



Report on *Information Technology and Libraries*  
prepared for the Core Board by  
Ken Varnum, Editor  
January 2022

## Key Activities

This report reflects activities around *Information Technology and Libraries* during the calendar year 2021. The Editorial Board spent a significant amount of time this past calendar year reflecting on the journal's and the Board's role in fostering a more diverse and inclusive environment for our authors and our readers. We approached all planning and strategic activities with this lens in mind.

In thinking about expanding the reviewer pool, creating a diverse pool of reviewers (by institution, geography, and role in the home institution) was essential. As we explored revisions to our journal's scope and mission statements, we kept a diverse audience of readers and authors in mind. And as we progressed through the selection process for the Assistant Editor, we kept in mind that the person filling this role would play a key role in communicating with potential authors, selecting content for publication, and working with authors through the editorial process.

## Publishing

The core activity of the Editor and the Editorial Board is soliciting, reviewing and publishing articles. During the past calendar year, ITAL received 134 articles, of which 38 have been accepted after review and 13 have so far been published (see [Appendix 1, Table A](#) for a summary since 2016). That results in a 22% acceptance rate over the past calendar year, and 27% for the past six calendar years. Time to publication has remained in the 6-9 month range,

similar to the historical norm, thanks in no small part to our increased reviewer pool (see below), which has allowed us to review more articles without over-burdening individual reviewers.

## Peer-Reviewed Content Readership

Full-text PDF downloads in 2021 totaled 136,756, according to the COUNTER reports provided through the publishing platform, a 10% increase over last year (see [Appendix 1, Table B](#)). As noted in previous years' reports, a change in COUNTER's counting process likely contributed significantly to the increased numbers in 2019 and beyond.

See [Appendix 2](#) for a summary of the most frequently downloaded articles published in 2021 and the most-frequently downloaded articles across all volumes and issues.

## Editorial Content Readership

In addition to peer-reviewed content ("articles" and "communications"), each issue of ITAL includes the following regular columns:

- Letter from the Editor
- Editorial Board Thoughts (a contribution from a member of the editorial board, on a topic of their choosing)
- Core Leadership Message (contributed by the someone in division leadership)
- Public Libraries Leading the Way (topics proposed by library technologists working in public libraries, selected by the Editor)

Readership for each of these columns over the year is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Readership of editorial content by type for calendar years 2019-2021.

	2019			2020			2021		
Column Type	Items	Downloads	Downloads/ Item	Items	Downloads	Downloads/ Item	Items	Downloads	Downloads/ Item
Letter from the Editor	4	865	216	4	696	174	4	1876	469
President's Message	4	973	243	4	796	199	1	652	652
Editorial Board Thoughts	3	795	265	4	1612	403	3	2604	868
Public Libraries Leading the Way	4	1863	466	6	1450	242	5	2717	543

# Improving our Editorial Processes

## ITAL Assistant Editor

The Core Board approved the creation of a new Assistant Editor position for ITAL in September 2021. This position had been requested before Core's creation, but a decision was deferred until Core's budget and organizational structures had been established. During fall 2021, the ITAL Board solicited nominations and established a search committee to review and select the first Assistant Editor. Chaired by Ken Varnum, ITAL's editor, the committee's membership was:

- Jon Goddard (ITAL Editorial Board)
- Brady Lund (ITAL Editorial Board)
- Elizabeth Nelson (editor, *Library Leadership & Management*)
- Mary Beth Weber (editor, *Library Resources & Technical Services*)
- Brooke Morris-Chott (Core Advocacy & EDI Program Officer)

We received a strong candidate pool and appointed Marisha Kelly to the role beginning in January 2022.

## Adding More ITAL Reviewers

Following up on the proposal in 2020 to add to the breadth and depth of our reviewer pool, ITAL solicited for reviewers in May 2021. During summer 2021, we trained about 30 new reviewers (via Zoom sessions) both in using ITAL's Open Journal Systems interface and in following the journal's content guidelines.

This expanded pool of reviewers has enabled us to handle the increased number of reviewable submissions while maintaining our 6-week target for completing a review round. After an application process, the Editor conducted several group training sessions, both on using Open Journal Systems and how to evaluate articles for the journal. The larger reviewer pool requires a little more time to manage, in terms of selecting the appropriate reviewers for a given submission, but overall has made the operation of the journal more efficient.

## Topic Review

Members of the ITAL Editorial Board (Paul Swanson, Soo-yeon Hwang, and Lori Ayre) contributed significant time to a review of topics published by ITAL over the past five years, resulting in a descriptive list of keywords representing topics we have published on. This list maps fairly closely to ITAL's stated scope, which did not provide the direction we had hoped.

Following discussions within the Board, we determined that a more prudent next step would be to consider the journal's scope, refine it if necessary, and implement keyword descriptors for published articles that mapped more closely to the desired scope of the journal. This will enable

us to better measure how well we are doing at publishing on our intended topics. We also decided that we did not have capacity to pursue this work but would defer until after the appointment of the journal's Assistant Editor. Now that we have taken that step, we will come back to our scope statement and more integrated assessment plans in the coming year.

## Updated Policies and Procedures

In June 2021, the Editorial Board approved a policy on changing the names of authors of published works. This policy is in recognition that authors may change their names for many reasons, including—but not limited to—gender identity, marriage, divorce, or religious conversion. The new policy is detailed on the ITAL site on the [Name Change Policy](#) page. Individuals who wish to make such a change are directed to contact the journal's editor.

## Making the ITAL/JOLA Backfile Available

While ITAL has been published online as an open-access publication since 2012, not all of the previous 43 years of ITAL or its predecessor journal, the *Journal of Library Automation* (JOLA), are available online. Over the years, there have been some efforts toward scanning articles available before the journal went online and making those articles available through the ITAL site, but they have not been systematically pursued.

In summer 2021, an ITAL reader (Sandy Roe) approached ITAL's editor with an offer of sharing a significant portion of the missing issues in print form. The University of Michigan Library's digital preservation department offered to scan and process the digitized files as their time allows. Once complete, these digitized copies will be published on the ITAL site. I am most grateful to Larry Wentzel and his staff for taking on this effort.

## Editorial Board Membership

The Editor relies heavily on the volunteer efforts of the members of the ITAL Editorial Board. Without their dedicated service and deep knowledge of their respective subject domains, the journal would not exist. Board members during calendar year 2021 are listed in Table 2.

Normally, there would have been more turnover in Board members. However, the Editorial Board made a choice not to seek new Board members in spring 2021 because the merger of LITA with ALCTS and LLAMA to form Core was still pending and there was, at the time, uncertainty about the journal's future; and 2) All members whose terms were ending in June 2021 were eligible for a second term, and all wished to continue for a second term.

Because roughly half the members of the Editorial Board will conclude their second terms in June 2021, we will share a call for volunteers in late winter and make appointments of new members prior to the start of the fiscal year.

**Table 2.** Editorial Board Membership<sup>1</sup>

	July 2020-June 2021	July 2021-June 2022
Editorial Staff	Ken Varnum (2020-2023)	Ken Varnum, Editor (2020-2023)  Marisha Kelly, Assistant Editor (2022-2025)
Editorial Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lori Bowen Ayre (1st term, 2019-2021)</li> <li>• Steven K. Bowers (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> <li>• Kevin Ford (2nd, term, 2020-2022)</li> <li>• Jon Goddard (1st term, 2019-2021)</li> <li>• Soo-yeon Hwang (1st term, 2019-2021)</li> <li>• Cinthya Ippoliti (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> <li>• Ida A. Joiner (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> <li>• Holli Kubly (1st term, 2019-2021)</li> <li>• Brady Lund (1st term, 2019-2021)</li> <li>• Michael Sauers (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> <li>• Paul Swanson (1st term, 2019-2021)</li> <li>• Laurie Willis (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lori Bowen Ayre (2nd term, 2021-2023)</li> <li>• Steven K. Bowers (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> <li>• Kevin Ford (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> <li>• Jon Goddard (2nd term, 2021-2023)</li> <li>• Soo-yeon Hwang (2nd term, 2021-2023)</li> <li>• Cinthya Ippoliti (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> <li>• Ida A. Joiner (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> <li>• Holli Kubly (2nd term, 2021-2023)</li> <li>• Brady Lund (2nd term, 2021-2023)</li> <li>• Michael Sauers (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> <li>• Paul Swanson (2nd term, 2021-2023)</li> <li>• Laurie Willis (2nd term, 2020-2022)</li> </ul>
Ex Officio Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marta Deyrup (Monographs Chair)</li> <li>• Kerry Ward (Core staff liaison)</li> <li>• Tabatha Farney (Core Board Liaison)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerry Ward (Core liaison)</li> <li>• Brooke Morris-Chott (Core liaison)</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Editorial Board members are appointed for two-year terms based on fiscal years (July-June), while this report is based on the calendar years (January-December). While Board membership did not significantly change during the 2021 calendar year, the membership for each half of the year is shown in the table.

## Appendix 1: Journal Statistics

Table A shows summary data about article submissions and acceptances for 2016-2021. These figures are derived from the COUNTER stats made available through the Open Journal Systems platform that hosts the site. Because of the variable time the review and revision process can take, not all articles submitted in a given calendar year are accepted or published in that year.

Table A. Summary of Publication Activities (2016-2021)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTAL
Peer reviewed articles submitted <sup>2</sup>	61	98	81	114	134	156	<b>644</b>
Peer reviewed articles accepted after review <sup>3</sup>	10	42	16	36	34	34	<b>172</b>
Acceptance Rate	16.3%	42.8%	19.1%	31.5%	25.3%	21.8%	<b>26.7%</b>
Peer reviewed articles published <sup>4</sup>	12	13	24	26	27	28	<b>130</b>
Full-text downloads during year (PDF) <sup>5</sup>	83,335	52,289	41,003	148,649	124,657	136,756	<b>586,689</b>

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<sup>2</sup> Use the Articles report from OJS and import into Excel. Filter columns. Limit to "Section Title" contains "Articles" and "Communications" and the year in the Date Submitted column.

<sup>3</sup> Use the Articles report from OJS and import into Excel. Filter columns. Limit to "Section Title" contains "Articles" and "Communications", the year in the Date Submitted column, and all statuses except "Declined".

<sup>4</sup> Use the Articles report from OJS and import into Excel. Filter columns. Limit to "Section Title" contains "Articles" and "Communications", the "Published" status, and that year's volume number from the DOI column. (This includes all articles *published* in the calendar year, not all articles *accepted for publication* in that calendar year.)

<sup>5</sup> Sum of monthly totals from the XML output of "Journal Report 1" for each year ([link to report](#)).

Table B shows monthly downloads of articles from the ITAL site for 2016-2021. Note that starting with May 2019, an updated COUNTER protocol was applied. The salient difference is that, starting in that month, the definition of a “download” changed from including only PDFs to including both PDFs and the abstract page from which the PDF is linked.

**Table B. Download Activity (2016-2021)**

<b>Month</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
January	8370	7637	3268	3500	12896	11972
February	6700	7064	2918	3729	10841	8961
March	6016	8583	4211	4472	14147	12755
April	6321	6151	3693	6368	9048	9166
May	7696	2797	2819	10164	8587	11290
June	5388	2593	3176	11067	9538	8423
July	6536	2127	2478	8931	9711	9920
August	5909	2958	3069	12915	6736	8239
September	5696	3175	3675	20397	12136	11241
October	8167	3747	3767	42770	10427	20526
November	10845	2887	4560	12121	12345	15713
December	5691	2570	3369	12215	8245	8550
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>83,335</b>	<b>52,289</b>	<b>41,003</b>	<b>148,649</b>	<b>124,657</b>	<b>136,756</b>

## Appendix 2: Most-Read Articles

### Top-Read Articles Published in 2021<sup>6</sup>

These are the top ten most-read articles published in volume 40 (2021). Note that no articles published in December (the most recent issue of the year) appear in this list:

1. [The Impact of COVID-19 on the Use of Academic Library Resources](#), by Ruth Sara Connell, Lisa Wallis, and David Comeaux (2027 downloads). Published in Vol 40 No 2 (2021).
2. [The Fourth Industrial Revolution](#), by Brady Lund (1254 downloads). Published in Vol 40 No 1 (2021).
3. [Beyond VIAF](#), by Carlo Bianchini, Stefano Bargioni, and Camillo Carlo Pellizzari di San Girolamo (898 downloads). Published in Vol 40 No 2 (2021).
4. [Emergency Remote Library Instruction and Tech Tools](#), by Kathia Ibacache, Amanda Rybin Koob, and Eric Vance (781 downloads). Published in Vol 40 No 2 (2021).
5. [Web Content Strategy in Practice within Academic Libraries](#), by Courtney McDonald and Heidi Burkhardt (744 downloads). Published in Vol 40 No 1 (2021).
6. [Algorithmic Literacy and the Role for Libraries](#), by Michael Ridley and Danica Pawlick-Potts (1494 downloads). Published in Vol 40 No 2 (2021).
7. [Mitigating Bias in Metadata](#), by Juliet Hardesty and Allison Nolan (585 downloads). Published in Vol 40 No 3 (2021).
8. [Solving SEO Issues in DSpace-based Digital Repositories](#), by Matus Formanek (578 downloads). Published in Vol 40 No 1 (2021).
9. [Utilizing Technology to Support and Extend Access to Students and Job Seekers during the Pandemic](#), by Daniel Berra (524 downloads). Published in Vol 40 No 1 (2021).
10. [Expanding and Improving Our Library's Virtual Chat Service](#), by Parker Fruehan and Diana Hellyar (482 downloads). Published Vol 40 No 3 (2021).

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<sup>6</sup> Calculated based on the COUNTER AR1 report for the calendar year, calculating the sum of monthly views for all articles, limited to those published in 2021.



## Top-Read Articles Overall<sup>7</sup>

These are the ten most-read articles in 2021, regardless of publication date. Only one of this year's top ten was in last year's list.

1. [The Impact of COVID-19 on the Use of Academic Library Resources](#), by Ruth Sara Connell, Lisa Wallis, and David Comeaux (2027 downloads). Published in Vol. 40, No. 2 (2021). Last year's rank: Not ranked.
2. [Public Libraries Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Creating a New Service Model](#), by Jon Goddard (1795 downloads). Published in Vol. 39, No. 4 (2020). Last year's rank: Not ranked.
3. [Challenges and Strategies for Educational Virtual Reality](#), by Matt Cook, Zack Lischer-Katz, Nathan Hall, Juliet Hardesty, Jennifer Johnson, Robert McDonald, and Tara Carlisle (1751 downloads). Published in Vol. 38, No. 4 (2018). Last year's rank: Not ranked.
4. [Management Planning for Library Systems Development](#), by Fred L. Bellomy (1551 downloads). Published in Vol 2, No. 4 of the Journal of Library Automation (1969). Last year's rank: Not ranked.
5. [Near-field Communication \(NFC\)](#), by Neeraj Kumar Singh (1386 downloads). Published in Vol. 39, No. 2 (2020). Last year's rank: Not ranked.
6. [The Fourth Industrial Revolution](#), by Brady Lund (1254 downloads). Published in Vol. 40, No. 1 (2021). Last year's rank: Not ranked.
7. [An Evidence-Based Review of Academic Web Search Engines, 2014-2016: Implications for Librarians' Practice and Research Agenda](#), by Jody Condit Fagan (1120 downloads). Published in Vol 36, No. 2 (2016). Last year's rank: Not ranked.
8. [Alexa. Are You Listening?](#), by Miriam Sweeney and Emma Davis (1114 downloads). Published in Vol 39, No. 4 (2020). Last year's rank: Not ranked.
9. [Virtual Reality: A Survey of Use at an Academic Library](#), by Megan Frost, Michael C. Goates, Sarah Cheng, and Jed Johnston (1085 downloads). Published in Vol. 39, No. 1 (2020). Last year's rank: Not ranked.
10. [Rural Public Libraries and Digital Inclusion: Issues and Challenges](#), by Brian Real, John Carlo Bertot, and Paul T. Jaeger (1055 downloads). Published in Vol. 33, No. 1 (2013). Last year's rank: 1.

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<sup>7</sup> Calculated based on the COUNTER AR1 report for the calendar year, calculating the sum of monthly views for all articles.