



Editorial: Introduction to the Special Issue on Social Justice

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Introduction

This Special Issue of *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship* (ISTL) on Social Justice came out of a [column series that aimed to define social justice concepts and provide contextual examples](#) of them for science and technology librarians. As they were developing the column series, the five authors (Jeffra D. Bussmann, Isabel M.

Altamirano, Sam Hansen, Nastasha E. Johnson, and Gr Keer) thought it was also important to highlight the social justice work that was actively being done in science and technology libraries, and thought an *ISTL* Special Issue was the best way to accomplish this goal. This team reached out to the editorial board of the journal with their idea and let the board know that their ambition was to continue the conversation they were fortunate enough to begin in *ISTL* about social justice and science librarianship. In order to do this, they wanted to put out a call for contributions that was not just limited to traditional research articles, but would also be open to stories of people's lived experiences, autoethnographies, case studies, social justice-informed instructional approaches, programming best practices, and more. The *ISTL* board was very receptive to this idea, and so a Special Issue editorial board was formed with four of the original authors, Jeffra, Isabel, Sam, and Nastasha, and representatives of the *ISTL* editorial board, Ginny Boehme, Rosalinda Linares-Gray (who had to step away part of the way through the process), and Sarah Tribelhorn (who replaced Rosalinda).

As an editorial board, we thought deeply through every step of the process of our Special Issue. We began by clearly defining the scope of our Special Issue through the following three questions:

- Is social justice threaded through your work, project, and writings?
- Do your work, project, and writings push things forward for science & technology and social justice?
- How is this work impacting libraries and librarians?

Prospective authors were invited to submit a proposal for a submission that combined science librarianship and social justice. Invitation calls were shared via emails to a variety of science and technology librarianship email lists and a few related Discord spaces. After reading the submissions, our editorial team used the framing questions to determine which articles would be within scope of this special issue. Authors whose works were within scope were then invited to submit a full manuscript and were provided with resources to help them, such as a [Framework for Equitable Reference Review](#). We also cultivated a set of peer reviewers from these submissions that reached beyond those reviewers already known to *ISTL*. Our intent was to make sure that our authors' submissions were being reviewed by people who had expertise in the social justice areas covered in their contributions.

This is not to say that everything we tried was successful. We attempted to create an accountability group for our authors in Discord, but beyond offering the space, we did not have enough of a plan to build engagement in this for it to work. There were also a few cases where we missed some of our own deadlines and did not follow up with our authors and reviewers as quickly as we should have. Leading this Special Issue has been a big learning experience for all of us.

In the end, we believe that even though not every step we took was successful, the framework we developed has allowed us to meet our goal of continuing the conversation that was started by the social justice concept series. The contributions from our amazing authors push science and technology libraries forward toward the goal of justice, and do so with both traditional and non-traditional research articles. It is our

hope that this is only the start of a long future of social justice research, work, and lived experiences being featured in the online pages of *ISTL*. We cannot wait to read what comes next.

Editorial Team Positionalities

Isabel Altamirano (she/her):

Isabel is mixed-race (Hispanic - Peruvian and Honduran), cis female librarian working at a land-grant R1 university in the southeastern part of the USA. Her current subject liaison areas are chemistry, chemical engineering, and communications/journalism. She also answers patent questions. She was born and raised in a small city by the Gulf of Mexico, which sustained major damage during Hurricane Katrina. Her lived experience as a minority within the minority of Hispanic peoples in the USA has informed her viewpoint of self, expectations, and understanding of a society that has not really been examined in academic circles.

Ginny Boehme (she/her):

Ginny is a cisgender white woman who grew up in the Southern U.S. and who now lives in a college town in the Midwest. She is a science librarian at a public Predominantly White Institution (PWI), with a BS in biology and an MLIS both earned from PWIs in Alabama. Her work in social justice began with her collaborations with undergraduate researchers, and her current work as a union leader and organizer continues to heavily influence her perspectives and actions around social and racial justice.

Jeffra D. Bussmann (she/her/hers):

Jeffra is a white, euro-blend, cisgender woman, 2nd generation academic librarian, working in a budget-challenged Pacific coast state public university. She earned a BS in Mathematics and thought being a mathematics librarian sounded like the coolest thing and quickly came to fall in love with physics and chemistry with her librarian hat. Jeffra is also heavily involved with board gaming, starting up a board game collection at her university library. Since she started working in the Bay Area librarianship, she has been flowing and stumbling deeper and deeper into social justice topics and issues. Jeffra believes these are critical issues that must be confronted and dealt with, particularly in the sciences and correspondingly, science librarianship. A book I recommend reading: *A psalm for the wild-built* by Becky Chambers.

Sam Hansen (they/them):

Sam is a white, queer, non-binary Director of Communications and Engagement at a grant-funded mathematics research institute. While editing this volume, they were working as a librarian at a rich R1 university in the midwest of the USA. Their life is impacted daily by more than one invisible disability. Their focus within libraries was on mathematics & statistics, and they have an MLIS and an MS in mathematics. They grew

up in a rural, farming community in the northern midwest. They also regularly engage in gender inclusion activism in sports.

Nastasha Johnson (she/her):

Nastasha is a cisgender Black woman from the Southern U.S. who now resides in the Midwest U.S. She has worked at or was conferred degrees by MSIs (Minority Serving Institutions) or Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), prior to her arrival at her current land-grant Historically White Institution (HWI). Her work as a young adult librarian in an urban city center, before it was trendy, continues to ground and inform her work to elevate the voices of those who are not often represented in the academic and library discourses.

Rosalinda Linares-Gray (they/them):

Rosalinda is a trans, non-binary Latinx program manager of a workforce development program in the Southwest U.S. During their decade-long career in academic libraries, they centered feminist and social justice-oriented approaches to instruction and collections. They were a STEM librarian at a Native-serving public liberal arts college for the past 5 years and still work in higher education to promote equitable economic access for rural BIPOC communities.

Sarah Tribelhorn (she/her):

Sarah is a cisgender, white woman with global experience. She is a sciences librarian at a public, R2 university that is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI). She has an MS in Ichthyology and Fisheries Science, and MMLIS. She is deeply committed to sustainability in academic libraries, including social equity and justice, environmental stewardship, and economic feasibility.



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