Reflections on ISTL

ISTL at 25: A Short History

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When *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship* was founded in 1996, the World Wide Web was a few years old. The Internet Archive was just getting started as a collection of the world's knowledge, Netscape was the browser of choice, Amazon had recently begun selling books, and Alta Vista was an amazing search engine everyone was excited about. It was a time when new technology made it appear that anything was possible, including easy publishing. Individuals and organizations started up new e-journals aiming to make information freely available. While librarians tried to keep up with these new titles, it was difficult: new journals popped up quickly and often published only an issue or two before shutting down.

Starting in 1991, ACRL's Science and Technology Section (STS) published a newsletter of news and events of interest to sci-tech librarians. Called *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship*, it was distributed via the STS-L mailing list. The STS Publications Committee recruited new board members to expand the number of contributors to ISTL and named me as the editor. The new editorial board took the title in a different direction, changing the e-mailed newsletter to a web-based journal. The first issue of the new journal came out in Fall 1996. Two of those early board members, myself and Nestor Osorio, continue to serve on the editorial board today.

The first couple of issues of the new journal contained mostly articles written by editorial board members. Everyone on the board worked hard to encourage (and sometimes arm-twist) additional contributors. Within a year, we initiated themed issues

in the hope that authors would be more likely to contribute if they had particular topics to focus on.

In those early years there were many behind-the-scenes events that signaled big steps forward for the journal. One of our first actions was to register the istl.org domain. We signed up for an ISBN and when DOIs became available we arranged to add them to ISTL articles. When the Directory of Open Access Journals came along, we made sure we met the criteria to be listed. In addition to web indexes like Google, we were eager to be listed in traditional indexing services alongside more established journals and were very excited when Library Literature included ISTL.

Over this time, the journal continued to develop. In the Summer issue of 2000, we began publishing refereed articles under the leadership of Buffy Choinski. This responded to our readers' desire to publish peer-reviewed articles, primarily for tenure and review purposes.

Winter 2009 was the last of ISTL's themed issues. We were now receiving enough submissions that authors no longer needed a prompt. In 2015 we moved to publishing primarily refereed articles, along with columns and short communications that did not go through peer review.

In the past couple of years, ISTL has moved from a homemade platform to the University of Alberta's Open Journal Systems (OJS). Michael Fosmire was instrumental in making this move and ensuring the journal continued to be published regularly during the transition. OJS offers many advantages over the old system and means that ISTL has a stable home for the future.

Various columns have come and gone over the years, reflecting trends in the profession and the concerns of our readers. ISTL has always tried to be responsive to the needs and interests of readers. We take special pride in publishing the work of new authors and helping them through the editorial process. We encourage readers to tell us about their interests and desires for the journal.

With this issue I will step down from being editor of ISTL. I am grateful to the volunteers who have given much time and effort to the editorial board and the many contributors who helped this journal start up and succeed. Edward Eckel takes over the reins and will lead *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship* into its next quarter century.