Reinvigorating engagement with scholarship: Supporting early career librarians as they research and publish

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Research Questions & Methodology

Research and publication practices of early career librarians:

1. What are their practices?
2. What factors influence them?
3. How confident are they?

Methodology: Online survey conducted Jan - Mar 2018 via professional listservs

Demographics

Requirements for inclusion

1. Currently work in an academic library
2. Worked for < 5 years after most recent degree

Responses (n = 345; qualified n = 255)

- From 40 states + Washington DC + outside US
- All had an MLIS degree (though not required)
- Required to publish = 31% of respondents

Factors Influencing Research & Publication

Top positive factors:

1. Convenience of accessing scholarly resources (86%)
2. Access to necessary technology (84%)
3. Collaborator support and/or presence (78%)

Other highly ranked positive factors:

- Dedicated time to research and/or write
- Colleague support and/or presence
- Presence of supervisor support
- Presence of mentor support
- Culture at my academic library

Top negative factors:

1. Absence of supervisor support (48%)
2. Absence of mentor support (48%)
3. Culture at my academic library (19%)

Additional factors identified by respondents:

- Self motivation
- View of librarianship (positive or negative)
- Lack of confidence
- Personal life
- Access to conferences
- Career advancement

Confidence in Research & Publication

- 90% of respondents took research methods in their MLIS program.
- 81% were confident in their research skills, but only 55% were confident in their ability to publish scholarly, peer-reviewed articles.
- Despite this low confidence in publishing, 94% desired to publish more in the future.

Applications & Takeaways

Early Career Librarians

- Start with small projects or professional blogs
- Build confidence by engaging with this

Academic libraries

- Offer mentoring and discussion groups
- Allow time to research and publish

LIS curricula

- Include a scholarly publishing course