

**EDITORIAL**

# Communities and Connections: Volume 63 of Virginia Libraries

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The *Virginia Libraries* Editorial Board is pleased to present volume 63 (Vol. 63), and with it, a transition to a new publishing platform, Ubiquity, provided by our publisher, VT Publishing of University Libraries, Virginia Tech. While *Virginia Libraries* journal solicits and publishes articles on all topics related to libraries and information science, a focus on communities and connections runs through the articles published in volume sixty-three. Each article includes suggestions for practical application, with programming examples or other ways to try something new to build community and connections @ Your Library.

**Keywords:** libraries in Virginia; communities; libraries; programming

## A New Publishing Platform

The *Virginia Libraries* Editorial Board is pleased to present volume 63 (Vol. 63), and with it, a transition to a new publishing platform, Ubiquity, provided by our publisher, VT Publishing of University Libraries, Virginia Tech. Ubiquity is based on the Open Journals System (OJS) previously used, and is equally committed to supporting high quality, open access publications. With this new platform, articles display in a user-friendly, easy-to-read format, and in future volumes, articles will be available in both XML and PDF formats. The new platform also supports linked, machine-readable, Creative Commons open licenses; makes it easier to include embedded videos; and highlight's the journal's new Twitter account via a running feed of @VALibJournal posts.

## Communities and Connections

While *Virginia Libraries* journal solicits and publishes articles on all topics related to libraries and information science, a focus on communities and connections runs through the articles published in volume sixty-three. Each

article includes suggestions for practical application, with programming examples or other ways to try something new to build community and connections @ Your Library.

The volume opens with Todd Elliott's 2018 VLA President's Letter, "VLA: the Place to Connect with Your Colleagues, Enhance Your Skills, and Revolutionize Our Profession," a celebration of the Virginia Library Association as our community of colleagues across Virginia. Elliott's notes of the year's accomplishments highlight how VLA and its members and groups support each other, advocate for libraries within and beyond Virginia, lead through service, and build initiatives to promote diversity and leadership in the profession.

Dora B. Rowe shares the results of her review of recent studies regarding whether reading popular fiction may increase empathy. This research article primarily addresses academic libraries where collections and programming around popular fiction may be less prevalent. Rowe notes that, "there is a growing body of evidence that transportation, identification, and perception [experienced while reading fiction] may actually be part of an integral process that allows these feelings to have lasting effects on the reader." In "The "Novel" Approach: Using Fiction to Increase Empathy," Rowe describes the Theory of Mind, "... a psychological concept that describes how people understand those around them," and shares examples from reviewed studies of the use of fiction to increase empathy. Rowe concludes with practical suggestions for academic libraries to "collect and promote

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fiction, and to facilitate opportunities for students and faculty to enjoy it together.”

The best practice article, “Serving Military Families in the Public Library,” by Jan Marry, provides a profile of military families in general and specifically in Virginia, followed by, “an overview of more than a decade of serving military families in public libraries from the author’s perspective as a librarian and as a military spouse.” Targeted to public libraries, this article shares in-depth collection recommendations for different ages, and addresses challenges or topics that may be of particular interest to children and teens of military families. Marry includes several examples of programming from her experience in public libraries, along with examples she has seen in other public libraries. The article concludes with discussion questions that prompt readers to consider how they might apply recommendations in this article, or develop their own ideas about working with military families in their communities. In Appendix I, Marry shares her own military family’s experience, and completes the article with Appendix II, a list of recommended books.

Patricia Mars Maddatu’s case study discusses methods to build online communities through an observational report on social media strategies of two cultural heritage institutions, Mount Vernon and Dumbarton House. In “A Comparative Analysis of Cultural Heritage Institution Social Media Strategy,” Maddatu compares the social media practices of each institution, showing how their strategies reflect their missions. In comparing posts by each institution over two separate one-month periods, Maddatu highlights successful techniques used by each that build connections between past content, current events, broader topics – present and historic – and awareness of future happenings at each institution.

It’s always exciting to see what topics will be proposed for the Themed Column section. In this volume, Kristen Shuyler and Liz Chenevey reached out to libraries around

Virginia with a survey to, “...explore examples of library staff promoting civic engagement and serving as agents in the democratic process via their work in libraries ...”. Their article, “Fulfilling Our Potential: Libraries Supporting Civic Engagement in Virginia,” shares eight stories from public and academic library perspectives, including examples of programs, activities, and other initiatives. The article concludes with a prompt to all of us, “How will you and your library support civic engagement within your community in the next week, the next month, and the next year?”

As always, we, the editorial board of *Virginia Libraries*, thank you, our readers, for supporting our publication, and we also issue an invitation to you to help our journal grow stronger. We always want to hear your ideas, suggestions and feedback, and look forward to receiving your input and submissions at [virginialibrariesjournal@gmail.com](mailto:virginialibrariesjournal@gmail.com).

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### Editor Information

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