

Theory in Library Research

William Welburn

(William Welburn is a doctoral student in the IU School of Library and Information Science)

When I first decided that I wanted to return to school for doctoral study in library and information science, many of my colleagues had mixed reactions. While no one questioned the wisdom of my choice, virtually everyone had an opinion on what might be done with a Ph.D. Some felt that its utility would be limited to teaching and research, others saw it as a vehicle for administration. I maintained that it was those unanswered questions derived from the organizational life of libraries that were the driving force behind my decision to give up my job to become a full time student again.

Often, there are elements of surprise that accompany the sensemaking process of a new experience. In doctoral study, it is coming to terms with definitions of research held by academe that are fundamentally different from those of practitioners. Eliot Freidson has argued that a central characteristic of the organization of professions is the "critical division" between practitioners, administrators, and teacher-researchers over professional powers and the use of formal knowledge (Freidson, 1986). Differences between academics and practitioners have been voiced elsewhere and in most professions. As Freidson has noted, definitions of research are linked to hierarchical authority within a given profession. In some professions, the nucleus of research lies within the university. In others, the contributions of academics to the core of knowledge driving the profession is secondary to ideas, innovations, and research and development activities carried out by professionals. In any case, it is the task of the doctoral student as a budding researcher to make sense of the hierarchical authority of knowledge within her or his profession in an effort to determine the effect of an original contribution of research.

Librarianship as a profession is no exception. The "critical division" between practitioner and academic is clearly reflected in the production of research and related literature. Studies of research productivity indicate that there appears to be a causal, albeit tentative, relationship between professionalization, as

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From the Editor

Emily Okada

(Emily Okada is Reference Services Coordinator, Undergraduate Library Services, IUB)

During the last ACRL conference in Baltimore, I attended an open session on library science education. Someone stood up to make a comment, gave his name and went on to state, "I have been a library scientist for 12 years." For some reason, that statement struck a nerve in me (no one else stirred). I had never heard anyone seriously refer to him/herself as a library scientist. "I'm not a library scientist, I'm a librarian," I thought to myself. I felt this quite strongly and still do. Is this all just a matter of words, just

superficial labels that don't really mean anything? Or do these terms indicate real differences in orientation and status and expectations? The articles by Welburn and Burbach in this *Innuendo* address this issue. It seems appropriate to reflect on this during National Library Week.

The last issue of the *Innuendo* featured a story written by Mary Krutulis (*Taxes We Have Always With Us*). Mary's name was spelled incorrectly: it's Krutulis not Krutulus!

Notes From InULA

Julie Bobay, President

(Julie Bobay is Instruction Librarian, IUB)

InULA's committees are busy planning programs for the rest of the year, including, of course, National Library Week. We have the book sale coming up (April 7), and we hope to make it a very successful fund-raising event. Traditionally, the book sale has been the only event sponsored by InULA to celebrate National Library Week, and many InULA members have commented that we need to do more to celebrate the profession. This year, the National Library Week Committee is planning a few more events: watch for a display in the Main Library (Bloomington) on the theme of "The Year of the Reader," and a feature film which "features" a movie star/librarian to be shown in the Main Library (Bloomington) during National Library Week. When's the last time you enjoyed a good movie with a room full of librarians? We hope you'll take this opportunity to share in this celebration of National Library Week with your colleagues.

We have lots of other things going on: our annual conference in April featuring a day-long seminar by Jana Bradley on "Writing for Publication," a microcomputer software demonstration, our annual auction to raise money for the Research Incentive Fund (remember to send in those applications for grants—they're easy to do!), more issues of the *Innuendo*, and the never-ending struggle to get and keep our internal affairs in order (balancing the budget, remaining on schedule, etc.).

You can see that InULA is a very busy organization, and one which needs the support and active participation of all its members. I hope that when the election mechanism gears up this Spring, you will all consider running for a board position, or volunteering to work on a committee. The organization fills an important professional need, and it will do a progressively better job of meeting that need as more librarians become involved.

InULA People: Frances G. Livingston

by Lois McCune

(Lois McCune is Assistant Head, Monographic Processing Services
Department, IUB)

Frances Livingston has been the director of the Southeast Regional Campus Library at New Albany for the past thirteen years. She is responsible for the administration of the library, which includes policy making, budget management, and overseeing two other librarians and eight support staff.

A dyed-in-the-wool librarian, Frances has never worked outside the field. When she graduated from high school, she decided to work a year before going to college. She took a position in the children's department in the public library in Aurora, IL, and she loved the work. During the summers when she was in college, she worked full time. During the school year, she worked part time at the local public library while attending Knox College in Galesburg, IL. She graduated in 1958. While in library school at the University of Chicago, she worked first as a filer, and then as a cataloger.

Frances began her professional career in Louisville, KY, at the University of Louisville. She held various positions there for nine years, until she took over the leadership of the Shelby campus library. She became a Hoosier with her next move across the river to New Albany four years later.

When asked how the philosophy of library service differs between the IU Bloomington campus and the regional campus libraries, Frances replied, "The regional campus libraries are not research libraries. Our collections reflect the teaching mission of our institutions and are to serve our students and support the teaching efforts of our faculty. We rely on the collections in Bloomington to support research."

The smaller population served makes it possible for the IUS Library to give more individual assistance to the patrons. The IUS Library is presently involved in the designated writing course program, in which students who are enrolled in the term paper writing course are given individual guidance in selecting materials on their chosen topics. Each student makes an appointment with one of the librarians for this service.

Frances does not feel that the missions of the regional campus libraries differ significantly from each other. It has been her experience that when problems arise or the libraries need to get information about policies, they can always depend upon each other for assistance.

The most important issue facing the library profession today is funding, Frances believes. She is concerned that we will become a nation of libraries classified as the "haves" and the "have nots." The steady erosion of federal and state funding has not only impacted on the ability to provide basic services and collections, but in many cases it has become impossible for libraries with poor funding to even think of taking advantage of new technologies. She states, "I am especially aware of this situation because, for the past two years, I have been president of the Southeastern Indiana ALSA. Our ALSA is located in one of the poorest areas of the state, and it covers the largest area. With the services that we have been able to provide over the past ten years, our members and their patrons have come to realize what a valuable network this is. However, no members have local resources of their own to help fund this project if our budget were to be severely cut."

Frances enjoys watching films from the forties and fifties with her husband. She also likes gardening, traveling, and cooking. Her first love, however, is chamber music. She has been actively involved with the Louisville Chamber Music Society for many years. She and her husband also enjoy listening to records from their large classical music collection.

Theory in Library Research

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manifested by the adoption of ACRL standards for faculty status, and increases in the contributions of practitioners to the library press. Yet there has been little systematic attempt to explore the dichotomous nature of authority in the knowledge base of the profession. It becomes much clearer with one foot in the field and the other in doctoral study that the distinction between the librarian as researcher and the academician as library "scientist" (social researcher, historian, information scientist, etc.) might have to do with the use of theory in forming a framework for analysing a given problem.

Somewhere during the course of a doctoral program, the student is surprised to learn that the arsenal of problems she or he has brought in from the field are devalued somewhat when they are not placed in a theoretical context. Theories are often appropriated by researchers in professional schools from what Parsons and Platt called the cognitive core disciplines of the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. For example, organization theory has borrowed a number of theoretical perspectives from the social and behavioral sciences, forcing one writer to contend that the "domain" of organizational research resembled a "weed patch" rather than a "well tended garden." (Pfeffer, 1982) Thus, the doctoral student as researcher is again surprised to find that research grounded in theory requires not only the explication of a theory but an interrogation of that theory to judge its worth. It is the linkage between theory and measurement, or the "relationship between abstract concepts and empirical indicants" (Zeller and Carmines, 1980), that forms the basis for the work of the library scientist.

If the use of theory is explicit in the world of the teacher-researcher, then it is much more implicit in the everyday life of the practitioner. One of the characteristics of the writings of practitioners that distinguish them from the work of the teacher-researcher is an apparent absence of the use of theory. As with other professions, librarians are concerned with the immediacy of finding solutions, or making sense out of problems. Wide ranging theories from organizational psychology, interpersonal communication, markets, Marx, Weber, information storage and retrieval, etc. are assumed in the perspectives of the practitioner-as-researcher. Subsequently, most of the articles published in professional journals link problems with measurement, and empirical results are interpreted for

what they are rather than for their theoretical significance. While the teacher-researcher is usually preoccupied with content validity, or whether or not there is a relationship between the findings of a study and its theoretical framework, the practitioner-as-researcher is more concerned with the generalizability of the findings of a study to various situations in the workplace.

There is little else to distinguish between librarian and library scientist in the hierarchical arrangement for generating knowledge for the library profession. There are good and bad examples of research from both groups:

"If the use of theory is explicit in the world of the teacher-researcher, then it is much more implicit in the everyday life of the practitioner."

of poorly articulated problem statements, methodological malfunctions, and misinterpretations of findings. Where the two are differentiated, and possibly the greatest area for conflict, is in the generation and utilization of theories, paradigms, or logical structures to frame problems and observations.

If I have learned nothing else as a doctoral student, I've observed two things. First, the interrogation of a theory during the process of conceptualizing a researchable problem is a time consuming task that requires the attention of a core of researchers. The researcher then attempts to influence professionals and policy makers through the diffusion of ideas in conferences, publications, and in teaching. Second, there is certainly room in our profession for the coexistence of both perspectives in an effort to expand the knowledge base of library and information science.

Notes

Freidson, E. *Professional Powers: A Study of the Institutionalization of Formal Knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1986.

Pfeffer, J. *Organizations and Organization Theory*. Marshfield, MA: Pitman Press. 1982.

Zeller, R. A. and E.G. Carmines. *Measurement in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1980.

What's in a Name?

Librarian or Information Scientist

Sylvia Burbach

(Sylvia Burbach is Assistant Head, Cataloging, IUB)

My first memorable encounter with the term information science occurred during library school. In the middle of my two year stay, the Graduate Library School of IU changed its name to School of Library and Information Science. This had no effect on the degree, which remained Master of Library Science. It did, however, reflect changes that had already occurred in the School's curriculum. My exposure to information science was furthered by mandatory enrollment in Introduction to the Information Sciences, or "baby computers," as we called it. I was thankful that the final exam was not mandatory.

My personal opinion of the term has, for the most part, evolved from my experience in a research library. I define an information scientist as someone who is professionally insecure with the label of librarian. Those who embrace the newer name are librarians who have accepted the negative image ascribed to us by the uninformed.

Although the sources I read while in library school did not provide a clear definition, I decided to return to the literature. I am sorry to report that vague and inconsistent definitions still permeate the articles and books on information science. Alvin Schrader, a recent Ph.D. graduate from IU, was so moved by such inadequacies in the literature that he based a thesis on this very topic. In Schrader's *Toward a Theory of Library and Information Science* one can find approximately 700 definitions of information science and its antecedents. No point in further burying myself in ASIS-type journals! I was interested, however, in pursuing the following question with the InULA membership: What is the difference between a librarian and an information scientist?

Polling librarians on this topic was much more fun than reading about it. Not one person declined the opportunity to be heard and all agreed to be quoted (expletives deleted, of course). Even in this small sample patterns emerged.

Some librarians saw little or no difference between a librarian and an information scientist.

Diane Bever, Reference Services, IUK – "I use them interchangeably, If there is a difference, I see the librarian as a practitioner and the information scientist as a researcher."

David Farrell, Collection Management and Development, IUB – "There is no difference between a competent librarian and a competent information scientist."

Other opinions focused on the two names.

Rosann Auchstetter, Fine Arts Library, IUB -- " I view it pretty much like splitting hairs, or like the difference between a slide curator and a slide librarian. They are both doing the same thing, it's just the difference in terms.

Barbara Henn, Monographic Processing Services Department, IUB -- "[The difference is] the title, and because of the title the people appear different in the eyes of the beholder. It is the stereotypical picture when you say librarian...you get the hair in the bun, oxford shoes and the eyeglasses. When

"Librarians are professionals in our own right."

-Kathy Sorury

you say scientist you think of a research oriented person on the forefront of knowledge."

Kathy Sorury, Cataloging Department, IUB, -- "Librarians are professionals in our own right. We don't have to prove to anybody that we are something different or better by using that new name. It was created because of all the automation that was implemented but that doesn't make us scientists. An information scientist could be a teacher, librarian, publisher or researcher."

A few librarians emphasized hierarchy.

Jackie Byrd, Cataloging, IUB -- "I guess information science is a subcategory of librarianship."

Jan Preusz, School of Library and Information Science, IUB -- "In my mind, I think of an information scientist in a broader relationship to the field than a librarian. An information scientist may be involved with materials we traditionally associate with libraries, but is primarily involved with the collection of data, regardless of the source. I also think of librarians being more involved with collections (i.e. merging collections with people) and information scientists merging people or clients with the collection."

Carla Montori, Preservation, IUB -- "I look at information science as a subset of librarianship. I view librarians as involved with a wide range of activities in a wide range of service areas dealing with a number of different formats in each of those service areas. I think that information scientists tend to be more public-service oriented rather than being active in the entire range of services, that they deal with machine-readable data rather than with a variety of formats.

Structure provided the distinguishing characteristic in the following:

Bob Goehlert, Subject Specialist, IUB -- "A librarian is someone whose basic job is working in a library and providing service. An information scientist is someone who studies the structure and the flow of information. An information scientist is someone who studies the creation, diffusion, and utilization of information."

Bruce Miller, Systems Officer, IUB -- "A librarian is someone who works in a library and provides access to or delivers information. An information scientist is someone who studies the organization and use of information."

Two librarians viewed the role of information scientist as dynamic.

Judi Copley, Interlibrary Services, IUB -- "A librarian sticks to the traditional tools they teach you in school. An information scientist will go to the ends of the earth."

Miriam Bonham, Medical Sciences Library, IUB -- "I think an information scientist is more active and pro-active and not waiting for services to be requested but participating more, being more a part of the research team and utilizing new technologies to access information."

An emphasis on computerization was highlighted by some.

Pat Riesenman, Reference Department, IUB -- "My thought is [that an information scientist is] someone who works exclusively with computers. A librarian works with a broader base of sources, including computers. Somehow the term information scientist implies concern with pieces of information. I think there is a lot more to be sought than data and information alone."

Some answers just can't be categorized.

Barbara Halporn, Subject Specialist, IUB -- "A librarian is a real person and an information scientist is a fake."

Mary Hudson, School of Law Library, IUPUI -- "I really haven't thought that much about it."

Herb White, School of Library and Information Science, IUB -- "The difference is about \$5,000 a year in the starting salary."

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-Herb White

Join the Nation of Readers

InULA National Library Week Activities

Annual Book Sale

Monday, April 6

9 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Main Library Media Showing Room

(Between the south glass entrance doors to the Main Lobby)

All proceeds go to support InULA grants,
the *Innuendo*, and other InULA activities

Foul Play

Goldie Hawn &
Chevy Chase

Goldie Hawn as a Librarian? It's True!

Wednesday, April 8, 8:00 p.m. • Free Admission

Main Library Media Showing Room

*Watch the glass display cases in the Main Library to see
who else belongs to the Nation of Readers*

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