
Editorial

In the academic year 2021-2022, the Department of Library and Information Studies (DLIS) in the Faculty of Humanities and Education, at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, celebrated its Golden Anniversary, under the theme, “The DLIS at 50: Reflecting, Reshaping – Embracing the Future.” This milestone presented an opportunity for reflection, admiration, and appreciation of the remarkable achievements that have shaped education, innovation, and collaboration within the DLIS over the past five decades. In moving forward, the Department sought to pull lessons from the past, while reinventing itself to remain relevant and responsive to the changing needs of society. The DLIS has consistently risen to challenges, positioning itself as a hub for cutting-edge research, practical application, and forward-thinking pedagogical approaches. The DLIS 50th Anniversary celebration was marked by several events which included this special issue of the Caribbean Library Journal.

In this Information Age, where information is the heartbeat of human existence, the job of the library and information professional is critical to the economic, educational, socio-cultural, and political survival of the 21st Century citizen. The ever-increasing dependence on technological forms of information has heightened the demand by users for more variety in, and access to information. The library and information professionals are called upon to adapt to change in the interest of institution, community and national development. Similarly highlighted in Kaur and Sharma's (2018) review of adaptations needed by library professionals for the 21st Century, “as technology continues to advance at phenomenal speed, library professionals have to play a speedy and dynamic role to keep themselves up to date and learn new sets of skills to keep pace with technological developments” (131).

The DLIS recognizes its critical role in providing training, awareness and professional development opportunities for library and information professionals, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the evolving needs of our communities. The DLIS has consistently striven to align its curriculum with industry standards and best practices, ensuring its graduates are well-prepared for the challenges they will encounter in their careers. As we continue to celebrate education, innovation, and collaboration in this ever-changing world, the Department is grateful for the vision and wisdom which guided thought and action in its establishment over 50 years ago.

This special issue is a testament to the enduring legacy of the DLIS, showcasing the breadth and depth of its contributions to the field of library and information science. We are

privileged to have gathered a collection of articles from esteemed scholars, practitioners, and educators, both from within our region and beyond, to share their insights and experiences. Their contributions cover a range of topics that highlight the passion, dedication, and innovation that have become synonymous with the DLIS.

Several articles in this special issue demonstrate commitment to education, innovation, and collaboration. In "Librarian as Creator," Pierre-Robertson delves into the use of different innovative ways to disseminate information and the role of the librarian as a creative. Under the sub-theme of 'Celebrating Caribbean Cultural Expressions as Information Practices', this work highlights storytelling and writing as important media that librarians can use to contribute to literary works. It is an insightful reflective case study that also tactfully and delicately touches on violence against women as an issue of international concern.

St Rose and Johnson's "Innovation in An Ever-Changing World – Using a Virtual Reference Service (VRS) to Develop a Technology Inclusive, Research Driven Caribbean Library for The Future" further highlights innovation, along with collaboration. This article speaks to the use of VRS within the University of the West Indies libraries and the wider diaspora, the challenges faced and the benefits achieved. This knowledge is then importantly transposed into recommendations that can positively impact all Caribbean libraries, through policy, best practices and collaboration.

Finally, the article "The Impact of Technology Provision in the Caribbean" by Saddler explores the current state of information and communication technology in academic, public and national libraries across the Caribbean. The article highlights the need for advancement, collaboration and creative thinking in libraries to adjust to the fast-paced developments in technology, areas of concern and recommendations. Aimed towards the betterment of library services for the public and academic customers.

One of the key themes explored within this journal is the transformative power of education. Paul and Quiggin (2020) notably state that "for an experience to be transformative, it needs to involve a type of experience, a person hasn't had before. When the shift is transformative in the intended sense, it involves a discovery and a change in oneself: a new kind of experience that brings an epistemic shift that's deep enough to change your core personal preferences and the nature of your lived experience" (1). The DLIS has nurtured and empowered generations of librarians and information professionals who have become agents of positive change, fostering a love of reading, facilitating access to information, and promoting

lifelong learning within their communities. The impact of these individuals cannot be overstated, and we celebrate their tireless efforts.

Innovation has been a hallmark of the DLIS journey. According to Jantz (2012), “innovation can be viewed on a continuum where dynamic-idea creating organizations generate considerably more innovations than those that are process and static-rule based” (17). The library and information science field has witnessed significant transformations through innovation, over the past 50 years, and the DLIS has been at the forefront of embracing these changes. From the adoption of new technologies to the development of pioneering research initiatives; from digitization projects preserving our rich Caribbean heritage to the integration of emerging technologies in expanding access to information, the DLIS has consistently demonstrated a commitment to innovation that has propelled the library and information profession.

Throughout its history, the DLIS has also recognized the importance of collaboration in achieving its goals. Strong partnerships with other academic institutions, libraries, and organizations have been instrumental in expanding its reach and influence. The DLIS collaborative efforts have fostered cross-pollination of ideas, knowledge sharing, and the establishment of networks that have benefited the entire Caribbean library and information community.

This special issue serves as a tribute to the impactful work of the DLIS and the countless individuals who have contributed to its success. It is our hope that this celebration will inspire continued excellence and a vision for an even brighter future for library and information science in the Caribbean.

As editors, we are humbled by the opportunity to curate this special issue, bearing witness to the remarkable accomplishments of the DLIS at 50. I extend my sincere gratitude to all the authors, reviewers, and contributors who have made this issue possible. Your dedication to the library and information profession and commitment to advancing the field are commendable.

I invite you to delve into the pages that follow and to join us in celebrating the DLIS's 50-year journey of education, innovation, and collaboration. Together, let us embrace the ever-changing world and work towards a future where libraries and information centres continue to be catalysts for positive change in the Caribbean.

Regards,



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[Guest Editor]

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