
Farewell Stacks . . . Hello Digital

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Many individuals helped create this memorable volume. Tim Clifford, our production editor at ALA Production Services, is responsible for the great cover graphic commemorating the journal's fiftieth anniversary. The members of the *RUSQ* Editorial Advisory Board helped authors to create their best work by offering thoughtful and constructive feedback. The following individuals served in this role this past year: Judith M. Arnold, Gwen Arthur, Sian Brannon, Corinne Hill, Jessica E. Moyer, Judith M. Nixon, Lisa O'Connor, Amber A. Prentiss, Michael Stephens, and Molly Strothmann. Many other experts volunteered their time to serve as occasional reviewers of manuscripts. I am grateful to the following individuals who served as referees on an as needed basis: Rebecca Albitz, Karen Antell, Christine Avery, Anne Behler, Susan Burke, Joe Fennewald, Jennifer Gilley, Russell A. Hall, Roma Harris, Daniel Hickey, Neil Hollands, Nancy Huling, Heidi Jacobs, M. Kathleen Kern, Robert H. Kieft, Robert Labaree, Dale McNeill, Tina Neville, Eric Novotny, Bonnie Osif, John Riddle, Emily Rimland, Diana Shonrock, Carol Singer, Karen Sobel, Kathleen Sullivan, Barry Trott, Dave Tyckoson, and Neal Wyatt.

In addition to this collection of outstanding peer-reviewed feature articles, this volume featured the familiar columns that are beloved by many *RUSQ* readers. I am fortunate to work with this team of creative column editors: M. Kathleen Kern ("The Accidental Technologist"), Neal Wyatt ("The Alert Collector"), Lisa O'Connor ("Information Literacy and Instruction"), Marianne Ryan ("Management"), and Barry Trott ("Readers' Advisory"). Barry Trott did double duty this year as he served as RUSA President, contributing the occasional presidential column as well as serving as an ex officio member of the editorial advisory board.

Tammy J. Eschedor Voelker and Karen Antell continued their excellent work as section editors of "Sources." Many individuals have reviewed reference books and professional materials this past year. The result is a body of substantive, comparative, and analytical reviews that help readers make wise collection decisions during this period of tight budgets. While I would like to thank all of the book reviewers for their important work, I would like to recognize a special group of reviewers. Tammy Voelker, editor of the reference books section of "Sources," has informed me that the following reviewers have reached the milestone of contributing ten reviews of reference books since volume 40: Suzanne Larsen, Evan M. Davis, and Bernadette A. Lear. Karen Antell, editor of the professional materials section, has asked me to acknowledge these distinguished reviewers of professional materials: Jenny Foster Stenis, Larry Cooperman, Sarah Hart, Katy Herrick,

Lisa Powell Williams, Melanie Wachsmann, Margie Ruppel, Rachel Vacek, and Mike Matthews.

While this volume marks an important anniversary, it also marks an important change. Volume 50 will be the last issue to be published in traditional print format. Beginning with Volume 51, Number 1 (Fall 2011), the journal will only be published in a digital format. I served as the chair of a taskforce that spent more than a year exploring the migration of *RUSQ* from a print to a professionally designed electronic version. The other members of the taskforce were Judith M. Arnold, Gwen Arthur, Bobray Bordelon, and Neal Wyatt. After carefully examining many factors (cost implications, possible impact on advertising, access, archival issues, potential impact on the journal's scholarly reputation, and membership satisfaction), the taskforce recommended that the print version of *RUSQ* be abandoned and that we move to an all-electronic version. This recommendation was accepted by the RUSA Board at the 2011 ALA Midwinter Meeting.

The taskforce believes that the time is right to make this change. *RUSQ* has an established reputation and we are confident that the move to a digital format won't impact the journal's reputation. Prospective authors are more concerned with whether or not a journal is peer reviewed. Contributors and readers will understand that cost issues are moving us forward. Additionally, readers are accustomed to the online environment since many journals have made this transition.

One major advantage of a digital version will be lower production costs. While we will still have production costs and start-up costs, we will not have paper, printing, and mailing costs. The savings will be *substantial*; these three items alone account for approximately 46 percent of the journal's annual budget (based on the FY 2011 journal budget). Additionally, ALA Production Services projected that paper and postage costs will increase 2 to 3 percent this year. Another advantage is that the production schedule will be slightly shortened. It currently takes three to four weeks to get an issue into the hands of subscribers after I have reviewed final proofs.

From a logistical perspective, the taskforce recommended that we move to the digital version with volume 51 as this is the final volume that I will be responsible for editing. *RUSQ* editors may serve no longer than six consecutive years and

another editor will be responsible for volume 52 on. There is a steep learning curve when assuming the editorship. It would be unreasonable to burden a new editor with oversight of a major change. This gives us one year to work out any problems before a new editor comes on board.

We will retain the services of ALA Production Services for copy editing, proofreading, and composition. ALA Production Services does an excellent job, and the taskforce firmly believes that money should be spent on the production quality of the journal rather than printing and mailing costs. MetaPress will be used as the platform for the journal. MetaPress, owned by Ebsco, has a strong track record and is used by other professional associations, including the prestigious Academy of Management, to host journal content. Additionally, ALA has experience with MetaPress. The first digital issue and all new issues going forward will be available in both HTML and PDF formats. Archival content (from 2006 forward) will be available in PDF format only. The taskforce has recommended a one year embargo since the journal is one of the benefits of RUSA membership. The *RUSQ Online Companion* will be eliminated with Volume 51. This was originally developed as a stop gap measure until a full electronic version was in place. This will result in some savings as the RUSA office has been responsible for loading content. Another advantage is that the digital version (unlike the current *RUSQ Online Companion*) will include the book reviews contained in each issue. One of the most exciting developments is that JSTOR will be used for permanent archiving. JSTOR is stable and many libraries are members. JSTOR is currently implementing a number of changes that will provide the capability to archive e-journals only.

From the reader's perspective, the digital version of *RUSQ* will probably not look much different than the print version. Although I confess that I will probably feel some nostalgia about the paper version (it is very satisfying to open up the latest issue in the mail), I know that there will be no loss of quality with the digital version. Rest assured that you will find the same high quality feature articles, cutting edge columns, and thoughtful reviews. You will no longer need to reserve stacks space for future issues of the journal. Farewell stacks . . . hello digital!