Staying Relevant in the Era of Budget Cuts and Artificial Intelligence

Margaret A. Hoogland, MLS, AHIP[a]

[a]Clinical Medical Librarian and Associate Professor, University Libraries, The University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9932-3605, margaret.hoogland@utoledo.edu

Back in the stone ages of the early 2000s, I attended a panel session on career paths. At least once, each panelist found an occasion to state "I never learned that in library school!" At that time, the panelists predicted a turnover in current library administrators within 5 years. They also thought e-books would be the norm and that Google or Google Scholar, at least in academic settings, would put our profession out of business.

Fast forward to present day and career path panelists might say, "I never learned how to do programming in library school." Or, "It's not possible to do my job because of declining enrollment, budget cuts, etc." My responses, when asked about my career or getting through a murky time, fall into three categories: Stay Agile, Community Connections, and Finding the Bright Spot.

Stay Agile

Take a moment to consider the development and launching of the electronic health record (*née* electronic medical record) and the field of informatics. Both continue to grow and change, but in time librarians potentially could work with other departments to add connections to library resources in the electronic health record. Further, respected researchers in our field are lecturers and – in some cases – directors of informatics programs.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) could improve how we provide support and reduce the labor-intensive aspects of some services[1-4]. Similarly, our field does acknowledge that Google and Google Scholar are not going away. Depending on the setting, Google Scholar could be the go-to information source for a busy health care provider or a student on rotation[5-6]. As publishers and authors, it is important to keep up with trends, especially when it comes to adjusting our requirements for citations, the data availability statement, and use of AI within submissions[7]. So rather than viewing new or emerging technologies as threats, perhaps consider more carefully current and potential use of such products.

Community Connections

Tightening budgets, loss of personnel, and increasing responsibilities make it essential to establish and maintain a rapport with the community you support. For many, this translates into saying "yes" and spending time in meetings, which might not always directly apply to our work. These meetings, however, do get your *name* and *face* out in

the community and could result in a follow-up email, appointment, or a pre-meeting instant message that leads to something more promising.

When people ask me to take on a new role, join a committee, or recommend me for something, however, two questions come immediately to mind: What can I bring (e.g., prior experience, skills, etc.) to this role? What will this role give me or my community? Having tenure gives me flexibility, but it also means increased responsibilities within my own college. Recent conversations with colleagues have helped me realize that developing community connections takes courage, frequently hurts, and that it is almost never fun to say "no." By thoughtfully considering these questions and protecting my time by saying "no," I meet deadlines, reduce the possibility of burnout, and get the most out of projects. Employing such tactics also opens the opportunity for me to provide better support within my community and to assist my colleagues in the University Libraries.

Finding the Bright Spot

Regardless of how tough, murky, or impossible a situation may seem, surrendering is the only unacceptable response. It is OK to get frustrated, angry, or even yell. Temporarily retreating, strategizing, and then returning for round two of the discussion or debate over the next steps also works. Such tactics provide clarity and improve our ability to assess and to navigate or sometimes avoid future circumstances.

Hypothesis is a bright spot for me and each issue brings satisfaction and enjoyment. The Editorial Team and I hope you enjoy reading the articles featured in this issue. If you want to be in the loop about journal happenings and see the new issue table of contents alerts in your inbox, consider registering as a reader.

Margaret A. Hoogland, MLS, AHIP, She, Her, Hers;

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ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9932-3605

Email: margaret.hoogland@utoledo.edu

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