



The View from the Bridge

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How do we know what we know?

Interdisciplinary scholars in the LIS Dual Degree program are uniquely positioned to grapple with this question. We take received wisdom from our "other" fields (in this issue, they include Archives & Public History, Costume Studies, English, French Studies, History, and Museum Studies) and trace it back to its source documents and archives. We consider how the intellectual traditions of these fields have been inaugurated, and how applying an LIS lens can reveal new cross-sections for knowledge development. *Bridging Fields* takes its name from this sort of interdisciplinary inquiry. Our vantage point as contributors is from this titular "bridge" – a position that allows us to gain new insight on both LIS and our additional specialties, conscious of the permeability that exists between all seemingly discrete knowledge domains.

In these articles, readers will encounter many bridges spanning from the balmy shores of LIS to various other exciting landscapes. Scholars in the fields of Archives & Public History, History, Museum Studies, and English consider the construction of community archives and questions of public accessibility alongside responsible knowledge stewardship. Emanuel Agbavitor recounts his experiences with archival research in West Africa, and Daniel Abelow offers a corresponding study of a United States–based digital archive of Southern African history. Marissa Brown draws on her work in both public libraries and museum spaces to argue that museum libraries must do more to invite patron access and dismantle centuries-old traditions of exclusion. Meadow Netardus takes up another old tradition of information censorship – book-burning – and shows us the forms it takes in today's world.

In addition to questions of archival responsibility, information workers must consider obligations to support community literacy, whether among students, specialized audiences, or the general public. Mac McAree invites current and future information professionals to brush up

on our critical pedagogy, using the work of Paulo Freire to spark self-reflection on how we participate in knowledge-sharing between library workers and patrons. JT Eissenberg, whose NYU degree is in French, tackles a case study in translation: making the all-American oeuvre of Mark Twain accessible for Francophone readers, while considering the cultural and linguistic nuances that are lost during this shuffle between reading publics. Isabella Collins and Mac Murray both reflect on their experiences shadowing the NYU Bobst Library Reference Desk, with both concluding that reference desk workers are in a unique position to offer warm, accessible, human support in an era of increasing automation, atomization, and techno-surveillance.

We hope you enjoy the reflections offered by these interdisciplinary writers, and we invite you to keep the conversation going. Email us at bridgingfields@nyu.edu with any feedback or questions. We are committed to welcoming as many perspectives on LIS as possible, and we each have our own unique “bridges” from which to consider and innovate in the field.

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