-part document with preliminary considerations as well as advice for planning, preparing, and carrying out a reclassification. On the basis of the manual for RVK shelf marks by the Regensburg library, we developed a detailed manual for the use of the RVK at WWU libraries, following the Regensburg version in most aspects while refining and localizing the explanations of the different aspects to consider. As we had benefitted greatly from the material provided by the Changeover Network and the Regensburg library, we wanted to give something back to the RVK community; therefore, we published our documents so that interested colleagues can use and re-use them according to their purposes.

Tools for the RVK

One of the big advantages of the RVK is that is fully and freely available online, so that first spot checks to test the classification scheme – and then later the routine work – can easily be done without any barriers or limitations. The main tool for exploring and working with the RVK is the online version provided by the library of Regensburg University. It not only features the full classification that can be searched for class marks, class mark labels, or register entries, users can also start searches for media classified in a specific class in different German library networks catalogues. There is also an integrated tool for finding Cutter-Sanborn numbers. This tool can also be used in stand-alone version provided by the library of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt University, useful, e.g., when you have a list of books that already have their class mark and now need RVK shelf marks. The classification is available as Open Data in XML und MARC21-XML. In December 2017, it got licensed under CC0 to facilitate use and implementation. The RVK website and the online classification scheme are only available in German, but some parts of the classification have been translated to English.

To search for the class mark decisions made by other libraries for a specific book, the “ISBN tool” developed at the library of Mannheim University is very helpful: Via the ISBN, it collects all data about a book available in German library catalogues, Amazon.de/com, and Google Books, and it gives links to WorldCat and other useful services. The collected library catalogue data include a list of all RVK class marks that the book in question has been assigned to; a useful overview, for example, when thinking about how to classify new books for your library.

When it comes to gathering class marks for hundreds or thousands of volumes of old stock, a different solution has to be found. While there are some programs developed at several libraries that collect data for local collections from nationwide catalogues (see e.g. Pfeffer & Eckert (2013) or Selmikeit & Oberfell (2016)), none of these is usable in the library management system setting used at WWU libraries. Our RVK working group was lucky that a colleague from ULB Digital Services compiled a script for mapping our holdings to the Bavarian catalogue (the German union catalogue with most RVK data) and for collecting the available RVK class marks. We used the lists generated by this script to reclassify the media in the WWU libraries that were changing to RVK, but we also added all RVK class marks to our central catalogue data so that they can also be used for thematic searches.

Outlook

Having completed all its tasks, the ULB RVK working group was disbanded in July 2017. Consultations, discussions, and maintenance of the manuals and training documents are coordinated by an “RVK Office” that is part of the ULB Subject Indexing Unit. The WWU libraries work independently on their reclassification projects. From time to time we discuss specific problems or exchange best practice examples.
To facilitate the introduction and training of librarians new to the classification – be it at WWU or anywhere else in “RVK land” – we are planning to develop a webquest, i.e., a collection of e-learning exercises similar to the quests we use for training students in information literacy. And, while we feel well-equipped for the years to come, we will nevertheless keep an eye on other reclassification projects so see what we can learn from them – because many aspects of reclassification are the same, no matter what classification scheme is used.

References


It all started with a single question raised at a CIG committee meeting. “Could CILIP be offering CIG members better access to relevant literature, and in particular journals?” That single question lead to, inevitably I suppose, the answer “That depends”, followed by a stream of other questions such as “How do our members keep up to date with current practices, standards and discussions?”, “Wouldn’t access to e-books also be useful?” and so on. I cannot claim to have the answers, I can only share my experience so far and do what I do best, ask the questions.

**A membership benefit**
CILIP members are encouraged to take advantage of access to the *Library & Information Science Abstracts (LISA)* and *Library Science Database* both of which are available via ProQuest, and four journal titles which are available through SAGE.

If you use this service and have set up RSS feeds or emails alerts from it we would love to hear about it. If you have not used this service before and are not sure how to access it simply go to the CILIP website, [www.cilip.org.uk](http://www.cilip.org.uk), navigate from ‘Membership’ to ‘Benefits’ and select the ‘Professional journals’ option – see Figure 1.

![Figure 1.](image)

You should be presented with three options: *LISA*, *ProQuest Library Science*, and *SAGE journals*. Selecting either of the first two will prompt you to sign in to the CILIP site and from then on, being signed in to the CILIP environment should, in theory, guarantee you immediate access to these resources. This does not always work in practice, at least it has not for me, but that is not important right now. Once within ProQuest you can set up email alerts based on your search parameters – see Figure 2.
You can also set up new content alerts for the *Journal of information science*, the *Journal of librarianship and information science*, the *Health informatics journal* and the *IFLA journal* by registering on the SAGE site. To access this content CILIP provide members with a username and password.

**Online journals**

I have always been aware of this membership benefit but since my role changed to Librarian with responsibility for Serials and e-Resources I realised that full text articles for one of the journals I now wanted to access, *The Serials Librarian*, are not available to me via this route. Of course it is fantastic that I can get a tantalising look at the recent articles and their abstracts via LISA but at the same time frustrating that I cannot access the full text articles. When the product states “Library Science Database gives users full-text access to a selection of publications relevant to library and information science” I find myself wishing that the titles I want to access are part of that selection, but they are not.

Not unlike many other libraries, the BFI Reuben Library stopped acquiring professional library journals many years ago. As our acquisitions budget could not stay in line with the rising cost of periodical subscriptions the whole budget has to be used for titles which are specific to the library’s main subject, the moving image. The only ways for me to access professional journals are via the online journals offered with CILIP membership, visiting the British Library and subscription or article purchase as an individual.

Despite being based in London, and essentially not that far from the British Library reading rooms, my time is as valuable as my subscriptions budget so I have never been able to visit. My private purchasing power does not stretch far enough to afford me the luxury of buying subscriptions to professional journals, or indeed individual articles of interest at £30 for 24 hour online access.
More questions

The next logical question was then, "Is it just that one title or are there other more obvious titles which would be useful to CIG members for which full text is not available?" After a quick search, the most apparent answer would seem to be, yes, useful titles for which full text access is missing are mostly those published by Taylor & Francis. Titles such as Cataloging & classification quarterly, Journal of electronic resources librarianship, Journal of library metadata and Technical services quarterly.

What about CILIP’s own journal over the years? Do members have access to the full text and how well is our area of expertise represented there? Although there is currently no obvious link to it from the new web pages, past issues of CILIP Update are in fact available via an archived page (https://archive.cilip.org.uk/cilip/membership/benefits/monthly-magazine-journals-ebulletins/cilip-update-magazine/archive) which leads to a portal (https://cilip.pagelizard.co.uk/magazine) for the title. The answer to the second question I guess would be that, this could always be improved.

This is also not the answer, but thankfully Catalogue & Index and a wealth of other useful information sources – conference papers, blogs, reports and tutorials - are freely available if you know where, and have the time, to look. We share some of our favourites in this issue and invite you to share yours, using the @CILIPCIG Twitter handle.
Cataloguing special collections? Want to tell your gauffered edges from your inner dentelles? Your catchwords from your chain lines? Then what you need is a copy of John Carter’s *ABC for Book Collectors*. First published in 1952, and now into its Ninth Edition, it is the book (and it is an actual book, there’s no online version of this) for those of us who have the joy of getting our hands on and cataloguing old books from time to time.

And when we are cataloguing old books we are going to be faced with some questions that just don’t crop up when we are creating a record for that 2017 edition of the *Companion to International Relations*. Questions like: is that former owner’s signature on the front-free endpaper, the half-title or on the title-page? With Carter’s book by your side there will never again be any doubt. Your 563? “Hardback” is just not going to cut it with that lovely eighteenth-century four-volume set. This is where you can finally get to say the words: an elaborately tooled, full Levant morocco binding! And why wouldn’t you? Who wouldn’t be seduced by skivers, slips and solanders; of vellum, vignettes, and versos? It’s like poetry. That’s why we love John Carter’s *ABC for Book Collectors*. Yes, it is old-school but then, sometimes, so are the books, and so are we!

In fact, we love it so much that things got a bit out of hand here. Not content with using it for cataloguing books, it turns out that it can be used on your favourite librarian too…For example, Simon’s 563, in Carter’s lexicon, would read something like this: Unsophisticated, slightly rubbed around the edges, original 1960s binding mostly intact but hinges cracked! Amy’s might state: Unauthorised blind-tooled chapbook, tipped in and grangerised with gilt in the rough edges, not for issue-mongers and point maniacs!
Why I love…025.431: The Dewey blog

Karen F. Pierce, Cataloguing Librarian, Cardiff University

Well, first of all, its name - 025.431

I discovered, and more importantly bookmarked, this blog only relatively recently (within the last twelve months), although I am sure I had probably stumbled across it before. I was trying to find out when the next printed edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification was due out as our print copy of DDC23 is falling apart, and has been patched several times. The Dewey blog provided the information, which for me was disappointing – there will be no more printed editions of Dewey! Along with the realisation that I will just have to continue patching our copy (or learn to love WebDewey), was the excitement of finding a blog with all kinds of information about Dewey at my fingertips. The posts are mainly by members of the Dewey editorial team, so they know what they are talking about – but the content is not vetted by OCLC (the owners of DDC), so there is some freedom in what they are writing about.

With blog posts in the centre of the blog layout, there are columns either side, one of which lists the archives and recent posts, recent comments and DDC people; the other side lists categories of posts which is potentially useful. You can look up posts on particular number ranges, on various mappings, projects, research, tables. There is also the DDC tip of the week and number of the day – although don’t get too excited as these categories haven’t been contributed to recently. The blog is active, however, and the most recent post at the time of writing (end of February) was 23rd February.

You might not find out everything you ever wanted to know about Dewey from this blog, but it is an ideal place to keep up to date with the world of Dewey, including posts about the European DDC Users group meetings.

Meanwhile, back to the lack of future print editions of Dewey. One comment (by David from Denver) on this particular blog post did bring out some contemplation – How will the lack of print editions affect the notation of DDC edition numbers, for example in the 082 field? To get the answer, you’ll have to check out the blog!

http://ddc.typepad.com/
Why I love ... WebDewey

Fotis Mystakopoulos, Senior Library Assistant (Cataloguing & Metadata), Southampton Solent University

My hands were going through the pages of this book on musical theatre. Absent-minded, my gaze locked at my PC screen, I was imagining what it would be like to be part of a musical. Dancing and singing across the scene in Royal Albert Hall, bowing in front of 1000 thousand people, absorbing the clapping, and the adoration of the spectators. That is when it hit me (not literally) that I did not know where to classify the book. Thoughts interrupted, moving away from my afternoon reverie, I realised I must focus. Turning around to look at my bookshelves, I gasped in amazement, my chest shrinking, realising that the printed version of the Dewey Decimal Version 23 is not where it was supposed to be. I was searching for both air and an answer.

“Fotis, are you ok?” asked my colleague, arriving just in time in the office, only to see me suffer, perspiration coming out of my forehead. I explained the situation. He seemed eerily calm. Should I not be worried? I thought to myself. “Where is DDC Version 23? It was right here” I said, pointing, standing up, and stumbling towards the bookshelf my hands now where the books should have been. Volumes 1,2,3,4. All the answers I was looking for. My life, my education in library science school, flashing before my eyes, all the exams and the exercises I had taken to learn how to use the volumes. Now gone.

“Oh Fotis, we weeded the printed version in the summer. We now subscribe to the online version”, said he, assured that I should accept the change in status quo. Should I put up a fight? Demand an explanation! “Can you send me the link of this….online….version for me to check it?” I remained calm, trusting my colleague that he knows, that we did the right thing getting rid of the printed version. “There you go, Fotis” he supplied me with the link instantly.

(\url{http://dewey.org/webdewey/standardSearch.html})

Looking at my screen, my mouth agape, I was clicking through the options of the database. It was so beautiful. The orange bright colours perking up my screen. The search engine, allowing you to search by keyword or base number. The explanation next to the numbers and the linking between possible alternative solutions. All the tables a couple of clicks away, the links now mocking me, for doing the heavy lifting all these years with the printed versions. Where were you, I muttered to myself. Where were you. It was simple. So intuitive. Words not usually associated with a complex information system. Yet there it was.

That day I left work at 5pm. I put on my coat, wrapped my scarf tightly around my neck, said good night to my colleagues left behind to work the evening slot. What a day, I reckoned, walking past the high-street, hands tucked inside the pockets, playing with the house keys. I picked up a few potatoes, some carrots and broccoli from the grocery shop. I sat in my kitchen, listening to something on the radio, Sam Smith must have been, eating my vegetable stew, regretting not adding more salt to it. This time I was not thinking if I could be in the musical.

I then knew that 792.6 was for staging of musical plays.

All well, that ends well.
Editing Catalogue & Index can be a wonderful job (albeit time consuming at certain stages), as we get to liaise with a variety of authors, and read some excellent articles prior to them being published. However, I have heard comments from people who assume because they are neither academics, nor early career professionals (full of enthusiasm and ideas), that writing for C&I is just not for them. They believe they have nothing to offer, despite being involved in interesting projects, or having valid viewpoints about cataloguing and metadata. Many of the key points made by Claire Sewell in her article about workplace research are relevant here, especially about communicating your research. I am hopeful after reading this issue that many more of our readers will feel that they can write for C&I and will indeed volunteer to do so.

What does the role of editor comprise?

Firstly, and many months in advance, we have to decide what the theme of each issue is going to be. C&I has two co-editors and we will discuss all the ideas that we have, but we also value input from the rest of the CILIP CIG committee (of whom we are members). Approximately once a year we will take our ideas to a CIG committee meeting to see what the rest of the committee thinks, and also to hear what other ideas they have. We will look at previous issues, and be aware of what themes have been covered recently, what themes prompted a lot of interest, and consider which themes we might want to revisit. With ideas discussed at the meeting we will go away and draw up a plan for the next four issues.

Once we have established our themes we then have a two pronged approach to getting papers. We will write a call for papers (cfp) which will be advertised in the CIG monthly ebulletins, and on a blog post which can then be tweeted. Many thanks to everyone who retweets us, as it is great to get coverage far and wide. We are hopeful to get the majority of our papers via the cfp, but we may also have a few key people in mind that we would like to write for us and these we would approach personally. There are occasions where very few people (if any) answer our initial cfp in which case we know we have to work a lot harder to get content for the issue. We will continue pushing the cfp but will also try targeting a few likely suspects or colleagues who we know could offer something on that theme but haven’t yet put themselves forward.

For anyone who writes for us we have a brief set of guidelines available on our webpages: https://archive.cilip.org.uk/cataloguing-indexing-group/catalogue-index/guidance-contributors

It is helpful for the editors to receive all the articles in the correct font and size, and without any fancy formatting, but quite often contributors do neglect to check this aspect. This means it takes us a little longer when adding the text to Publisher, so we do try and steer people to our guidelines.

With two co-editors we take it in turns to lead on an issue. The person who is leading will be the main contact for all the contributors to that issue, although we always copy the other person in so they are informed on how the issue is taking shape. We maintain a spreadsheet on Dropbox so we can track contributions and note when they are received. When articles arrive they are also added to Dropbox so that both editors have access to the material. The lead for that issue will do the main editing work and will add all the contributions to Publisher. The other editor will double check that everything looks fine and will write the editorial for that issue.
We accept articles, meeting and event reports, letters, and book reviews. If you have never written for us before, then a book review might be a good place to start. We have a separate book reviews editor who will source suitable books from publishers, and then the opportunity to review these items is opened up to all members. Notification for available books is usually done through our blog, and then tweeted, so do keep your eyes open. If you review the book you also get to keep it.

As C&I is a freely available open access publication, once an issue is ready we save the whole issue to PDF, and also all the individual articles, before adding them to our webpages. We have e-issues dating back to 2007 online, and are in the process of scanning our back catalogue of print issues which we hope to make available at some point in the future. All of which makes C&I a useful resource for reference and research. We have had issues on reclassification, RDA, rare book cataloguing, linked data, discovery layers, repositories and a host of other topics. You might find the information you need for a decision, or read about personal experiences of projects similar to those you are planning. If you want to find out more about a relevant subject and we haven’t themed an issue round it, then do get in touch and suggest it.

We hope this brief look at the editing process has perhaps inspired you to write your own contribution to C&I. The call for papers, as noted above, are in the monthly ebulletins, but if you have an idea for a paper that doesn’t fit any of the current themes please do get in contact with us so we can discuss it. We are always happy to take contributions, and it is possible that your paper may inspire a future theme for an issue. Additionally, we are also keen to receive contributions from recent students who are writing up their research, or who have just finished a dissertation or thesis and would like to share their ideas and results.

If you’ve never written for us before, go on, give it a go!
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