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The Past, Present, and Future of Information

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About Author
Tierra Holmes is a recent graduate of San José State University’s MLIS program. She served as the Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of SRJ during her final year at the iSchool and is excited about publishing her last issue with the journal. Holmes also graduated from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte with a B.A. in History and a B.A. in Art History.

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The ways in which we share and interact with information is in a constant state of fluctuation, spurred on by major societal developments. We have in recent memory experienced the globalization of information with the rise of the internet and the virtualization of many information behaviors and services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is exceedingly clear that current events exert influence on the nature of information, one must not discount the significance of how the past may also help shape the future. In this issue of the School of Information Student Research Journal (SRJ), our authors and faculty contributor explore the intersection between past, present, and future in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) and what it means for underrepresented groups.

Dr. Michele A. L. Villagran, assistant professor at San José State University (SJSU) and CEO of the CulturalCo, LLC consultancy, contributes an exceptionally pertinent piece on cultural competency in research. Her essay discusses how current trends of researching historically underrepresented groups and addressing inequities have made cultural competence a critical skill. She offers tips on how to understand and develop cultural competence based on a webinar given in conjunction with the American Library Association (ALA) Library Research Round Table (LRRT).

Lena Hernandez, a graduating student of SJSU’s Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program, offers an illuminating review of Information: A Historical Companion in which she explores the idea that the modern “Information Age” has evolved from centuries of history. She offers studies into non-Western information traditions as an area of future research that would address a current gap in the field.

Claire Kelley, a current MLIS student at SJSU, provides a thought-provoking review of Selby’s Freedom Libraries: The Untold Story of Libraries for African Americans in the South, that explores the largely overlooked history of Freedom Libraries and their relevance to LIS. She posits that the legacy of Freedom Libraries is important for contemporary research to meet the needs of underserved communities.

I am thankful for the opportunity to explore topics related to underrepresented groups in my final issue as the Editor-in-Chief of SRJ, as it is an area of research that sorely needs attention. I hope that the essays presented in this issue will facilitate discourse on how to fill such a critical gap in the LIS field and that you, our readers and contributors, will continue to support the journal as we endeavor to push LIS and related research forward by considering how the past, present, and future are intertwined.

Acknowledgements

As my last publication with SRJ comes to a close, I cannot help but reflect on the contributions of everyone who made this issue possible. Our Managing Editor, Meghan Duffey, was an invaluable partner and sounding board throughout the planning process; we dedicated many late nights to the journal this semester. The other members of our Editorial Team also played an integral role in the development of this issue; their passion for peer review enabled us to provide a
valuable experience to our authors through detailed and thoughtful commentary on submitted manuscripts.

Our Faculty Advisor, Dr. Anthony Bernier, has been an attentive mentor to our Editorial Team in the year I have served as the Editor-in-Chief of SRJ. I will miss his guidance as I begin the next chapter of my career, but I am confident that the skills we cultivated as part of the Editorial Team will help me fulfill my professional goals.

We would also like to offer our sincere gratitude to the Faculty Advisory Board, led by iSchool Director Dr. Anthony Chow and Associate Director Dr. Linda Main, for their continued support. SRJ has been downloaded over 160,000 times in 205 countries as of May 2022. Moving forward, we hope to expand the journal’s reach even further as we endeavor to uphold our institution’s values through establishing our journal as a premiere source for graduate research in LIS and related fields.