LIBRARIANS DO RESEARCH TOO!

BY CAROL TENOPIR

LIBRARY CONNECT
BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

ELSEVIER
In this Library Connect Blueprint for Success, Carol Tenopir answers your questions about librarians doing research:

CHAPTER 1 – But I’m a librarian. Why should I do my own research?

CHAPTER 2 – How do I get started?

CHAPTER 3 – I’m a little fuzzy on research methods. What do I do now?

CHAPTER 4 – Okay, I’m ready to go. Or am I?

CHAPTER 5 – I’m doing it! How do I balance my research with the rest of my workload?

CHAPTER 6 – I’ve gathered data and completed my research. Am I done?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
BUT I'M A LIBRARIAN. WHY SHOULD I DO MY OWN RESEARCH?
Bring in grant money is not required, but grants can help you do larger-scale projects and enhance the visibility of you and your library.

5 **KEY** reasons librarians should do their own research:

1. Improve LIS practices
2. Partner with and understand the needs of researchers
3. Collaborate with librarians in different environments
4. Bring in grant money
5. Build toward promotion and/or tenure

A survey conducted by Catherine Sassen and Diane Wahl suggests an increase in the requirement to publish in academic libraries and an increase in the number of libraries where librarians have faculty status.

— “Fostering Research and Publication in Academic Libraries,” *College & Research Libraries*
HOW DO I GET STARTED?

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FUNDING

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From 1996 to 2014, the Institute of Museum and Library Services funded more than 1,000 projects in academic libraries, library consortia, research libraries/archives, LIS schools and special libraries.

http://www.imls.gov/

GETTING STARTED

REFLECT and THINK about

✈️ What research questions get you excited?
✈️ Will your background and expertise be of benefit?
✈️ How can you build on strengths within your organization?
✈️ Who can you speak with about their research experiences?

Approach potential COLLABORATORS and FUNDERS

Find out:

✈️ Who in your circle of colleagues is doing research or interested in starting?
✈️ Are there researchers who would like an information specialist partner?
✈️ Where is funding available — from government agencies, foundations, institutional research offices, professional societies, or companies?
Attend research sessions and talk to **COLLEAGUES** at local, regional, national and international **CONFERENCES**:

- Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL)
- American Library Association (ALA)
- Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Assess
- Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T)
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)
- Association of European Research Libraries (LIBER)
- United Kingdom Serials Group (UKSG)
- Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Research

**OUTSIDE THE BOX**

For inspiration beyond the realm of the library, try a multidisciplinary conference such as:

- [SXSW](http://sxsw.com/)
- [EDUCAUSE](http://www.educause.edu/annual-conference)
Read to get ideas on **TOPICS** and **METHODS**

I recommend research-focused LIS journals, such as:

- College & Research Libraries (C&RL)
- The Journal of Academic Librarianship
- The Library Quarterly
- Portal — Libraries and the Academy
- Library & Information Science Research

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**JISC INVESTMENTS IN R&D TOPICS**

- Data and analytics £3.5m
- Research and research data £2.3m
- Digital literacy £998k
- Curation and preservation £811k
- Course data £400k
- Open access £388k

[http://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/in-numbers](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/in-numbers)

Web, 3 March 2015.

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**LIS RESEARCH TRENDS**

This data visualization of “Library and Information Sciences” is based on more than 42,000 publications from 2010-2014.

Source: SciVal Trends module, drawing from Scopus and ScienceDirect data.
I'M A LITTLE FUZZY ON RESEARCH METHODS
WHAT DO I DO NOW?
Whether you need a **REFRESHER** or an **INTRODUCTION**:

- Scan research methods texts
- Select an appropriate research method (qualitative or quantitative)
- Think long term — are these research questions and methods you want to build on throughout your career?
- Take a statistics refresher course or find a research partner with complementary expertise
- Consider your timeline:
  - Would a preliminary study with a colleague help you gain experience?
  - If this is an area with little research to date, can you do an exploratory study first?
OK, I'M READY TO GO
OR AM I?
Only if you have taken the **time** to:

- Turn your ideas into a hypothesis or research question
- Design your study and instruments
- Conduct some pilot testing and plan analysis before you begin
- Determine whether you need permission from your Institutional Review Board if your research involves human subjects
- Decide how you will contact subjects for surveys or interviews

**Research Tip**

“Research involving contact with students, faculty, staff, or other persons — termed ‘human subjects research’ — may require approval from the college or university institutional review board (IRB).”

I'M DOING IT!
HOW DO I BALANCE MY RESEARCH WITH THE REST OF MY WORKLOAD?
There’s **NO SIMPLE ANSWER** to this one:

- Prioritize
- Tell your supervisor what you’re working on
- Delay taking on new responsibilities if possible
- Share the research work with colleagues at your library, your university, or other universities who have expertise in some aspects of the project
- Align your research with your work and ways to improve practice

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**BARRIERS TO RESEARCH**

In a 2010 survey, Canadian university librarians indicated their perceptions of the degree to which a series of barriers affect librarians’ ability to research. The top five barriers were:

1. Lack of skills
2. Lack of experience
3. Lack of research culture
4. Lack of time
5. Lack of motivation

I'VE GATHERED DATA AND COMPLETED MY RESEARCH. AM I DONE?
Not yet. Now it’s time to 
CONSOLIDATE and 
PREMOTEN your hard work:

- Organize your thoughts and start writing
- Communicate your findings in a venue that reaches the right audience, whether it is a journal, a conference (presentation or poster) or a newsletter (like Library Connect!)
- Share your work on academic networks like Mendeley, on social media and websites, and on library listservs and blogs

Find more ways to prepare, publish and promote articles in Elsevier’s “Get Noticed: Promoting Your Article for Maximum Impact”

http://www.elsevier.com/promote-your-work
Bibliography by Subject

Academic Writing and Publication
Human Subjects – Contacting
Human Subjects – Institutional Review Board
Hypotheses and Research Questions
Instruments, Pilot Testing and Plan Analysis
Implications
Limitations
Literature Review
Posters
Research Methods
Study Design
Why Do Research?
Academic Writing and Publication


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Instruments, Pilot Testing and Plan Analysis


Implications


Limitations


Literature Review


Posters


Research Methods


Study Design


Why Do Research?


Dr. Carol Tenopir is the author of five books and more than 200 journal articles, and is a frequent speaker at professional conferences. Her areas of teaching and research include: information access and retrieval, electronic publishing, the information industry, online resources, and the impact of technology on reference librarians and scientists. She has been recognized for her service and contributions to the LIS profession with numerous awards and honors. Dr. Tenopir holds a PhD in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois.

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