What are Subject Liaisons When "Collections" and "Subjects" Don't Matter?

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#librarianroles

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Food for Thought ...

- What are the sacred cows around liaisons?
- Do you expect your current role to continue as is? Is it already changing?
- Do you see yourself as a deep expert, generalist, or functional specialist?
- How important are spaces to your current role? To your library as a whole?
- When are too many disparate skill sets too many? Too many subjects?
- What are the trade-offs when we chase the latest trends?
- Where do liaisons sit in your organizational structure? Where should they?
Identity

- What is it that only subject librarians are able to do?
- Promote *library services* plus *their own services*.
- Is identity tied to a physical location? Is it tied to faculty relationships?
- What functions are central to identity? What are peripheral?
- When are disparate skill sets overwhelming?
- When do many subjects become *too* many subjects?
- Service provision versus project management
- Restructuring: where should liaisons sit in an organizational structure?
  - Collections? Teaching? Some type of Reference? A mix of all three? Or something new?
- What’s your professional affiliation?
Functional Specialists

- If liaisons cover many disciplines, is true disciplinary expertise less important?
- What sort of functional experts do we need?
  - Digital humanities? Data science? Visualization? Open science? Scholarly communications?...
- Do functional needs outweigh disciplinary?
- Which skill sets are easier to train for versus recruit for?
- What if more institutions move in the direction of functional specialty?
Interdisciplinary Specialists

- How important are truly disciplinary librarians anyway?
- Are there disciplines that require librarian specialists?
- Just as the “edges” define great collections, can they define great liaisons?
- Do researchers need more help at the boundaries of their fields?
- How could liaison roles address the increasing interdisciplinarity of research?
Collections

- Can we trust vendors/ DDA/ PDA/ doc delivery and automate most collecting?
- Should collection management be a functional speciality?
- Is automation outsourcing? Does it undermine trust in our ‘brand?’
- What role do liaisons play in creating content?
- Collecting beyond books, journals, databases - how does it impact your work?
  - Faculty brands
  - Research data
  - Evolving scholarly record
Research Cycle

- Should we be inserting ourselves more upstream or downstream?
  - Identify/research reputation management
  - Funder mandates
  - Grant support

- How far can we rely on third party solutions?

- Is this type of work a subject specialist role or a functional specialty?
New Spaces, New Technologies

- Are these driving organizational structures? Or vice versa?
- What positions are needed to maintain them?
- How do these two factors impact more classical services and roles?
- How is space accorded? What services are moved to the forefront?
Citations

● Data Sharing and Discovery: What Librarians Need to Know (http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0099133314000950)

● Developing new skills for research support librarians (http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00049670.2015.1041215?scroll=top&needAccess=true)

● New Roles for New Times

● Association of Research Libraries/ Columbia University/Cornell University/ University of Toronto Pilot Library Liaison Institute

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Let’s Continue the Discussion

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