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Contenidos de este número

1. **New Article: “Empowerment, Experimentation, Engagement: Embracing Partnership Models in Libraries”**

Filed by [Gary Price](https://www.infodocket.com/author/gprice/) on May 7, 2018

The following article was published by EDUCAUSE Review today.

**Title**

[Empowerment, Experimentation, Engagement: Embracing Partnership Models in Libraries](https://er.educause.edu/articles/2018/5/empowerment-experimentation-engagement-embracing-partnership-models-in-libraries)

**Source**

*EDUCAUSE Review* 53, no. 3 (May/June 2018)
Available Online: May 7, 2018

**Abstract**

Shifting from a transactional model to partnership models, libraries are repositioning themselves as laboratories for exploration, incubators for ideas, and essential collaborators across the teaching, learning, and research enterprises.

The article begins:

What relationship do we want learners to have with their library? This is an essential question for those of us who work as library faculty and staff in higher education. As the information landscape becomes increasingly diverse, complex, and digital, we need to consider the different roles that libraries are embracing. From makerspaces and digital scholarship centers to open-access initiatives, digital library projects, and literacy education, academic and research libraries are engaging with communities in ways like never before.

Direct to [Full Text Article](https://er.educause.edu/articles/2018/5/empowerment-experimentation-engagement-embracing-partnership-models-in-libraries) ||| [PDF Version (2 pages)](https://er.educause.edu/~/media/files/articles/2018/5/er183107.pdf)

https://www.infodocket.com/2018/05/07/new-article-empowerment-experimentation-engagement-embracing-partnership-models-in-libraries/

1. **Oregon: “Library Associations Support Book About Transgender Girl Included in State Reading Program”**

Filed by [Gary Price](https://www.infodocket.com/author/gprice/) on May 8, 2018

From [KATU:](http://katu.com/news/local/library-associations-support-book-about-transgender-girl-included-in-state-reading-program-george)

Two state library associations are expressing support for a title on the list for Oregon’s Battle of the Books that has created controversy in some districts.

The children’s book “George” tells the story of a young transgender girl.

The Oregon Library Association and the Oregon Association of School Libraries say they support keeping the book on the list for third through fifth graders.

Read the [Complete Article](http://katu.com/news/local/library-associations-support-book-about-transgender-girl-included-in-state-reading-program-george)

See Also: [2nd District Withdraws From Oregon Reading Program Over Book About Transgender Girl (via KATU)](http://katu.com/news/local/cascade-school-district-declines-participation-in-oregon-reading-program-over-book-about-transgender-girl)

See Also: [Hermiston School District Won’t Participate in Oregon Reading Program Due to Book About Trans Kid (via The Oregonian)](http://www.oregonlive.com/pacific-northwest-news/index.ssf/2018/04/hermiston_school_district_wont.html)

See Also: [Oregon School District Pulls Students Out of Reading Competition Over Trans Children’s Book (via Into)](https://intomore.com/culture/Oregon-School-District-Pulls-Out-of-Competition-Over-Transgender-Book/792471c1f9cd4955)

**About Gary Price**

Gary Price (gprice@mediasourceinc.com) is a librarian, writer, consultant, and frequent conference speaker based in the Washington D.C. metro area. Before launching INFOdocket, Price and Shirl Kennedy were the founders and senior editors at ResourceShelf and DocuTicker for 10 years. From 2006-2009 he was Director of Online Information Services at Ask.com, and is currently a contributing editor at Search Engine Land

https://www.infodocket.com/2018/05/08/oregon-library-associations-support-book-about-transgender-girl-included-in-state-reading-program/

1. **Cool Tools! New Feature Allows Users to Embed Ebook Titles From “The Open Library” on Web Pages and Blogs**

Filed by [Gary Price](https://www.infodocket.com/author/gprice/)

From [The Open Library (an Internet Archive Project) Blog:](https://blog.openlibrary.org/2018/05/06/turn-your-website-into-a-library/)

[Openlibrary.org](https://openlibrary.org/) has over 3M books lining its digital shelves, but nothing quite beats being able to embed your favorite book directly on your personal site. Last week, with the help of volunteer [Galen Mancino](https://github.com/whatisgalen), we launched an embed tool which lets you add any Open Library book to your website or blog. Next time you write a book review, you can place its Open Library book right next to it and, if its available, enable your audience to read it with a single click.

Learn [More About the New Embed Feature in the Complete Blog Post](https://blog.openlibrary.org/2018/05/06/turn-your-website-into-a-library/)

https://www.infodocket.com/2018/05/06/cool-tools-with-new-embed-feature-the-open-library-invites-you-to-turn-your-website-into-a-library/

1. **U.S. Copyright Office Requests Info on Developing a Cloud-Hosted Enterprise Copyright System (ECS)**

Filed by [Gary Price](https://www.infodocket.com/author/gprice/)

 [A ten page request](https://www.fbo.gov/utils/view?id=7fe2f355eb886325160add19c81fbf80) for information (RFI) from the [United States Copyright Office (USCO)](http://copyright.gov/)Copyright Modernization Office (CMO) was published yesterday and available via the [FBO.gov database.](https://www.fbo.gov/spg/LOC/CS/CS/RFI-COP20180089/listing.html)

The solicitation number is [RFI-COP20180089.](https://www.fbo.gov/spg/LOC/CS/CS/RFI-COP20180089/listing.html)

From the Solicitation:

The United States Copyright Office (USCO) Copyright Modernization Office (CMO), in support of the registration, recordation, and licensing capabilities, is seeking information on how an interested contractor could manage the development of USCO capabilities into a new, web- based, cloud-hosted Enterprise Copyright System (ECS). The ECS could be accomplished through a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solution, through a COTS augmentation, or through a custom build.

[Clip]

The USCO administers the national copyright registration and recordation programs in accordance with the U.S. copyright law. Certain provisions of the Copyright Act, codified in Title 17 of the U.S. Code, govern the submission, review, indexing, and legal presumptions pertaining to the act of registering claims to copyright and publicly recording documents relating to copyright ownership. Examples of recorded documents include assignments of copyright title, licenses, terminations of transfers, security interests, bequests, and other instruments relating to the ownership or expiration of copyright interests. The USCO has administered copyright registration and recordation for more than a century.

The enterprise capabilities of the ECS listed by USCO in the RFI include:

* Provide access to a federated or smart searching capability to quickly search and filter through all USCO records, providing meaningful and useful results, and facilitating user research such as ownership and chain of title.
* Create an online payment collection system using either integration with pay.gov, or another, secure system that has significant audit and review capabilities for the payment collection and verification process and provides for USCO reconciliation requirements with the U.S. Treasury.
* Provide for robust financial and statistical tracking and reporting across all systems. Financial and statistical tracking and reporting will consider the needs of USCO customers as well as USCO federal reporting responsibilities as part of the Library of Congress, including financial and reporting workflows between the USCO and other Library of Congress offices.
* Provide for tracking and monitoring of workflows to facilitate required activity cost allocations between the USCO appropriations and to facilitate the appropriateness of the USCO fee structure.
* Access to / integration with a Help Desk system to manage account, access, and other IT related issues to the system

You can read the complete [RFI here (PDF)](https://www.fbo.gov/utils/view?id=7fe2f355eb886325160add19c81fbf80).

https://www.infodocket.com/2018/05/05/u-s-copyright-office-requests-info-from-vendors-about-developing-a-cloud-hosted-enterprise-copyright-system-ecs/

1. **The Credo FYE Guide: Practices for Enhancing Instruction**

**Effective First Year Experience (FYE) programs can impact everything from retention, to GPA levels, to graduation rates, and employability. As more colleges and universities invest in these initiatives, librarians are being tasked with finding innovative ways to engage incoming students and cultivate essential academic and research skills.**In order to best support librarians navigating this quickly growing space, we’ve put together an interactive guide for libraries involved with the FYE. Whether you’re building your FYE strategy from the ground up, or looking to improve upon existing programs, you’ll find valuable information to put into practice at your institution.

**The Credo FYE Guide will provide overviews of current trends, tips & best practices, case studies, and so much more. Subjects covered include:**

* ***Orientation***
* ***Collaboration***
* ***Assessment***
* ***Information Literacy***
* ***Student Engagement***

**The best news is you won’t have to wait for the full guide’s release this summer. We’ll be releasing a new section each month. Want to make sure you receive each section release? Please sign up below!**

**Join our conversation on Twitter #LibraryFYE**

**Sign up here for Credo FYE Guide section releases**

Hemos tenido algún problema para cargar este formulario. [Haga clic aquí para continuar.](https://f.hsforms.net/fallback/form.html?&hscontext=%7B%22portalId%22%3A%222569500%22%2C%22formId%22%3A%2232027fb6-b673-4648-a030-2dd95db7e103%22%2C%22formInstanceId%22%3A%228514%22%2C%22pageId%22%3A5508176017%2C%22pageName%22%3A%22Credo%20FYE%20Guide%20section%20release%22%2C%22inlineMessage%22%3A%22%3Cdiv%20style%3D%5C%22text-align%3A%20center%3B%5C%22%3E%3Cspan%20style%3D%5C%22color%3A%20%230080c5%3B%20font-size%3A%2024px%3B%5C%22%3EThank%20you%20for%20registering%20to%20receive%20the%20monthly%20Credo%20FYE%20Guide%20section%20release.%26nbsp%3B%3C%2Fspan%3E%3Cem%3E%3Cspan%20style%3D%5C%22color%3A%20%230080c5%3B%20font-size%3A%2024px%3B%5C%22%3E%3Cstrong%3E%3Cbr%3E%3Cbr%3E%3C%2Fstrong%3E%3C%2Fspan%3E%3C%2Fem%3E%3C%2Fdiv%3E%5Cn%3Cdiv%20style%3D%5C%22text-align%3A%20center%3B%5C%22%3E%3Ca%20href%3D%5C%22http%3A%2F%2Fmktg.credoreference.com%2Fcredo-fye-guide%5C%22%20target%3D%5C%22_blank%5C%22%3E%3Cem%3E%3Cspan%20style%3D%5C%22color%3A%20%230080c5%3B%20font-size%3A%2024px%3B%5C%22%3E%3Cstrong%3ERead%20the%20latest%20section%20releases%20here!%3C%2Fstrong%3E%3C%2Fspan%3E%3C%2Fem%3E%3C%2Fa%3E%3C%2Fdiv%3E%5Cn%3Cp%3E%26nbsp%3B%3C%2Fp%3E%5Cn%3Cp%3E%26nbsp%3B%3C%2Fp%3E%22%2C%22rawInlineMessage%22%3A%22%3Cdiv%20style%3D%5C%22text-align%3A%20center%3B%5C%22%3E%3Cspan%20style%3D%5C%22color%3A%20%230080c5%3B%20font-size%3A%2024px%3B%5C%22%3EThank%20you%20for%20registering%20to%20receive%20the%20monthly%20Credo%20FYE%20Guide%20section%20release.%26nbsp%3B%3C%2Fspan%3E%3Cem%3E%3Cspan%20style%3D%5C%22color%3A%20%230080c5%3B%20font-size%3A%2024px%3B%5C%22%3E%3Cstrong%3E%3Cbr%3E%3Cbr%3E%3C%2Fstrong%3E%3C%2Fspan%3E%3C%2Fem%3E%3C%2Fdiv%3E%5Cn%3Cdiv%20style%3D%5C%22text-align%3A%20center%3B%5C%22%3E%3Ca%20href%3D%5C%22http%3A%2F%2Fmktg.credoreference.com%2Fcredo-fye-guide%5C%22%20target%3D%5C%22_blank%5C%22%3E%3Cem%3E%3Cspan%20style%3D%5C%22color%3A%20%230080c5%3B%20font-size%3A%2024px%3B%5C%22%3E%3Cstrong%3ERead%20the%20latest%20section%20releases%20here!%3C%2Fstrong%3E%3C%2Fspan%3E%3C%2Fem%3E%3C%2Fa%3E%3C%2Fdiv%3E%5Cn%3Cp%3E%26nbsp%3B%3C%2Fp%3E%5Cn%3Cp%3E%26nbsp%25)

**About Us**

***Credo believes that everyone deserves the ability to learn and the opportunity to succeed.***

Credo Reference is an information skills solutions provider that serves libraries worldwide. We build platforms and instructional materials that enable the flexible configuration of content, technology and services for the purpose of connecting learners, faculty and teachers, librarians and publishers. Credo promotes knowledge building, problem solving and critical thinking to give people the information skills necessary for success throughout their academic, professional and personal lives.s across every page it appears on.

<http://mktg.credoreference.com/credo-fye-guide-section-release>

1. **Inclusive Restroom Design | Library Design**

By [Meredith Schwartz](https://lj.libraryjournal.com/author/mschwartz/) on May 3, 2018 [2 Comments](https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/05/buildings/lbd/inclusive-restroom-design-library-design/#comments)

Libraries grapple with the need for options beyond men’s and women’s

**Until recently, the widespread** re­examination of library
design principles largely stopped at the bathroom door.
But that’s changing; as awareness spreads that many patrons
identify as transgender, non­binary, agender, genderfluid,
or otherwise don’t fall within the male/female binary, libraries are exploring how better to serve users by reimagining that most
necessary, yet often overlooked, aspect of library buildings.

**SENDING THE RIGHT SIGN: LABELS**

Signage is crucial for creating a gender-inclusive restroom; in many cases it is the primary, if not the only, change made to turn a single-sex restroom into one that welcomes all patrons. There is not yet, however, a broad consensus about how that sign should read.

Libraries we spoke with have wording on their signs that vary, including “gender universal,” “gender inclusive,” “gender free,” “gender neutral,” and “unisex.” Some dislike terms that include “free” or “neutral”—as ­Rochelle Mazar, assistant dean of academic engagement at the University of Rochester, NY, says, “Gender is never neutral!”

In “Designing for Inclusivity: Strategies for Universal Washrooms and Change Rooms in Community and Recreation Facilities,” HCMA Architecture + Design says, “*Universal* is the recommended term rather than *all gender* or *gender neutral*. *Shared* is a positive term that may be considered as an alternative.” For those with multi­lingual signage, HCMA also recommends working with “transgender-informed translators to avoid problematic terms in other languages.” In addition, HCMA recommends signage near building entrances to identify which types of washrooms are available and how to find them.



*Rendering courtesy of Joel Sanders Architect*

**SENDING THE RIGHT SIGN: IMAGES**

The consensus on graphic representations is also still evolving. Many signs show the familiar man and woman icons together, but that can still feel unwelcoming to those who don’t identify as either. As one nonbinary librarian tells *LJ*, “The sign shows the standard woman and man bathroom icons and a person in a wheelchair. It certainly gets the point across. But if it were up to me, it would just be a picture of a toilet. While I know [the icons indicate] a restroom I can use without risk, it still technically displays only two genders that don’t apply to me.”

Attempts to rectify this by modifying the figures still don’t quite capture the complexities of gender identity. Architect Joel Sanders tells *LJ*, “Human avatars…presuppose the [gender] binary. Even the kooky hybrids (half-man/-woman) are still based on and reinforce the binary.”

Conveying the message through humor via space aliens or mythological creatures, often accompanied by the words “Whichever” or “We don’t care just wash your hands,” can have the effect of equating real people with made-up beings. They can also add confusion for those who don’t speak fluent English.

An emerging best practice seems to be to eschew depicting users altogether. Entro, a Toronto wayfinding and placemaking communications firm, published a paper for the Canadian Standards Association recommending that signage focus on the service, not the user, by showing the fixtures found inside. (That has the additional benefit of providing clarity about whether urinals, a potential stopper for some users, are present.) The state of California uses a white triangle to signify an all-gender restroom, but that has yet to catch on more broadly.

In addition to wayfinding, some libraries adopt explanatory signage that informs users about the goal of gender-­inclusive restrooms and the library’s policies around their use. Make sure you also explain to employees, says Erin Shea, supervisor, Harry Bennett and Weed Hollander branches of the Ferguson Library, Stamford, CT, and a 2014 *LJ* Mover & Shaker. “If I were to do it again, I would have spent some time educating the staff before simply changing the sign…because although all the staff have good intentions, there was a bumpy road with the rollout. We also had pamphlets made afterward…because a lot of people asked what ‘gender neutral’ meant.”

**SINGLE OR MULTIUSER?**

The simplest—and cheapest—place to start in creating all-gender restrooms is simply to relabel existing single-user restrooms. This is likely to face little or no resistance from users, many of whom are accustomed to sharing bathrooms with people of other genders in their own homes. For many smaller libraries that may only have one or two single-user restrooms, that’s enough.

Yet larger and higher traffic libraries are faced with a dilemma. Just relabeling existing single-user restrooms may not result in an all-gender option when one is needed, such as at the University of California–Santa Barbara (UCSB), where a plan to do so would have placed the only all-gender restroom outside the section of the building that is open 24 hours a day. Instead, UCSB implemented a minimal retrofit to convert a multiuser men’s room near one of the large ­computer areas.

That accords with HCMA’s advice to locate all-­gender restrooms “adjacent to high traffic and prominent areas.” Similarly, University of Pennsylvania architect David ­Hollenberg told *Building Operation Management* magazine that when converting single-user restrooms, UPenn ­eliminated those in remote locations for user safety.

Relabeling single-user bathrooms also may simply not meet demand. The choices: install more single-use facilities, convert single-sex multiuser facilities into single-user restrooms (sometimes by simply installing locks on the door, as at Kansas University’s Anschutz Library), or build or retrofit all-gender multiuser restrooms.

Sanders, principal of New York–based Joel Sanders Architect (JSA), is working with trans theorist Susan Stryker, legal scholar Terry Kogan, and accessibility policy analyst Quemuel Arroyo to advocate for inclusive bathrooms, designing a multiuser prototype called Stalled! and supporting it with writing, lecturing, and lobbying for code changes. With funding from the New York State Council on the Arts and Hewlett Packard, JSA is also consolidating its research into a manual of best practice guidelines. Sanders tells *LJ*, “We think [choosing single-user facilities] has drawbacks because it separates nonconforming bodies, including trans people and disabled people, from mixing with other people.” He also estimates that the cost for a ­gender-inclusive restroom is about the same as two back-to-back single-gender, multiuser facilities. Sanders is implementing these principles at an East Coast university.

**HIGHER ED LEADS THE WAY**

Academic libraries are far more likely to go the multiuser route, as part of a larger campus culture. Says Joan Petit, interim dean and associate professor, Portland State University Library, OR, “I think we’re somewhat unusual in having multistall, all-gender bathrooms, but ours aren’t the first on campus, so the model is familiar to our students and other campus community members. Most important, it meant we could renovate our existing multistall bathrooms affordably.”

The University of California (UC) system has a mandate for all-gender restrooms going forward. As part of that process, UCSB’s library now has a multioccupancy gender-inclusive restroom, as does UC–Berkeley’s Moffitt Library, designed by architect Gensler.

However, not every academic library is following the multi­user path. Donna Reed, director of Oregon’s Portland Community College libraries, told *American Libraries*, “We were…rushing to install multistall gender-neutral restrooms, and we found out that [many transgender people] were more comfortable with single-stall bathrooms…. It would have been a costly mistake.” To learn such things, Eric ­Margiotta, associate director of student engagement and campus life at Virginia Tech, told *Buildings Operations Management* that he recommends including the larger community in the design process.

Of the public libraries we spoke with, only Ferguson, MO, and Canada’s Edmonton Public Library (EPL) had so far installed a multiuser all-gender facility.

While multiuser all-gender restrooms are new enough not to have settled on a standard pattern, private stalls amounting to separate rooms coupled with shared sinks is perhaps the most common scenario. Such additional privacy poses some practical challenges. Sukhjit Johal, head of library capital projects and facilities management at UC–Berkeley, tells *LJ*, “Each stall has to be fully enclosed, which meant code-wise, each stall is a separate room. Each [has] to have its own fire strobe and sprinkler in it. It’s very expensive to implement.”



**CELEBRATING THE SPECTRUM** Adding a touch of color to a mostly neutral color scheme, Edmonton PL’s Calder branch’s all-gender restroom features stalls painted in a range of pinks and purples. The self-contained family restroom is set within the gender-inclusive facility near the entrance. *Floor plan courtesy of the Marc Boutin Architectural Collaborative, Inc.; photos courtesy of Edmonton Public Library*

Using full side walls accessed by a door with a few inches of gap at the top and bottom can provide privacy yet eliminate the need for such duplications, says Sanders. (For security, if a floor-to-ceiling door is desired, HCMA recommends incorporating translucent panels to facilitate staff monitoring). While longer partitions can cost more, if designers choose standard wall materials rather than prefabricated panels, it can actually be cheaper, according to Matt Nardella, founder of Chicago-based architecture firm Moss.

While some might anticipate pushback on multiuser facilities, that hasn’t proven to be the case, says Johnny Nielsen, director of facilities at EPL. “I was expecting a bunch of community outcry or conversation,” especially from a large conservative religious community near the Calder branch, but that didn’t happen. The facility has been mostly well received; Edmonton is building a second multi­user, all-gender restroom in another branch.

**PRODUCTS AND FIXTURES**

It may seem intuitive that an all-gender restroom would not require products not already in use in men’s and women’s rooms, but apparently that’s not quite true, as Johal found. While floor-to-ceiling partitions are common in Europe, in America, the firm learned, no suppliers offered them, so architects had to work with the vendor to design the product they wanted.

In most cases, however, it’s less a question of new products than of adding some usual suspects and subtracting others. Rooms previously designated for men often lack changing tables—though, of course, many men need to change babies—and even more lack the means to provide and dispose of menstrual hygiene products, though trans men need these as well. Adding these fixtures isn’t difficult, but it takes funds and, often even less fungible, space.

Meanwhile, there’s one fixture that often needs to come out—urinals. According to Sanders, urinals don’t work in an all-gender restroom. “We don’t recommend [urinals]…. We find that once a urinal is there, it is self-selecting; neither men nor women are comfortable.”

Perhaps as a result, even though urinals are faster to use, consume less water, and take a smaller footprint than toilet stalls, few multiuser all-gender restrooms are designed to include them. Although UCSB’s inspiration at Macalester College, St. Paul, had simply taped off the urinals that were a legacy of the bathroom’s single-sex origins, UCSB decided to remove them and cap the pipes at the wall.

**CODE COMPLICATIONS**

In many locales, local plumbing code requires that a certain number of bathrooms be designated for men and for women. The original goal of such regulations was inclusive—to ensure that public places had facilities for women when that was not necessarily the norm. However, these requirements made no provision for concepts of gender beyond the binary, and their application to single-stall restrooms can cause unneeded complications even for cisgender men and women, such as when one gender’s designated facility is occupied or broken while the other sits unused.

Jennifer Bruneau, director of the Boylston Public Library, MA, tells *LJ*, “We decided that we wanted both bathrooms to be nongendered. We hit a snag…when the architect and contractor informed us that Massachusetts building codes required us to designate a men’s room and a women’s room.” To work around the problem, the library was able to designate them both as “family” restrooms.

Fortunately, the 2018 edition of the International Plumbing Code addresses this issue, at least in part. In language proposed by the American Institute of Architects, it allows single-user family or assisted-use restrooms “to be included in the number of required fixtures for either male or female occupants” and be “identified for use by either sex.” (So far, the code does not address multistall all-gender rest­rooms, but Kogan is working on writing an alternative to govern ­multiuser facilities.)

However, many state and local governments have not yet adopted the newest code. This can be a deliberate rejection of gender-inclusive facilities, but in many places it is simply inertia, lack of knowledge, or lack of perceived need.

In other areas, however, local law may not only permit gender-inclusive restrooms but require them. Regulations requiring that ­single-stall bathrooms welcome all genders have been enacted in California, Philadelphia, New York City, Seattle, Washington, DC, and elsewhere. It’s not just big cities, either: at press time, such a rule was under consideration in Bainbridge Island, WA, population 24,404.

Creating all-gender restrooms, therefore, may start with consulting not an architect but a lawyer. Library leaders who find they are looking to build more inclusive restrooms than local code allows may find themselves ­lobbying for code change—or citing the international revisions in support of an application for a variance. Depending on the depth of governmental red tape, however, that may be a slow ­process: New York City’s Congregation Beit Simchat Torah and its architect, Architecture Research Office, underwent a four-month effort to receive permission for an all-gender restroom.

**WHY IT MATTERS**

Restrooms may seem like an odd focus for a library (although not to Jim O’Donnell, university librarian at Arizona State, who last year told *LJ*, “It is a significant measure of the attention architects and planners pay to the whole human being if they get the bathrooms right”). But anyone who has ever worked a desk shift can testify that “Where is the bathroom?” is by far the most common, and urgent, question.

Getting the bathrooms right can yield big benefits. Says Bruneau, “The feedback has been very positive from our customers. One father in particular came in and told us that his son was starting the process of transitioning and that the library is the one place where he feels totally comfortable.”

The benefits accrue to more than just trans and non­binary patrons and their families, friends, and allies. Eileen Daly-Boas, philosophy librarian at the University of Rochester, tells *LJ*, “At alumni weekend, elderly couples walk in together, leaning on each other, parents with children, etc. Access for all is lovely.”

Access for all has long been a core library value. And while we may not always have thought to apply it to bathrooms, providing welcoming facilities can make the difference to whether patrons feel they belong at the library.

***This article was published in*Library Journal*.***[***Subscribe today***](https://lj.libraryjournal.com/library-journal-print-digital-edition-offer/)***and save up to 35% off the regular subscription rate.***

**About Meredith Schwartz**

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https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/05/buildings/lbd/inclusive-restroom-design-library-design/

1. **Improving Research Workflows**

Posted on May 4, 2018 [Leave a Comment](https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/05/academic-libraries/improving-research-workflows/#respond)

*Breaking down the silos in higher-education research can lead to better outcomes. Here’s how*



Supporting cutting-edge research is critical to the mission of universities. But all too often, the various steps in the research lifecycle are disjointed. This leads to inefficiencies that make the process harder than it has to be, costing universities—and individual researchers—valuable time, money, and even recognition for their work.

Breaking down these silos and improving the flow of information would allow for greater collaboration between campus libraries, researchers, and the research office. This would improve research outcomes and reduce the burden for everyone involved.

The Problem

As they occur today, the numerous steps in the research process—from planning projects, to securing grants, to collecting, storing, and analyzing information, to publishing and disseminating the results—generally involve different technology systems and stakeholder groups, with limited communication between them.

For instance, universities often use disparate platforms to handle each aspect of the research lifecycle. These include…

* *Research*across multiple campus departments, making it difficult for faculty and staff to *administrative systems* for managing grants, documenting and reporting on research activities, and ensuring compliance with regulatory processes;
* *Research data management systems* for organizing, storing, and overseeing the data collected in research projects; and
* *Institutional repositories* and/or *current research information systems* for archiving and publishing research results and showcasing faculty outputs.

Rarely do these separate platforms “talk” to each other or share data. Moreover, these various research functions typically are spread coordinate efforts or to know what others are doing.

Making matters worse, different departments within the same university might use separate processes or technologies to conduct research independently of each other. Researchers from one department might store their data in a spreadsheet, for example, while another department might use a university database. Or, two different departments might use two different software systems to accomplish the same function.

The Implications

One unintended outcome of this siloed approach to research is a duplication of effort. For instance, a library employee might create a spreadsheet to track the information collected for a certain research project, unaware that such a template or resource already exists in another department.

A more serious consequence is that management of a university’s various research objects—such as data, publications, creative work, algorithms, and other outputs and processes—becomes more difficult. This makes it harder to get a complete picture of an institution’s impact, and it could affect compliance with grant regulations as well.

When information is stored in separate systems, there are often variations in the completeness or consistency of the data. What’s more, the use of disparate systems makes it challenging to ensure that all of these assets are discoverable both within and outside of the institution. For example, it becomes harder for library staff and other stakeholders to find these assets and link them together.

A New Approach

One step that would help is for universities to require, or at least offer, the use of tools that enable consistent research practices across departments and disciplines. Obviously, the needs of each department will vary, but the more each department can be using the same resources and technology systems, the fewer different workflows there will be. And indeed, many university research offices have made strides in this area.

But this doesn’t solve the challenge of having to use disparate technology systems for separate research functions. To break down the silos that exist in the research process more completely, a new type of research platform that can unify these various functions is needed.

Ideally, this platform would be based on open standards, so that it integrates with other existing research systems. It would include automated processes to streamline research workflows, such as updating scholarly profiles whenever new work is published. It would contain built-in metrics to demonstrate the use and impact of research outputs. And it would be cloud-based, so that everyone has visibility into research objects and associated data.

In this scenario, *all* stakeholders involved in the research process would benefit:

* Library and research administrative staff would not have to enter information in multiple places, because a unified platform would pull data automatically to populate various sub-systems.
* Researchers would benefit from greater visibility into the research assets of the entire university community, including their own outputs.
* Research offices could ensure compliance with regulations and quantify the impact of the institution’s research efforts more easily.
* Libraries could demonstrate their value to the university by becoming more effective partners in the research process.

Aiming to fill this need, Ex Libris has partnered with five leading universities to develop [Esploro](http://www.exlibrisgroup.com/products/esploro-research-services-platform/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), a new Research Services Platform that ties these various functions together.

“One of (our) strategic goals is to foster a campus culture in which our instructors, students, and staff can maximize their research productivity,” says Paul A. Soderdahl, associate university librarian at the University of Iowa, one of the five partner institutions. “A feature-rich, integrated platform for collecting, describing, and promoting research outputs (would) help us reach that goal.”

https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/05/academic-libraries/improving-research-workflows/?utm\_source=ljsnewsletter&utm\_medium=newsletter&utm\_content=sponsoredcolumn&utm\_campaign=exlibris