

About This Publication

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In the summer of 2012, a handful of former CLIR postdoctoral fellows gathered at the home of Distinguished Presidential Fellow Elliott Shore to help him prepare the ninth annual fellowship seminar cookout. We had each come to the seminar to help lead the newest cohort of fellows—at that time, the largest group to date—in workshops and discussions designed to prepare them to inhabit their new positions in academic libraries, data centers, and other research support units on college and university campuses. While arranging bottles in coolers and shucking ears of corn, the group discussed the approaching ten-year anniversary of the fellowship, reflecting upon the similarities and differences between the roles of the fellowship’s newest members and those of the participants in the earliest days of the program. The one or two years we had spent as fellows had become deciding moments in our working lives, exposing us to career paths in academic service that we had never before considered and to a broader variety of ways to contribute to the creation of new knowledge than had our previous training.

While retracing the contours of our shared memories—Bryn Mawr College “bootcamps” of summers past, interactions with leading thinkers in higher education, valued opportunities to catch up at conferences and meetings—we wondered what might be the most appropriate way to mark the program’s entry into its second decade. If true to our experiences and to the changing nature of the many libraries that have hosted us, any celebration of the occasion must look to the future at least as much as it reflects upon the past. It should represent the array of perspectives and disciplines represented in the fellowship over the years; it should highlight key issues of common interest to many participants without oversimplifying those issues.

After considering several possibilities, the group settled upon the idea of a publication that would give both current and former

participants in the program an opportunity to work together to craft essays about the lessons they had learned and about their ideas on the future of academic libraries and higher education. To capture those insights and generate a list of topics of broad interest, three former fellows conducted a survey of past and current fellows. Over the course of the ensuing months, Jason Brodeur, John Maclachlan, and Jennifer Parrott developed the survey and launched it in late 2013; an analysis of its results appears on pp. 27–34.

When CLIR agreed to provide financial and logistical support for the publication project, the editorial team issued a call for participation in the fall of 2014, highlighting some of the common themes that had arisen in the survey responses and from a “Liquid Café” session (Healey, Marquis, and Vajoczki 2013) led by Lauren Coats during the 2013 winter meeting of current CLIR postdoctoral fellows. This session allowed for further exploration of those questions and themes, and complemented the survey in identifying and articulating areas of interest for the CLIR postdoctoral fellowship community.

More than a dozen prospective authors responded to the call for participation in the collaborative writing project. After indicating their preferred topic(s) of exploration, the eventual 16 authors were divided into four teams that made up the larger collaborative writing group. (For more information on collaborative writing groups, see Maclachlan and Lee 2015; Marquis, Healey, and Vine 2014.) Each team spent the ensuing months producing an outline, draft, and essay exploring some aspect of a broad topic of significance to the CLIR Postdoctoral Fellowship Program: the nature of collaboration, the changing and expanding library, the future of research data management, and PhDs on the “alt-ac” track.

In January 2015, the editors and team leaders met to discuss common themes in the publication and to gauge overall progress. Prior to the meeting, at least two people working on other topics reviewed each group's submission. This important step allowed everyone involved in the project to have an idea of the directions taken and the types of conclusions reached by their colleagues so that they could consider how the others' work might relate to their own and understand how their work might fit into the larger organization of this final report. Upon completion, chapters were submitted to external peer reviewers for comments, and these comments informed final revisions.

It is the authors' and editors' hope that the following collection will be meaningful both to the community of stakeholders connected to CLIR's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program and to anyone working toward the development of future leaders for tomorrow's libraries, research organizations, and institutions of higher learning.

The editors would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to CLIR for supporting this publication project from start to finish, especially Charles Henry for his leadership and vision, Lizzi Albert for logistical assistance, Alice Bishop for facts and figures and insights into the program's history, Kathlin Smith for editorial assistance, and Rita Van Duinen for crucial data gathering. We also thank Elliott Shore

for providing both the venue for the project's initial brainstorming session and encouragement throughout the process. The speed and ease with which this volume came together are a testament to the collaborative spirit of the CLIR postdoctoral fellowship collegium, and the editors would like to thank each and every one of the authors for making this experience a true pleasure. We sincerely hope that readers will gain as much from reading this volume as we did in stewarding it.

References

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- Marquis, Elizabeth, Mick Healey, and Michelle Vine. 2014. Building Capacity for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Using International Collaborative Writing Groups. *The International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 8: Article 12. Available at <http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/ij-sotl/vol8/iss1/12>.