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Special Libraries Association

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

PROVIDING DECISION-READY INFORMATION

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DANA AWARD · VORMELKER AWARD

Matarazzo and Pearlstein Honored with Dana Award

SLA will bestow its highest honor, the John Cotton Dana Award—named for the association's founder and first president—upon James "Jim" Matarazzo and Toby Pearlstein at its annual conference in Philadelphia.

The two SLA members are revered for their dedication to the association and substantial contributions to the field of corporate librarianship, and have collaborated on a significant portion of their sizable body of research and published works.

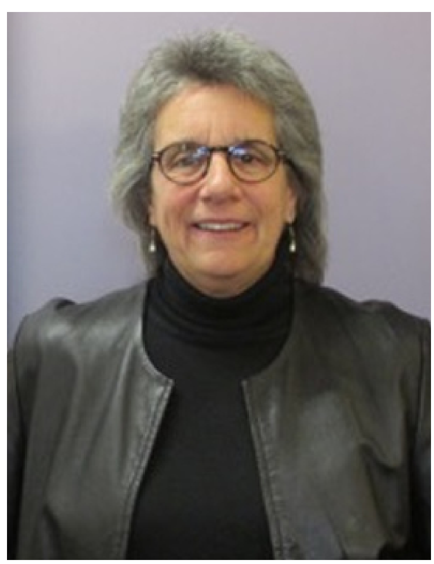
James Matarazzo

The Dana Award, named for the founder and first president of SLA, recognizes lifetime achievement in the field of library science and exceptional service to the association and to the profession at large. Though both honorees are technically retired, they continue to demonstrate and substantiate the value of corporate and special libraries with their ongoing research and writing.

Jim is dean and professor emeritus of the School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College in Boston. His expertise has led to consulting engagements on the creation of corporate libraries and information centers, and information management systems for many corporations.

Jim has been a member of SLA since 1964. He belongs to the Leadership & Management Division and the New England Chapter and was president of the latter when it was known as the Boston Chapter. Jim served on SLA's Board of Directors and on numerous committees, including the Awards and Honors, Research, and Strategic Planning Committees. He has also served as a faculty advisor for the Simmons Student Group of SLA.

Jim was named an SLA Fellow in 1988, received the SLA Professional Award in 1983 and 1988, and was recognized with the SLA President's Award in 1991. In 2015 he was inducted into the SLA Hall of Fame.



Toby Pearlstein

At Simmons, Jim served on the faculty for over four decades, including 14 years as assistant dean of the library school and 9 years as dean. Although he has been officially retired from the university since 2002, Jim still teaches courses on the organization and management of special libraries. He also continues to collaborate on writings with Toby—the pair have three more articles accepted for publication this year and next.

Until her retirement in 2007, Toby was director of global information services at Bain & Company, Inc. Her work at the management consulting firm focused on overseeing all local information centers for Bain's offices around the world and on vendor portfolio management.

Toby is a member of the SLA New England Chapter, the Leadership & Management Division, and the ENCORE Caucus. She has chaired both the Business & Finance Division and the Transportation Division. Additionally, she has held roles within divisions as strategic planning chair, professional development chair, and bulletin editor. She chaired the Professional Development Committee and has also served on the Finance, Nominating, and Research Committees. Toby is a Fellow of SLA and was inducted into the SLA Hall of Fame in 2008.

Over the years, Toby has shared her expertise through program presentations at SLA's Annual Conference and at local chapter meetings. She has also authored (and co-authored, with Jim) a variety of works published in North America and internationally. Some of Toby and Jim's notable collaborations include "Salaries of Special Librarians in the United States" (2014), "Ebooks in Corporate Special Libraries: A Review" (2013), "Schools of Library and Information Science: Some Thoughts on Vision to Purpose" (2012), and "Corporate Score: Marrying Two Expert Tools Will Help You Sustain Your Corporate Library" (2007).

For years, Toby and Jim have taken it upon themselves to provide colleagues in their industry with relevant empirical data on their sector to bolster corporate librarians' confidence in developing and growing in their role within their organizations. This research has taken on many forms: papers, case studies, benchmarks, and centers of excellence.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

Their 2013 work, *Special Libraries: A Survival Guide* (introduction by Barbara Quint and with assistance from Sylvia James), is a compilation of state-of-the-art examples and is considered an essential guide to all corporate librarians as they navigate the rapidly changing business world.

SLA Honors Judith Currano with Vormelker Award

Judith N. Currano, head of the Chemistry Library at the University of Pennsylvania, will receive the Rose L. Vormelker Award during the opening session of the SLA 2016 Annual Conference & INFO-EXPO.

judith Currano

Each year at its conference, SLA bestows the Vormelker Award upon one or more members in good standing who have actively worked to teach and mentor their fellow librarians and students. The award's namesake, Rose Vormelker (1895-1994), had a robust career that included working in public and corporate libraries and assisting the federal government in installing war and defense information centers in 4,000 libraries across the nation. The final decades of her career, however, were devoted to teaching at Kent State University, as an assistant professor. The impact she had on academic and professional development in others inspired the creation of the award, which is given to individuals who are similarly invested in furthering learning in others.

In addition to her role as the head of the Chemistry Library at Penn, Judith teaches a course in chemical information that is required of all first-year doctoral students in chemistry, gives lectures on information resources to every student enrolled in Penn's undergraduate organic chemistry laboratory courses, and is an active member of the Penn Women in Chemistry professional group.

Though she does much of her instructing at the university, Judith's knowledge of chemical information resources and passion for teaching are also in demand outside academia. For example, she has provided training to professionals in the government and corporate sectors, including employees at the Army Research Library and BASF.

A member of SLA since 1999, Judith has been an engaged and influential leader in SLA's Chemistry Division as membership chair, list owner, professional development chair, and, most recently, liaison to the American Chemical Society's Division of Chemical Information. In 2000, she joined the Philadelphia Chapter, which has been not only supportive but instrumental in her development of several of her educational materials for non-chemist professionals. She creates and teaches continuing education (CE) courses focused on chemical information retrieval, including "Chemical Information Sources, Requests, and References," which will be offered at SLA 2016. Over the years, she has developed Webinars for SLA, such as "Truncating Molecules: Basic Techniques in Structure and Substructure Searching for Information Professionals." She also participates regularly in the Chemistry Division's Conference Buddy program, mentoring a first-time attendee at each SLA Annual Conference.

In addition to authoring numerous journal articles, Judith has co-edited three books: *Chemical Information for Chemists: A Primer* (2014), *Science and the Law: Analytical Data in Support of Regulation in Health, Food and the Environment* (2014), and *Science and the Law: How the Communication of Science Affects Policy Development in the Environment, Food, Health, and Transport Sector* (2015).

SLA Takes Fresh Look at Skills Used for Information Work

SLA has reviewed and updated the competencies that its members and other information professionals use to manage the growing volumes of information, knowledge, and data that are critical to the functioning and success of modern organizations.

SLA's Board of Directors, in a meeting on April 13, approved the revised competencies, which were last updated in 2003. The revised document was created by a task force of seven SLA members appointed in 2015 by then-SLA President Jill Strand. The task force surveyed SLA members, conducted a "knowledge cafe" at the SLA 2015 Annual Conference, and reviewed a variety of literature related to competencies in preparation for developing a draft document, which it circulated throughout the association in January for comment. The revised document incorporates some of the feedback received in response to the draft.

"The competencies document describes the skills and knowledge that special librarians need to be effective in their role of helping organizations succeed," says 2016 SLA President Tom Rink. "There is virtually no area of work today that does not use information and data, and people who are skilled in finding, analyzing, managing, organizing, and sharing information and data can make the critical difference between organizational success and failure."

The competencies are divided into

two groups: core competencies, which are intrinsic to the information profession, and enabling competencies, which are used by professionals in other fields as well as special librarians. The core competencies, such as information and data retrieval and analysis, essentially define what information professionals do and how they work; the enabling competencies, which include effective communication, project management, and innovation, support overall professional success and development.

The core competencies are as follows:

1. Information and knowledge services, including analyzing information and knowledge flows and developing information literacy skills among stakeholders;

2. Information and knowledge systems and technology, which includes designing interfaces for an intuitive user experience;

3. Information and knowledge resources, including establishing resource budgets and aligning the strategy for managing information resources to meet the needs of the organization;

4. Information and data retrieval and analysis, including developing search strategies to discover and retrieve information and assessing the veracity or quality of such information;

5. Organization of data, information, and knowledge assets, including developing custom metadata schemas and taxonomies; and

6. Information ethics, which includes modeling ethical information behavior and recognizing ethical issues relative to information handling.

The competencies are useful not only to those who work in special libraries and in the broader information profession, but also educators and students in the library field. Employers, too, can benefit from the competencies by gaining a broader understanding of what librarians and information professionals can bring to their organizations and how they can contribute to its success.

SLA to Induct Noorlander, Weiss into Hall of Fame

SLA has named Willem "Bill" Noorlander and Janet Weiss as the newest members of the association's Hall of Fame. The two will be honored June 12 at the opening session of the SLA 2016 Annual Conference in Philadelphia.

The SLA Hall of Fame was established in 1959 and recognizes distinguished service and contributions to SLA or an SLA chapter or division. Induction is reserved for SLA members at or near the end of their active professional careers, and is granted to no more than three individuals per year.

Bill is a partner at BST America in New York, a company that provides market data and technology consulting for the financial services, professional services, and other business sectors. During his 16 years of SLA membership, Bill has been active in multiple units, including the New York Chapter, the Leadership & Management Division, and the Business & Finance Division. He is also a member of the Leadership & Management Division's Content Buying Section.

Bill has put his financial insight and business savvy to good use with SLA, especially during his time as treasurer of the New York Chapter (2008–2009) and as fundraising chair of the Leadership & Management Division (2014–2015). His business acumen and commitment to the long-term health of SLA also proved invaluable during his countless hours of service on the SLA Finance Committee (2012–2015). His dedication and loyalty ultimately earned him a seat on the SLA Transition Committee, where he played an instrumental role in preparing the request for proposal and conducting interviews during the

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SLA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

search for an association management company to manage SLA's staff operations.

A member of SLA since 1976, Janet Weiss is associate director of the scientific library at Daiichi Sankyo Pharma Development, Inc., in New Jersey. During her four decades as an SLA member, Janet has been indispensable to several units, especially the New Jersey Chapter, the New Jersey-Greater Princeton/Trenton Chapter, the Pharmaceutical & Health Technology Division, and the Biomedical & Life Sciences Division.

Both the New Jersey Chapter and the New Jersey-Greater Princeton/Trenton Chapter (CPRT) have benefited from Janet's guidance. Though she has worn many chapter hats—treasurer, fundraising chair, consultation officer, program chair, president, and awards chair—Janet is particularly well known within both chapters for her tremendous sponsorship and fundraising efforts. Janet's ability to secure vendors to sponsor meetings is legendary—as fundraising chair, a position she has held in both chapters intermittently since 1993, she has been instrumental in making chapter meetings affordable.

The Pharmaceutical & Health Technology Division has also been fortunate to count Janet among its members. Most recently chair of the division in 2015, Janet's successful efforts include guiding work on a division membership survey and reworking the procedures for member and student travel awards. Similarly, Janet chaired the Biomedical & Life Sciences Division in 2007, and has also served that unit over the years as fundraising, professional development, and vendor relations chairs..

SLA Welcomes Amy Burke as New Executive Director

Amy Lestition Burke, a 15-year veteran of association and nonprofit management and a thought leader in the areas of membership engagement, recruitment, and retention, is taking the reins as executive director of SLA, effective immediately.

Burke was recommended for the position by an executive director search task force composed of five SLA members. The task force interviewed three finalists for the job from among 79 initial applicants.


Amy Burke

"The task force members felt, and the SLA Board of Directors agrees, that Amy is uniquely qualified to help SLA continue to build on its recent actions to position the association for long-term growth and renewal," said SLA President Tom Rink. "We look forward to working with her and making good use of her expertise, energy, and ideas."

Burke has been serving SLA as vice president of success since March 1, when SLA entered into an agreement with MCI USA to manage its operations. She has been with MCI (formerly Coulter Companies) since 2006 and has served in leadership roles with several MCI clients, most recently as chief operating officer of the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association and its corresponding Foundation.

Burke brings a rich knowledge of stakeholder engagement strategies and tactics to her new role at SLA. From 2006-2012, she served as executive director of Association Media & Publishing, where she led membership restructuring, editorial strategy, program content, and management initiatives. Her previous experience includes stints at both the Greater Washington Society of Association Executives and the American Society of Association Executives.

"SLA members work in diverse settings and serve many types of organizations. I know my experience managing associations across a variety of industries and professions will help me appreciate their differences while leveraging their common interests," Burke said. "I am excited to work with SLA members and staff on creating and implementing new educational and community initiatives as well as new benefits for SLA members."

"Amy has grown to really appreciate the opportunities and challenges that leading SLA presents," said MCI USA Association Management & Consulting President Erin M. Fuller, FASAE, CAE, who has been serving as SLA's interim executive since March 1. "I am inordinately proud of her work with SLA and other global associations to date and am confident she will help guide SLA to future success."

Burke earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in international affairs at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. She is a certified association executive and was named a "Young and Inspiring Association Professional" by Association Trends in 2010. SLA

Three Steps to Better Insights for Innovation

FIRMS TEND TO BE DATA RICH, BUT INSIGHT POOR. TO GENERATE BETTER IDEAS—AND INCREASE THE ODDS OF LAUNCHING BETTER INNOVATIONS—CONVERT THE DATA INTO INSIGHTS FIRST.

BY PETER MULFORD, MBA

Effective innovation requires good insights. From CEOs searching for the next product innovation to ad sales teams looking to impress clients, managers everywhere are looking for better ways to gather, interpret, and leverage data and knowledge to develop and launch better innovations.

Advances in technology for data aggregation and analytics, as well as cognitive and machine learning, have given would-be innovators access to a tremendous—and swelling—amount of data. The problem is that time-pressured managers often rush from data to action based on what the data *say* without probing deeply to determine what the data *mean*. As a consequence, they can miss valuable insights and opportunities or, worse, make decisions based on incorrect interpretations.

It needn't be this way. My organization has studied and observed firsthand how teams at private and Fortune 100 firms around the world convert knowledge to insights. As well, we've seen what happens when teams skip this step. This experience has helped us formulate three practical steps that managers, and the librarians who support them, can take to develop better insights when innovating or making big decisions.

The main idea is to probe and discover the deeper "why beneath the why" that describes the data in question. So the next time you or your team are seeking to leverage data to enhance decision making, consider following these three steps:

Start with the "three W's" to frame the human problem you are trying to solve. A common reason that innovation efforts fail is that they are often developed from the inside out. That is, they start by "ideating" a new technology, product, or solution, then look outside the firm for a customer problem to solve. Teams that innovate this way are frequently working on the wrong problem or even no problem at all—indeed, the annals of innovation history are littered with examples of failed innovations that began this way.

Consider the case of a heart monitoring device developed by a tech start-up

PETER MULFORD is an executive vice president and global partner at BTS, a professional services firm that provides strategy execution, leadership development, and sales transformation services to businesses. He has more than 17 years of experience in management consulting and has advised numerous global firms on developing business acumen and innovation capability, including Coca-Cola, Sony, Hewlett Packard, Barclays Bank, Toyota, and McDonalds. Prior to joining BTS, he lived in Tokyo, where he worked for Aswa Ltd., a Japanese consultancy, and advised German firms on their Japanese market strategy.

in Silicon Valley. The team spent several months building the prototype solution, which was successful from a technical perspective. The problem? Only when they brought customers in to try the solution, late in the process, did they realize the product likely wouldn't sell. It was subsequently scrapped. The company founder later admitted, "The failure I had was asking them last, when we should have asked them first. We could have learned that painful lesson so much faster and so much cheaper."

People leading innovation efforts should, therefore, create a mindset in which their teams start by identifying the customer problem they are trying to solve. The three W's framework is a simple tool to apply to this end. It says that, for any innovative effort, teams should explore and answer the following questions:

1) *Who* is the person or people for whom we are innovating?

2) *What* is the need or want they are trying to fill?

3) *Why* do they have that particular need or want?

The three W's are an approach to framing the problem and finding the solution. The data generated using this framework can first be applied to help develop an understanding of the real nature of the customer's needs and wants as well as the "why" underlying those needs and wants. A deeper understanding of the "what" and "why" will, in turn, improve the quality of both the ideation efforts that follow and the experiments that innovators run later. By relentlessly asking and exploring these three questions, the team will dramatically improve the odds of success by ensuring it is working on a problem the customer actually cares about.

Use ALOE tools to uncover the "why." A key problem with data is that it often fails to reveal the deeper "why" required for great innovation. Consider the "Pepsi Challenge" campaign of the late 1970s. The campaign produced data demonstrating that consumers preferred the taste of Pepsi over Coke in blind taste tests conducted in public arenas. Coke responded by launching "New Coke," only to relaunch the original formula less than three months later after consumers responded angrily to the move. Six months after the relaunch, Coke's sales were increasing at twice the rate of Pepsi's.

What had happened? The research and data used by the Coca-Cola team failed to identify the deeper "why" underpinning consumer behavior. As Donald Keough, a former president of Coca-Cola, noted, "All the time and money and skill poured into consumer research on the new Coca-Cola could not reveal the deep and abiding emotional attachment to original Coca-Cola felt by so many people."

Managers can get to the "why beneath the why" hidden in customer data by using ALOE tools. Specifically, they should use tools intended for *asking*, *listening*, *observing*, and *empathizing*.

ALOE tools include advanced interviewing skills, such as the following:

1) The ROPE method (results, opportunity, problems, and execution);

2) So-called "design thinking" tools such as empathy maps and customer journey mapping; and

3) Other problem re-framing techniques such as the outcome expectation map and issue trees.

ALOE tools work because they help you probe beneath the data and reveal the customer's emotions, thoughts, and motivations so you can better determine the "what" to solve for him or her. These techniques are particularly useful for surfacing insights when you are innovating products that are radically different. This is because consumers tend to have a limited awareness of their real preferences with respect to radical innovation, which mitigates the effectiveness of traditional marketing data collected from customer surveys and focus groups.

Change the angle of inquiry to bust biases. Decades of psychological research have demonstrated that people readily fall prey to biases and patterns of "group think." These biases and patterns can retard efforts to glean fresh insights from data. One way to address this problem is to change the angle of inquiry, which requires forcing your team to evaluate data from new and unexpected perspectives.

In practice, this means crafting a series of questions your team can use to probe available data from different angles. For example, a media and entertainment firm looking to develop a better user experience might change the angle of inquiry from "Why are consumers cutting the cord?" to "What's the biggest avoidable pain point our cable customers endure?" Similarly, an athletic apparel retailer might shift from "What SKUs are selling above plan in Store X" to "Why is a given SKU selling in Store X, but not in Store Y?"

With the amount of data available to leaders growing by the minute, the temptation to leap from data to innovation is strong. By resisting this temptation and using techniques to generate insights before leaping into action, managers can improve the quality of the ideas they generate and the innovation experiments they launch. **SLA**

NOTES

ROPE is a question technique developed by Richard Hodge and Lou Schacter. For more information, read *The Mind of The Customer: How Great Companies have Reinvented their Sales Process to Accelerate their Customers' Success.*

Tailoring Information to Specific Objectives

ASKING THE PROPER QUESTIONS WILL ENABLE SPECIAL LIBRARIANS TO SHIFT THEIR RESEARCH PARADIGM FROM THE INFORMATION THE CUSTOMER *REQUESTS* TO THE INFORMATION THE CUSTOMER *NEEDS*.

BY KATE VILCHES, MLIS, AND CORY HUTCHINSON

Librarians are traditionally seen as information gatherers and gatekeepers, whether the information is in a physical library or archive or managed through an online portal. Increasingly, however, special librarians are being asked to become librarian-analyst hybrids, maintaining physical and digital collections as well as providing decision-ready information to internal customers.

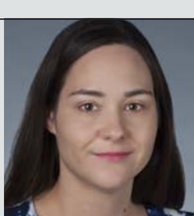
This has been our experience as research librarians at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. We define *decision-ready information* as information that is specific, tailored, and delivered in a format that allows the customer to quickly make an informed decision. The key here is *informed decision*—we do the reading, light analysis, and sorting and also include background documentation and citations to allow the customer to delve deeper into an area that may interest them. We largely provide this kind of information to the strategic planning, business development, and research engineering departments, in the forms of newsletters, research briefs, and patent searches.

As librarians, we are well-suited to this type of task. We manage the purchasing and indexing of information, so we know which sources to check first. We are trained in research methods and inclined to be skeptical of sources, so we excel at sorting out the credible information from unsupported claims. We have performed countless reference interviews, so we know how to look beyond what a customer asks for and discern what they really need. And we are solid communicators, so our summaries are concise and readable (though full of citations).

Finally, since the library or information center is often where various groups at a company, university, or organization intersect, we have insights into who is looking for information about specific topics. This allows us to leverage what one customer may have learned about a subject to assist another customer. The case studies that follow will show some of these skills in action.

What Are the Locals Saying?

A few years ago, a regular library customer came to us with a slightly unusual request. He had recently been promoted to a new role heading up business development in South Korea. He



KATE VILCHES is senior research librarian at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control, where she focuses on competitive intelligence, engineering, and intellectual property research as well as resource evaluation and purchasing. Outside of her library duties, Kate is involved in the company's internal history museum.

CORY HUTCHINSON is the newest member of the Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control Libraries' staff. During his three years at the library, he has developed interests in library marketing and competitive intelligence research. He is pursuing a degree in library science at Drexel University, with a focus in competitive intelligence.

had a fairly large team working under him, and he was collaborating with colleagues in other areas of the company who were working on different aspects of conducting business in South Korea.

His goal was to sell certain defense products to the South Korean military. He wanted us to create a reoccurring deliverable that would provide insights into what the South Korean media and government were thinking about Lockheed Martin, its competitors, various military products, and the general topics of national defense and missile defense.

In addition to discussing topics and keywords with the customer, we asked about the people who would be reading the deliverable and how they would use it. What actions would they take based on this information? Would they be reading it while they travel, and, if so, would they use a phone or a laptop?

Ultimately, we created a weekly newsletter that sourced public news sites, licensed databases, and government information portals to provide the readers with a picture of what was going on in the world of South Korean defense and national security in any given week. It is no-frills, easy to read on a phone, very targeted, and constantly evolving.

In the process of curating this information, we began an ongoing dialogue with our colleagues working in international business development. The result? We now cover 15 countries in this same manner. Each newsletter has an assigned librarian who maintains contact with the target audience and occasionally attends their staff meetings to help keep the newsletter attuned to their needs.

Asking ‘Why’ in a CI Setting

A customer approached our library seeking assistance with understanding a new market. He and his team were developing a proposal for a new helicopter program in a country whose foreign procurement and economic offset policies had recently changed.

After the initial discussion about the types of information our customer was seeking, we asked, “Why do you need this information?” We find that knowing the end result or product that our research supports can help us better meet our customers’ needs. When we neglect to ask the “why” question, we risk providing information that is not grounded in the proper context.

As it turns out, the customer needed more information than he originally suspected. In addition to information on how certain laws had changed and our competitors’ previous actions in that country, the customer also needed an analysis of the current political landscape as well as English-language organization charts for the various procurement agencies overseeing the contract. Having these organization charts helped the customer and his team identify key individuals and organizations, thus reducing the amount of time needed to establish connections in the country.

Knowing Customers’ Goals Saves Time

Another example of the value of asking “Why?” can be seen in a patents research project we completed in 2015. One of our customers requested that we compile a comprehensive list (looking back five years) of patent applications and grants in the field of exoskeletons and any academic papers written on the subject.

One of the first things we asked was why he needed the information and specifically what his end goal was. He said he and his team wanted to analyze patent holdings and academic publications to accomplish the following goals:

- To reduce Lockheed Martin’s research and development costs by verifying that planned R&D activities had not already been conducted by other (possibly competing) organizations; and
- To identify possible partners and suppliers based on their patent holdings and/or published research.

This customer obviously was unaware that the databases we use to search patent holdings and academic publications have tools that will automatically perform the analysis functions he and his team were planning to conduct manually. After completing the initial research, we performed the desired analysis and provided the team with graphs showing (1) how many patents each organization or individual held and (2) the number of academic papers published by individuals and organizations over the desired time period. Not only were we able to help the team identify potential partners, we reduced the time and cost of doing so.

When Librarians Write a Business Case

Most librarians, whether in corporate, academic, public, or even non-library environments, will at some point propose a new program, product offering, or policy change to their management. Treating your manager or board of directors as a customer in need of decision-ready information can help guide you through the process of creating the most effective proposal possible. We will use our experience of proposing an expanded engineering e-books collection to Missiles and Fire Control library managers as an example.

To prepare for developing the proposal, we spoke to our manager and her manager (our customers, in this case) about what they look for in a winning business case, how many levels of approval are required, and what factors determine whether a proposal is approved. We also gathered information on the most effective proposal format and gauged our end users’ awareness of the library’s role in knowledge management at the company, allowing us to be proactive in providing sufficient context for our proposal. (The library is ultimately managed by the finance department, and it is often helpful to provide those managers with additional information on how the resources they fund are used to support the larger organization.)

Next, we examined usage data on our current and former e-books platforms, surveyed frequent users of these materials, and interviewed a subset of those surveyed for more details. We collected information on their patterns of e-book use and preferred publishers, not only to guide us in selecting a product but to gather information to support our proposal. After speaking to the finance managers who would have the final say on our proposal, we knew what types of information they needed: concrete statistics supplemented by anecdotes relating how engineering e-books have helped lower costs and contributed to money-making programs.

Our library-using engineers provided the bulk of this information, which we were able to supplement with case studies sourced from library journals and market research studies. From there, we were able to put together a presentation that would provide our customers with the information they needed to make a well-informed decision on our proposal: a multi-page brief headed by an executive summary, brimming with statistics and citations. We also included some context to explain how e-book readers use the platform and how the information they gather affects the company's bottom line.

Shifting the Research Paradigm

In today's changing information landscape, where information becomes more readily accessible with each passing day, libraries and librarians must provide more services to make the information they curate more useful and understandable for customers. In addition to raw data, our customers want and need actionable information that facilitates faster and more informed decision making. Librarians in all settings can accomplish this goal by shifting their research paradigm from the information the customer requests to the information the customer needs to accomplish what they want to do. **SLA**

SHARPENING YOUR SKILLS TO PROVIDE DECISION-READY INFORMATION

The more you know about your organization, the better you can tailor your information. To keep abreast of the many changes at Lockheed Martin, we treat it like an organization to be researched—and we suggest you do the same with your employer. Here are three areas to consider that can add context to your research projects.

Strategic planning. Does your library have a strategic plan? What about your larger organization? How do the two fit together? Make a point of reviewing your organization's strategic plan at least once a year to look for changes, new directions, areas of growth, and areas of decline. Want to go one step further? Find out who writes the plan and get on his/her/their calendar for an information exchange session. In addition to gaining valuable insights, you can position the library as a service that can greatly benefit the strategic planning process.

Competitive intelligence. A thorough awareness of your organization's competition, partners, and customers is critical to effective and efficient business research. Regular reading of industry periodicals and questioning of experienced colleagues and library customers will get you started, but there is a competitive intelligence technique for every question. Check out SLA's own Competitive Intelligence Division (http://ci.sla.org/) for Webinars on a variety of topics to keep yourself up to speed.

Subject matter experts. Who are the movers and shakers within your industry and organization? The academics who are publishing regularly and being cited frequently? The internal fellow with a dozen patents? The recruiter who knows everyone? The company historians and record keepers, official or unofficial? Some knowledge is only transmitted person to person. Get to know as many people as you can and learn who to call when you need that specific piece of insight.

10 Questions: Tina Franks

SHE'S JUMPED FROM THE PUBLIC TO THE CORPORATE TO THE ACADEMIC SECTORS DURING HER CAREER. WHAT KEEPS HER GROUNDED? HER SLA NETWORK.

BY STUART HALES

To appreciate the wide range of environments in which special librarians work, the subject areas they cover, and the issues they address, you could review the list of divisions within SLA--or you could take a look at Tina Franks' résumé.

Currently head of the Architecture Library at The Ohio State University, Tina previously worked as a children's services librarian and branch manager for a large metropolitan library and as a solo librarian at a design engineering firm. Along the way, she accumulated experience (and expertise) in reference, cataloging, knowledge management, and several other facets of librarianship. She credits SLA's global network of information professionals for sharing ideas and advice that have helped her succeed at every stop along her career path, which she cheerfully describes as "always about wanting to try something new or different."

"Within SLA, I've bopped around and gotten a perspective from different units," she says. "And each time, people were more than willing to share their knowledge. If I needed a particular resource, people would get back to me. We'd all try to help each other out."

Information Outlook spoke to Tina shortly before the SLA 2016 Annual Conference, at which she will present a contributed paper and a poster.

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You entered library school shortly after graduating from college. Did you know when you entered college that you wanted to be a librarian, or did something happen in college that pointed you in that direction?

I had worked in my local library in high school and college, so I had eight years of public library experience before I even graduated from college. But I had no expectation of becoming a librarian. One of my supervisors at the library said, "You know, you'd make a pretty good librarian," and I thought, why would anyone even consider such a profession?

I kind of worked my way up, starting out as a book shelver and then working part-time at the circulation desk. Then I got bored, so they let me work in the cataloging department. It just seemed like over the years, I was given more and more opportunities to try out different aspects of the library.

I originally went to college to become a textbook editor—I was interested in editing and writing from the get-go. By the time I graduated from college, I had some student loans to pay off, so I continued to work at the public library. At one point I switched to a larger library—the metropolitan library here in town—and they said to me, you have some great experience, you should be a librarian. And I thought, people keep telling me this, so maybe I should start listening to them!

So when I started college, becoming a librarian was the furthest thing from what I imagined myself doing. But I'm still here after almost 30 years, so I guess I made the right choice.

Your first full-time library job was as a children's services librarian in a public library. What lessons or skills did you learn in that job that have helped you as your career has progressed?

One of the lessons I learned is that librarians need a great deal of patience. I worked with kids of all ages—I led story time for children as young as nine months. And part of being successful at that is getting comfortable being in front of people and kind of performing, if you will. It gave me a greater sense of confidence—I learned to feel OK that people were staring at me and listening to me.

I also learned some little ways to hold people's attention. For example, sometimes if I'm speaking at conferences, I'll see people texting on their phones or falling asleep. So I'll use voice inflection and other tricks like that to keep people attentive. That's helped a lot, at least in my current position.

I think one of the great things about being a children's services librarian is that you're getting experience not just introducing people to the library, but also re-introducing them. I was dealing not only with the kids, but also their nannies and their parents and sometimes their grandparents. So I had an opportunity to work with a wide range of users who had varying levels of familiarity with the library.

Also, when I was first starting out, it was very competitive here to get into adult reference positions, but there wasn't much competition to get into children's services. A lot of people don't want to spend 40 hours per week with other people's children; heck, a lot of them don't want to spend 40 hours of week with their own children. *(laughs)*

I had worked in the children's department in high school and college, so there was an opportunity there for me to start out as a children's services librarian, and also more promotional opportunities. I'd really had my heart set on an adult services job, working at a big reference desk, but I'd probably still be sitting and waiting for that particular position to open up, whereas this gave me an opportunity to try some new things.

I liked working with kids—it came very easily to me. But I think it was kind of a matter of not being afraid to try something outside my comfort zone. I could have hated it, but I really enjoyed it. It's not something I'd want to go back to after all these years, but I can still do "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" if you want me to! *(laughs)*

Most librarians are shy and introverted and don't like attention—we just want to do a good job and help people. The children's services people are in the opposite situation. When you're leading a story time, people will be focusing their attention on you, and sometimes the local media will come in and start filming you. Those experiences helped prepare me for what I'm doing now.

You ended up spending almost 10 years in public libraries, including serving as a branch manager and a department manager. As you look back, what did you like best and least about working in pubic libraries, and why did you decide to leave the public library sector?

The answer to what I liked least is easy—it's called working nights, weekends, and holidays. A lot of people going into the public library field don't understand that you work every other Saturday or Sunday, and it's difficult to keep a healthy work-life balance when you're giving up your nights and weekends and holidays. So I was glad to put that behind me when I left public librarianship.

The thing I liked the best was being part of a reference team. I was fortunate enough to work in locations where there was more than one librarian working at the reference desk, or maybe a librarian and some paraprofessionals. It was kind of nice, because if I got a question that was outside my knowledge zone, I could tap into the person sitting next to me. That kind of collaboration is essential to giving the best service possible.

Tina at her desk in the Architecture Library at The Ohio State University. "When I worked in the public library, my story times included pop-up books," she says. "How ironic that in my academic library, we also have pop-up books!"

In my current academic position, as in my corporate position, I'm the only librarian in the building, so I've kind of lost that sense of working collegially or collaboratively. So that's one of the things I really liked about pubic libraries—the way they functioned.

Deciding to leave a job, for me, is always about wanting to try something new or different, and for the promotional opportunity. I'm always looking to move up and gain new perspectives on librarianship.

Speaking of gaining new perspectives, after you left the public library job, you went off to an information center in an engineering and design firm, Burgess & Niple. What attracted you to that job,

and what skills and knowledge did you discover you were lacking after you began working there?

The switch to corporate wasn't planned; I'm never really actively looking for a job. Things just kind of pop up in front of me. In this case, a friend noticed a library job being advertised in the newspaper, and she said, "You know how to order books, you know how to catalog, you know how to answer questions. This ad is for a 'Jacqueline of all trades' job, because there's only one librarian. And as far as making the decisions, there's only one person doing that, so ultimately you'll be responsible for the success or failure of that library."

I wasn't really thinking about moving into corporate. My big thing was that I was an English literature major, with minors in journalism and speech communication, so I didn't know anything about architecture or engineering or construction. I didn't have any background in those things, and I really didn't have any interest in them. So I kind of talked myself out of applying for the job, because I didn't have the content expertise.

But my friend kept nudging me, saying, "You know, you're kind of sabotaging your career here. Maybe they aren't finding anyone with that expertise. Go and talk to them. If you know how to answer one kind of question, why can't you answer another kind of question using a different set of databases?"

So, on a lark, I applied for the job and ended up getting it. What they liked about me was that I had a little bit of experience in a lot of different realms, so I knew how a library functions. And I understood how a library works from a customer service viewpoint—how to get the books in the door, how to classify and catalog them, and so on. That's what they wanted—they were finding people who perhaps had worked as archivists and knew how to catalog but who couldn't find answers, because that's not what they were trained to do. So they thought I would be a good fit, and I ended up staying there for 11 years.

It was about the same time you started working for Burgess & Niple that you joined SLA. How did you hear about SLA, and what made you decide to join?

My MLS degree included a lot of different courses—cataloging, tech services, special collections—so I'm sure that SLA was mentioned at some point. There's PLA [the Public Library Association] for public librarians and MLA [the Medical Library Association] for medical and ALA [the American Library Association] as an umbrella, but I wasn't active in any of them.

I was looking for something that would help me relate to my customers and give me a peer group, because I was now a solo librarian at my location. Nobody in my company knew what a librarian does or what we can do. So I needed to be able to tap into colleagues who could walk me through challenges I was facing, and I remembered SLA from my coursework. I thought, this is exactly what I need. It's a specialty library, it's a corporate setting, it's in engineering, and SLA has an Engineering Division.

Over the years that I was at B&N, I switched divisions within SLA a few times. I was in KM when the company was talking about KM; I was in the Solo Division; I was in Engineering. So, within SLA, I've bopped around and gotten a perspective from different units. And each time, people were more than willing to share their knowledge. If I needed a particular resource, people would get back to me. We'd all try to help each other out.

So I really felt a connection within SLA, since I wasn't working with other librarians or information professionals. For me, it was a great support system. And my company was more than willing to spend time and money to send me to conferences, and those opportunities were in short supply in public libraries. Being able to go to conferences and sit in on the sessions, I could bring back knowledge and ideas to help me work around problems that other libraries were dealing with.

For example, at B&N we had this really clunky, old, online computer system, and I ended up connecting with

Tina attends her first football game to cheer on the Ohio State Buckeyes.

someone from another library who told me that if you put all of your holdings into a great big Excel spreadsheet, get your Webmaster to put a front door on it, and put it on your Website, you can do some basic searching. Thank goodness I met that person, because that's what I ended up doing to get a 24-hour online catalog available to my library users at B&N. Otherwise, we might still have been using a card catalog.

You've touched on some of the challenges you faced at B&N. Now that you look back at your career there, what are your proudest accomplishments?

I think, for me, it's something intangible—creating value. I know that seems to be the trend today, that librarians are trying to show value to their companies. But in my case, when I started at B&N, I replaced a librarian who was not trained in reference. So every time the engineers would go to her and ask for help, she had trouble. She couldn't find answers. She might be able to find a book if you gave her the title, but that wasn't how she was trained. She was trained as an archivist. Archivists often preserve and classify materials; reference librarians find answers.

So when I stepped into that role, the first couple of months, only a few people stopped by the library. I had been working in a large metropolitan branch where I could be helping 15 to 20 people an hour when I was on the reference desk. Here, I was getting a couple of people a month.

Finally, one of the engineers came in one day, and I was chatting with him and saying I was kind of surprised how quiet it was in the library, and he said, "Oh, your predecessor couldn't help us out much, so we stopped asking." And I think one of the things I'm most proud of is switching that attitude around, from one of seeing the library as a wasted space and wondering why they even had a librarian to, over time, me infiltrating their work groups and showing how I could help them. I tried to go above and beyond and give them more than what they asked for, so that over the years, I got busier and busier and busier. It got so busy that there were times I needed help, because I was still a solo librarian.

But when 2008 hit, people didn't have money to do big engineering design projects, so there weren't a lot of contracts out there. The design industry took a big hit from layoffs and reduced hours, and my company was not immune from that—we were doing the same things other design companies were doing. I lost a lot of colleagues to layoffs, and work groups were taken off the organizational chart and hours were reduced. But during that whole time, none of these things affected the library. My hours were never reduced, and they kept giving me money to buy the resources I needed to help the engineers and architects with their jobs.

I think that's because one of the things I did was change the perception of the library from "It's outdated and I can find what I need on Google" to "I can find it on Google, but I'll spend a lot of time doing it because I don't know how to search strategically, so I'm going to ask the librarian because she can search more efficiently and I can use my time doing what I need to do."

It's hard to measure value, so the only obvious thing I can do is point to increased usage. But there's a lot more to it. At one time, the company president hired me out to one of our clients that needed help working on their library. I think that's because I had built a reputation as a trusted member of the team, not just the librarian down the hall.

In my current position at The Ohio State University, part of being a tenure track librarian is to have a research agenda. I had noticed at B&N that there are different customer service models in the corporate world—how you handle requests and treat your customers—than there are in the public library world. And that morphed into my research agenda, the "Trusted Librarian," because a corporate library customer service model and a public library customer service model can be radically different.

Speaking of Ohio State, you shifted sectors again when you left B&N by taking an academic job. What led to this job change, and what have been the biggest surprises you've encountered?

I liked working in a corporate setting, but one of the things about me is that I get bored fairly easily. I have to have new things to juggle or new surprises pop up. I'm a lifelong learner—I love to be challenged by new and different things.

I wasn't looking to leave Burgess & Niple; I liked being in charge of my library and having sole decision-making powers. Again, it was one of those things where someone said, "Did you see this ad?" He was looking at it from a benefits standpoint—I had worked in public service and had the public employee retirement benefit, and now I was in the private sector and didn't have that retirement benefit available. Wouldn't I like to go back into the public service retirement program?

I thought, I'm not trained to be an academic librarian. I don't know what they do, I can't imagine working with faculty, and there's this whole professor thing—I don't think I'm qualified for that.

But I investigated it a little bit, and I found out I didn't have to have worked previously in an academic library to do the job. They were looking for someone who had headed up a library, had supervisory experience, collection development experience, reference, etc. And as I kept looking at the qualifications checklist, I saw that I had everything—I just hadn't worked in an academic setting or campus setting before.

So I thought, OK, I'll try it for the experience. It was the first time I had ever applied for an academic job, and I got it. I like to joke that they called the wrong person when they made the job offer. *(laughs)*

One of the things that attracted me to the academic world was that, over the years, I've volunteered for my local newspaper to write news articles and columns. That's the editor and journalist in me—I like to write. So it seemed natural to elevate to scholarly writing, which held a big appeal for me. And there was the fact that, when I had moved from public libraries to a corporate library, my focus of answering quick reference questions changed to answering research questions, which I really liked. In my academic position, I'm not answering basic questions like you would at a public library reference desk; I'm answering research questions, and I get to do my own research and publish it, which is really exciting.

There really haven't been any big surprises yet, except that it has become more clear as I've transitioned between the different settings that the decision-making processes and the scope of how decisions are made are very distinct. This may not be everyone's experience—I've only worked in Central Ohio, in a fairly small geographic area—but in the corporate world, they were always trying to be ahead of the game. So it was OK if you spent $100,000 on something and it failed miserably, because at least you were trying to get ahead of the competition. They were always very forward thinking.

Public libraries, on the other hand,

take the approach that we need to order 600 copies of the latest novel by James Patterson, because that's what people will want to read when it comes off the bookstands from the publishers. So they are very much into solving the demands of today.

In the academic world, they're very rooted in history and tradition, which is not something I had experienced in the other two environments. For me, it's how they approach their decision making—in the corporate world, it's very quick; in the public, it's relatively quick depending on immediate needs; and in academic, it's a little slower and more deliberate. That's pretty much the biggest surprise.

Hearing about the differences in the environments where you've worked makes me wonder if you've ever wished you had changed jobs in a different order—working in academia first, for example. Have you ever thought about that, and what advice would you offer someone who's leaving one sector to move to another?

I don't think I would change anything; I'm really happy with the way things have played out for me. There are jobs I'm glad I didn't get, and there are jobs I'm glad I did get. It seemed like a natural progression to go from one job to another the way I did.

Another part of my research agenda is librarian mobility and transferring between different locations and environments, and diversifying your skills portfolio along the way. For some people, it's OK to get a job as an academic librarian and stay in academia and never move. I get bored easily and like new challenges, so that's why I keep moving around.

There seems to be a typical progression of going from public to academic but never academic to public. Some people go from corporate to academic or academic to corporate. I think it ends up depending very much on what you want out of a library position.

For me, one of the goals is diversifying my skill set. So if I knew I wanted to move up to a bigger library, I would ask for new challenges or volunteer for things that might be out of my comfort zone so I could diversify my portfolio.

It's also important that you not refer to yourself in terms of the kind of library you work at. Many people say, I'm a public librarian or I'm an academic librarian. We're all librarians and information professionals, and we can all pitch in and help out each other.

I think sometimes people put up self-barriers. They'll say, I'm not an academic librarian, so I won't apply for an academic job, but they might be perfect for the job. I think you have to diversify your skills and connect the dots so that, in your head, you know what skills you have in the public library where you work and you recognize the skills you might need to move to a corporate position. You want to find opportunities to build those skills.

And if you're lucky enough to get the interview, remember that the people interviewing you may have no idea what it's like to walk in your shoes in the libraries you've worked in. When I applied for my current job, nobody on the search committee had ever worked in a public library, so they had no idea what it's like to conduct a story time or how to respond when tornado sirens go off and you have to secure the building. I had to try to connect those dots in a very polite way to show them that I had the experience, and just because I had switched environments, it shouldn't be considered a barrier to getting a new position.

When I met with the search committee at OSU, one of my questions for them was, "What answer did I give to you previously that got me to where I am today, as one of three finalists?" And they said, you've done reference, you have management experience, you've done this and that. Then the person sitting next to me said, "My first reaction when I read your application was, how rude of you to waste our time. You have no academic experience; you are not an academic librarian."

I thought, wow, I'm never going to get this job. Then she turned to me and said, "But when I read it again and cleared my mind of what I thought an academic librarian had to be, I realized that you have everything on our checklist that we're looking for, just in different environments." And I ended up getting the position.

So you have to recognize that there can be some misconceptions out there, some biases. You just have to plead your case, connect the dots, and show what value you can bring to this new environment.

You've worked in different environments and learned a lot of lessons, and now you're presenting papers and posters and you're very involved in helping plan the SLA 2016 Annual Conference. Is this just a function of being an academic librarian and you need to do this to get tenure, or have you decided that it's time to "give back" and share your wisdom with others?

Full disclosure: I'm a tenure track librarian, so it's part of my responsibility to provide service to my professional organization and develop a research agenda and share that knowledge with the community at large. It's just so awesome, because I'm getting paid to do this! *(laughs)*

I didn't set out to be a tenure track librarian, and going back to what I said earlier about work-life balance, I had never been able to have my outside life and still fit in all of these other things. But OSU is very supportive of making sure that we give back to our profession, so they carve out a slice of our annual hours to make sure we do it.

On a tangent, I've always been someone to volunteer and give back along the way, just not at an international level like in SLA. It's been more on a community level—I've mentored graduate students at Kent State and worked with younger librarians in a very informal way, not as part of an organized program. So it just seemed like, now that I have the time and the opportunity and the means to do this, I'm going to jump right in.

So, yes, I am a conference planner this year for SLA 2016, and I'm a conference planner for next year also. It's interesting, because I've now added a new division to my SLA perspective—I've done Solo, KM, Engineering, and now Academic. It's a whole new set of peers and colleagues that I'm making connections with, which I really enjoy. It's come kind of full circle now—I'm making presentations in front of large crowds of people, but they're about librarianship, not the "Itsy Bitsy Spider." *(laughs)*

Am I giving back to my profession? Yes. Am I sharing with my colleagues? Yes. But as I mentioned earlier, I joined SLA so I could make connections and tap into that network of sharing, so it's been very beneficial for me to build a portfolio of colleagues across the world.

Given that you're in a tenure track position, I assume you're set for the time being. But looking down the road, do you think there may be another twist or turn in your career?

I've been working in libraries for 30 years and I'm not really all that old, so I still have a good 15 or so years to put into the profession. As I've kind of mentioned, I haven't really planned my career path *(laughs)*, and I don't think I would recommend to someone else to just apply for jobs and take the first thing that falls in front of you. But I always seem to get bored after seven or eight years; if you look at my résumé, you'll see that's when I hop off to something else. I think the combination of my varied work experience and library school courses have allowed me to maneuver pretty easily through the library world.

As a tenure track librarian, I'm now 2-1/2 years into my six years. I would like to think I'm on a trajectory to make tenure, but who knows—in a few years I might be looking for a job if I don't make tenure. *(laughs)* I can't control the outcome; I can only do the best job I can. So I could see myself staying at OSU until I retire; I could also see myself thinking, hmm, what other kinds of jobs would I like to try?

I've never been one to pre-plan. If you plan too far in advance, something's going to go wrong and you'll be disappointed, whereas this way, special opportunities pop up and I think, oh, that would be a great job. I'm kind of a hands-off, whatever happens, happens kind of person. So check back in about six years and see where I am! **SLA**

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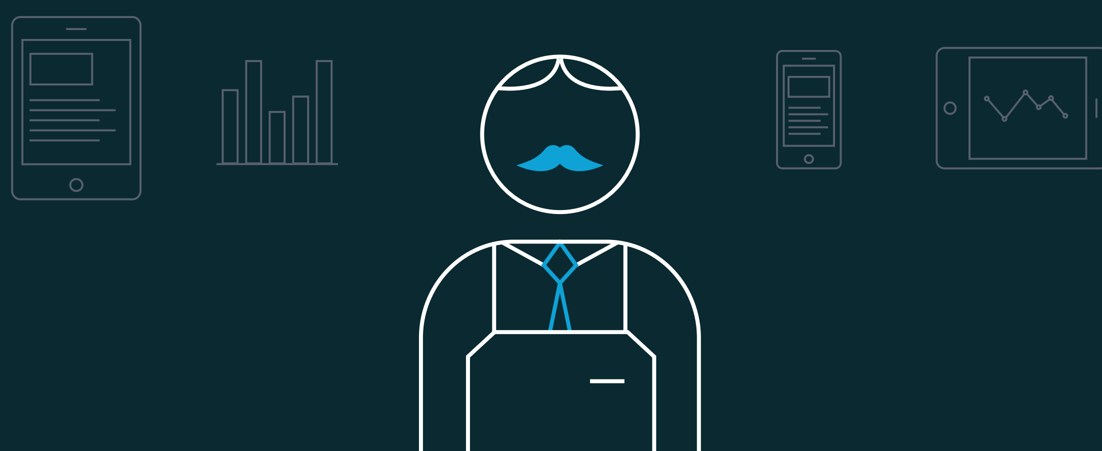

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