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Further information, including author guidelines and instructions on how to submit manuscripts, is available at the journal web site.

COVER IMAGE

The cover image is a picture of the Meinders Commons with a view of the diamond-brick and glass wall unique to the Concordia Theological Seminary campus in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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© Atla
300 S. Wacker Drive
Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60606-6701
connect@atla.com

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A Word from the Editor

Could we have ever forecasted something like COVID-19 taking place? The changes and the challenges it has brought about and continues to bring about are immense. As I write this editorial, Corban University (the University for which I work) is in the midst of getting prepared for a semester of social distancing and contact tracing (two phrases which were unknown twelve months ago), not to mention the other challenges brought about due to COVID-19, such as lay-offs, terminations, and other dynamics impacting our work. As editor-in-chief of *Theological Librarianship*, my empathy and prayers go out to you.

As librarians, how can we respond to COVID-19? The editorial team discussed the implementation of this forum on distance learning before we were fully aware of the challenges that would come about due to COVID-19. Like some of you, towards the latter part of the spring semester of 2020, I had to learn how to flip a class from face to face to online in a matter of weeks. Alongside the classroom flipping, we all had to flip library services to service the new norm of distance learning. There were others of you who already had strong distance learning dynamics in your library and, subsequently, the changes were like flipping a switch. We need to learn from you.

While many theological traditions are represented in Atla, some of the traditions represented believe in some higher power. Subsequently, many of us look for purpose in events like COVID-19—purpose that goes beyond simply finding a cure to COVID-19 and getting back to the norm. What are we supposed to be learning through this "new normal" that may have been difficult to learn in other contexts? How can we manifest the mission of our respective colleges, universities, and seminaries with these changes? How can libraries change to meet the needs of both students and faculty in this new context?

The forum in this issue intends to let libraries share how they have served their distance learning community. When discussing this topic as a forum, little did we know that distance learning would become a key dynamic of higher education in the spring, summer, and fall of 2020 (and beyond). As many of us adjust to the "new normal," we cannot help but strive to strengthen our library services through these changes. As the editorial team had the privilege of reviewing all of the contributions, we learned much about how, in the midst of challenges like COVID-19, we can learn to better serve our communities. We trust that you also will learn from this forum not just ideas on how we can serve our patrons and our institutions better, but how we can learn through incidences like COVID-19 and sharpen our skills as librarians, enabling others to see the critical role librarians play in the educational adventures of students and faculty.

Soli Deo gloria

Garrett B. Trott

Special Forum: Distance Learning

Supporting Distance Education Students

by Stacie Schmidt

Biola University, located on the Los Angeles side of the Los Angeles/Orange County border in California, has approximately 6,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Biola students are primarily residential or local, with close to 500 distance education or online students across several programs. Approximately 110 of these distance education or online students are Talbot Theological Seminary graduate students. Attempting to discern the exact number of distance education students was a challenging task, as Biola does not easily differentiate between in-person and distance education students. Furthermore, Biola does not consider itself as having "distance education students"; instead, Biola has "online students" who may be in any location.

Similar to the perspective shared across the university, the Biola Library does not differentiate services for distance education students. We do have a page on our website "For Online Learners"—the phrase "online learners" was chosen over "distance education students" because Biola emphasizes the style of delivery format (online) over location (distance). Our services for online students are a mixture of concessions for Biola students studying at a distance and promotion of our existing online services.

Students in online classes have the same access to our librarians and staff as in-person students. Reference Services offers chat, phone, and email support that is heavily used by online students for research assistance. Our major concession to students who do not live locally is that they can use interlibrary loan to request copies of articles or a book chapter we only have access to in print, and we will provide a scanned copy. We ask students to come in and copy it themselves if we notice that they have a local address. We do not mail books to students. The Biola Library maintains membership in a number of nationwide reciprocal programs, including Atla, which allows students to access libraries closer to them.

Our librarian and staff support for distance education students is superb. They receive the same high caliber of research and resource assistance as our in-person students. Students appreciate the personal connections that can come from repeated use of our reference services, and some have come to introduce themselves when they visit campus. Our interlibrary loan staff provide timely and valuable assistance to obtain articles or chapters for distance education students. Our Technical Services prioritizes electronic purchases of e-books, journals and other resources to provide material that is accessible for our students who do not have easy access to our physical collections.

Unfortunately, there are a number of recurring issues. Several online programs at Biola have reduced or cut their required research training, which means that students are less equipped to do library research. There can be a significant disconnect between some distance education students and the library. Many students are unaware of existing services or online resources, attempting to do their studies without utilizing the resources available to them. Some students expect or anticipate services that the library does not offer. Quite a few distance education students are disappointed when they realize that we do not mail books. Some students are in foreign countries without easy access to libraries or required textbooks and ask the Biola Library to provide all required resources electronically. These situations are frustrating for all involved, but provide avenues for future growth.

Stacie Schmidt is Reference Services Librarian at Biola University.

COVID-19 has turned all Biola students into distance education students and revealed some of the weaknesses of our support for distance education students. Biola's emphasis on format (online) versus location (distance) has led the library to focus on online material and support. American copyright law restricts us from copying more than a chapter or 10%, whichever is less, of a physical item in our collection. This restriction, while necessary to meet copyright standards, means that our distance education students have less access to our physical materials. I know this equity issue has plagued libraries for decades and has been a keen source of friction for our patrons during our COVID-19 closure. Many of our fellow Atla libraries mail books to their students. While the Biola Library had considered this option before and deemed it difficult to implement, mailing physical books to students would alleviate significant research and resource needs of students who are not local. Additionally, stronger marketing and departmental engagement by the library liaisons could ameliorate a lack of knowledge on the part of distance education students. Each librarian is a liaison to a specific school at Biola.

I am hopeful that the experiences of COVID-19 will have radical implications on how we support distance learners in the future. COVID-19 has made each one of us into distance education students, staff, faculty, or librarians. We are now dealing with the same experiences that distance education students have dealt with for years: limited resources, poor connections, lack of content, and the list could go on. As the Biola Library moves towards reopening amid an uncertain world, we are eager to find improved ways to support our distance education students.

Special Forum: Distance Learning

The Leo Dehon Library's Response to COVID-19

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

by Jennifer Bartholomew and Kathy Harty

ONLINE LEARNING PRIOR TO MARCH 2020 / COVID-19

Until this year, Sacred Heart Seminary & School of Theology (SHSST) provided online classes solely to seminary students in India who are part of our MA program pathway—Adveniat Regnum Tuum (ART)—designed for Roman Catholic seminarians of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJ) living abroad.

ART consists of seven asynchronous online courses and three face-to-face courses for which faculty travel to India. ART delivers courses taught by six experienced online faculty. The main delivery mode is through our learning management system, Populi. In addition, support for student learning (mostly writing and language skills) is provided by embedding our writing skills associate and the director of our English and Cultural Studies (ECS) program in the courses.

MARCH 2020 — SPRING SEMESTER GOES ONLINE

As news of the COVID-19 viral pandemic spread, the rector and senior administration made the decision in mid-March to take our face-to-face courses online through the end of the semester. With the charge to transform all courses in a week, the academic dean partnered full- and part-time faculty into teams coordinated by an experienced faculty peer-mentor (including the research & technology librarian). Each mentor had taken the University of Wisconsin-Madison's certificate program in online teaching in 2019 upon receipt of an ATS grant.

Academic administrators, IT personnel, and library staff all provided support to faculty during the transition. Progress was tracked in an online spreadsheet. Specific needs were quickly identified. Lecture notes were converted into PowerPoints and videos. English and Spanish faculty thought about how to teach, and what pedagogies would work best. Online pedagogy varied widely but all classes were ready to go by the following Monday.

For the most part, online classes went well with a few bumps along the way. Technology needs varied. The library continued to provide first-level help for students and faculty. We amended library services tracking, including faculty for the first time as we supported their tech issues. We shared our contact information and were available via personal phone, Zoom, Skype, and email. Our research & technology librarian was very busy, providing expert Populi support to both students and faculty. Some students enjoyed robust Wi-Fi as they "sheltered in place," while others who went home had a variety of tech issues. The ECS programs were particularly challenged by the online environment. Different meeting software was purchased in early April for faculty who thought it would make small group work go more smoothly.

Jennifer Bartholomew is Director of Library and Academic Support Services at Sacred Heart Seminary & School of Theology. Kathy Harty is Resource & Education Services Librarian at Sacred Heart.

Services provided by librarians included:

- Created a quarantine LibGuide describing library services and sharing basic details on how to access digital resources. Librarians shared best practices at online faculty meetings, then added these to an online teaching LibGuide. Tips such as: don't send multiple emails, use a variety of features in Populi (chat, calendars for weekly assignments), and update your syllabus as needed, all helped to improve communication and not overwhelm students.
- Participated as consultants and mentors as faculty converted courses to online learning. Worked with faculty to create online orientation materials and revise syllabi to include online resources and links. Shared best practices for Populi. Added links to e-resources; also scanned and posted content for e-reserves. Supported faculty as they learned to use technology (e.g., how to voice-over PowerPoints, how to use Zoom and WebEx).
- Student Outreach: The academic dean asked his support staff (the registrar, director of library and academic support services, the research & technology librarian, academic assistant) to reach out and call all students to see how they were faring in the new online environment. During the remaining seven weeks of class, we contacted students with specific questions regarding how things were going two times: once after two weeks online and again with two weeks left in the semester.
- Faculty Outreach: The library initiated an outreach program to all faculty. We called them to see how things were going, what their resource and technology needs were, and to determine how we could assist. These conversations were reassuring and fruitful, resulting in a number of suggestions for resource and technology purchases (Zoom, eBooks, and a journal package).
- Thesis Support: provided online resources and helped with citation and style questions.

JULY-AUGUST 2020

Previous summer sessions have been geared to English language learners (about 50 students) who came to Sacred Heart from all over the world. This summer, as travel restrictions are in place and many CPE programs have been cancelled, we decided to offer an online session for MA and MDiv students. The library was included in the support team planning. Our projects include:

- Create special online orientation materials for students who haven't attended Sacred Heart before.
- Create LibGuides, post digital resources, and add best online teaching practices into a faculty guide.
- Compile an FAQ for technology requirements, geared toward our new students. We'll list what they'll need for online learning: high-speed internet, camera, microphone, etc. Once students register, we will determine how comfortable they are online and come up with an individualized plan on how best to support them.

- Work with faculty to determine writing needs for assignments. Technology assistance will be offered by the research & technology librarian and IT staff.
- Purchase more digital resources and e-books.
- Communicate via a weekly newsletter and planned outreach (by phone once to faculty and twice, at the start and middle of the term, to students) during this session.

We have learned a great deal since March and will continue to adapt. For now, we are limiting library services and gearing them towards online learning. We are part of an eight-school consortium that shares a catalog and bin delivery service. We will also be thinking about our community patrons and how we can serve them safely.

Special Forum: Distance Learning

Online Library at Catholic Distance University

by Sr. Rebecca Abel, OSB

When COVID-19 called for closure, many schools began scrambling to find ways to offer distance education. Not so with Catholic Distance University, which has had distance education since 2004 when all degrees were completely online. This means there is no campus, nor buildings for classrooms or library. The only bricks and mortar are administrative offices that reside in Charles Town, West Virginia, and a small print library, housed in one of the offices. Students reside throughout the United States and in several foreign countries. No students reside on campus and they live in different time zones and locations. As a result, classes and services need to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is possible via our LMS (learning management system). All student services, classrooms, library, student center, café, and chapel are online. These services reside on the LMS making CDU a "virtual" rather than an "actual" space. The following is a description of the digital library the CDU librarian has designed on the LMS, called Canvas.

THE LIBRARY

Our online library has modules instead of rooms. These modules resemble LibGuides linking to multiple pages on a specific topic. These pages contain research resources and can be accessed through embedded links, videos, PDFs, images, and other formats. Nine modules contain library resources. For example, the first module, "Browse the Library," links to a page called "Index," a sort of card catalog for the online library. An additional page in this module, "General References Online," lists websites offering open access to resources. The next module, "Check out an eBook," links to the Atla E-Book Lending Program, which supports consortial purchase and sharing of e-books. The program has its own website (www.theologicalebooks.org), so students use a username and password to check out e-books. An additional page in the "Check out an eBook" module is "Books: Open Access and Public Domain." This page contains links to open access books required for classes or relevant to their studies. Another module, "Journal Articles and Dissertations," contains links to EBSCO/AtlaSerials and Project Muse. Students access these databases through Canvas, with no need for additional passwords. Online encyclopedias are also accessed through Canvas in this way. A module on "Research and Writing" accesses pages with links to the online *Chicago Manual of Style*, to the other various writing guides, and to specific term paper and citation guidelines required by the CDU faculty. Pages on writing skills are also included. Other modules access various library resources. These nine modules contain the greater part of the CDU online library, making resources easily accessible to students and faculty 24/7. The e-book library and a small print library also are available via web access and require passwords.

The librarian's role is twofold: to maintain the online library and to assist students and faculty with research and resources. Maintaining the online library means maintaining links. The course link evaluator in Canvas is a great help. Other tasks include acquiring content and distributing it onto Canvas or the e-book library. Assisting students and faculty is perhaps the easiest duty, as the communications provided by Canvas are efficient, including both email features and an online chat line called Pronto. Announcements regularly make students and faculty aware of new e-books and

Sr. Rebecca Abel, OSB, is Librarian at Catholic Distance University.

other sources of information. Students can also contact the librarian via regular email or telephone, with contact information posted on Canvas. Another source of communication for the librarian to use with students is Zoom. This resource is helpful both as one-on-one and small-groups work. The "share screen" option provides an excellent white board for teaching. Zoom recordings can be used to develop teaching videos, such as "How to" topics and introductions to "Literacy, intellectual and online." Using these and other tools provided by Canvas, the librarian is able to develop and maintain a digital space for the library.

CDU's library does not involve bricks and mortar but does provide digital and downloadable material. Digital information, besides being available around the clock, provides economical and practical ways to make more resources available as budgets shrink. A "Single Sign On" feature means accessing all library services on Canvas is simple and economical. But Canvas has its limitations. There is no "one search for all" as with discovery software, so students and faculty must do extensive searching. Access is limited to students and faculty who have a password for Canvas. Library staff cannot share that password with patrons outside the library. A library website could provide access to alumni and staff without an account in the learning management system.

Not all theological texts are available in digital formats, especially older texts not in the public domain. CDU does have a small print library housed in the offices at West Virginia and staff coordinate the interlibrary loan books delivery of books to students. The librarian, however, is in Indiana, so cataloging and maintaining the print collection requires travel. Given COVID issues, at present, no personnel are available to mail books. Moreover, because there is no full-scale brick and mortar library, CDU cannot participate in the Atla interlibrary loan project with other libraries. The librarian does maintain a close connection with library colleagues and is able to request resources from them. The librarian also contacts other librarians for permission for CDU students to use nearby libraries in accord with various library policies. Communication is limited in the online library environment. Zoom and similar programs can provide opportunities for social interaction, but they cannot really replicate the value of face-to-face interaction. Of the pros and cons CDU's online library has faced, these are the main issues the librarian is working to address.

The online library at CDU has and continues to be a project in discovery and learning. How to provide adequate resources that are easily accessible to students and faculty in a digital world of learning is the challenge. Collaboration among colleagues, sharing of resources though consortiums, and working with Atla and other library associations are part of the answer. Thomas Phillips and his efforts for obtaining Open Access is providing much needed resources. Vendors are finding ways to give access while maintaining their companies. Harnessing technology to managing the digital space of an online library requires time and technical expertise. Working with technicians to design programs and simplify the process will enable online libraries to become digital gateways. If it "takes a village to raise a child," it "takes all of the above and more for designing a gateway to digital resources."

Before COVID, the thought of distance education and online libraries might have been in the realm of "the future of libraries," but the pandemic has clearly brought this idea "into the present." The administration, faculty, staff, and librarian of each academic institution will have to decide how best to implement this idea and perhaps the above information will provide them with thoughts on how to embrace more electronic resources distance education in the future.

Special Forum: Distance Learning

COVID-19 Response "Playbooks" at Boston University School of Theology Library

by Amy Limpitlaw, Stacey Duran, and Sean Smith

Librarians historically have had to adapt their services and offerings to changing circumstances. Usually, however, there is time to assess the changed landscape and implement changes gradually and after careful consideration. In Spring 2020, however, the unusual situation of a global pandemic forced librarians everywhere to quickly modify their services and implement what in many cases were radically new procedures and offerings. At the School of Theology Library of Boston University, such changes were decided upon and implemented literally in the space of six days.

While not having the advantage of time to carefully and judiciously decide on how to change its services, the staff members of the library were not without a foundation upon which to build. The library already had been purchasing e-books for its collection for many years. And a program for serving distance learners was already in place, having been implemented after the launch of the school's largely online Doctor of Ministry degree program. The task, then, became one of how to extend and, if needed, modify this foundation to respond to the new situation. In what follows, we will describe in more detail how the library staff worked collaboratively to implement various "playbooks" for serving patrons remotely during the pandemic.

RECENT CHANGES TO E-BOOK COLLECTION POLICIES

As noted, one of the foundations already in place prior to the crisis was the library's collection of e-books. Prior to 2012, the theology library did not have a policy in place for the selection and purchase of electronic books. When Amy Limpitlaw, the head librarian, broached the possibility of purchasing more of its collection in electronic format with faculty, the response she received was mixed. Some faculty expressed their dislike of e-books, expressing their strong preference for the physical print book. There was also concern about the stability of the medium and licensing. Taking these concerns into consideration, the head librarian worked with the faculty members serving on the Library Committee to create a policy for limited procurement of e-books (for example: only buying e-books if a physical copy was available locally, allaying concerns of faculty). The overall outcome was that, although the library did increase its collection of e-books, in many cases electronic was not the default or preferred medium and a large bulk of its collection remained in physical format, even when electronic could have been procured.

The move to a remote learning environment in mid-March revealed some of the shortcomings of this approach. While the number of e-books in the collection was not insignificant, many required texts for courses now being taught remotely were not available electronically. The staff quickly went to work to locate electronic versions of texts required for classes, as well as for texts being requested by students for research assignments. In addition to accelerating its purchase of e-books, the library also looked into the various offerings made by publishers, vendors, and other providers for temporary free access to electronic resources or discounted rates for e-books. For the most part, the staff quickly learned that it was simply easier for library staff to do the legwork to find

Amy Limpitlaw is Head Librarian, Stacey Duran is Instruction & Collection Development Librarian, and Sean Smith is Outreach & Public Services Librarian at Boston University.

the desired e-book, rather than pointing students or faculty to the various places where they could search themselves, and so the library encouraged faculty and students to contact staff directly with their requests.

EXISTING SERVICES TO OUR DISTANCE PROGRAM

The second foundation already in place was the library's program of support for the school's single online degree program. When the school unveiled its first online degree—a hybrid online/on-site Doctor of Ministry program—in 2014, Stacey Duran, then the access services librarian, proposed a multi-layered response. The collection development policy was adjusted to prioritize e-books where possible for course readings. Reference services were expanded to include virtual reference via Skype and, as part of the library's ongoing personal librarian program, Duran volunteered to serve as permanent liaison to the program. As liaison, she coordinates library orientation and instruction sessions during the brief on-campus portions each semester, as well as screencasts of document delivery procedures and workshops that could be viewed remotely.

Access to library materials would be the most difficult part of the library's pandemic response, of course. Distance services for the Doctor of Ministry program relied heavily on reciprocal borrowing privileges through the Boston Theological Interreligious Consortium (BTI), Boston Library Consortium (BLC), and the fledgling Atla reciprocal borrowing program. However, the library also experimented with a back-up plan using document delivery (via mail) of books in addition to chapter and article scans.

DEVELOPING "PLAYBOOKS" FOR RAPIDLY CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

As the COVID-19 crisis deepened in early March 2020, careful planning for multiple contingencies and adaption of currently existing distance education infrastructure was vital for School of Theology Library services and support to keep pace successfully with the rapidly changing world. We defined "effective support" based on the following three factors: (1) continued (but safe) access to reference services, instruction, and librarians; (2) facilitating access to our collections, both physical and electronic, as safely as possible, and (3) clear, consistent communication with our community of users on how to access these services.

Library staff, led by Outreach and Public Services Librarian Sean Smith, began creating "playbooks" highlighting potential library services based on many different potential institutional-level responses to COVID-19 in early March, during the very early stages of the crisis, with clear checklists for implementation. This involved collaborative planning among staff for all possible contingencies, from implementation of basic physical distancing measures (e.g., adjusted circulation procedures and spacing of seating) to the seemingly slim chance of a shift to fully remote teaching for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester. As circumstances rapidly changed, so did the look of library services: from business as usual, to open to the public limited hours with physical distancing protocols, to fully remote teaching (with a fully virtual library!), within the span of six days. A special, continually updated COVID-19 response page on the library's website, coupled with consistent communication with the community across all platforms, communicated these changes with our community. A key lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is to expect rapid change during crises, and to anticipate and prepare for quick pivots.

In conclusion, our "playbooks" for remote learning rely heavily on the use and expansion of the existing infrastructure serving our distance education community. Reference assistance continues virtually; library staff have significant experience with online instruction and screencasts for the distance education community. While the physical building may be closed, the library facilitates access to our physical collections via document delivery scans, a service not previously available to on-campus students. Instructions on utilizing document delivery already existed, needing only slight adaptation for our COVID-19 world. The distance education program provided a catalyst for our robust e-book purchasing program (including purchasing all course reserve material electronically, if available). To highlight these collections, staff created course guides for all Spring 2020 classes showing e-books related to each course, which were then shared with faculty and on course reserve lists. These and other adaptions of existing infrastructure facilitated quick implementation of our "playbooks" as the situation rapidly changed, as all students soon became "distance students."

Quality Assurance in an Academic Library Contact Center

by Nita Mailander

INTRODUCTION

As libraries have been transformed by virtual services and online learning, academic libraries are focusing on customer-driven services to support students, faculty, and staff. In his editorial "Distinctive Signifiers of Excellence: Library Services and the Future of the Academic Library," Walter (2011, 7) challenges librarians to "engage the question of what array of services our users should expect to find in a 21st-century academic library" and to include services, not just collections, in our discussions of "distinctive signifiers of excellence." Bell (2019), in his editorial in *Library Journal*, also challenges academic libraries to embrace the "customer-driven service culture." Today, every student, faculty, and staff member in higher education is potentially an online student, instructor, or telecommuter. Including quality assurance measures in the academic library contact center designed to meet library customer needs regardless of physical location is an effective, distinctive approach to providing library services.

BACKGROUND

Grand Canyon University (GCU) began in 1949 as Baptist-affiliated Prescott College, prior to moving to West Phoenix in 1951. In 1984, the College transitioned to Grand Canyon University and from being owned and operated by the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention to being self-owned by the Board of Trustees. In 2008, on the brink of bankruptcy, the university transitioned again to a for-profit institution with the help of capital from an initial public offering that allowed the university to continue operating. In 2018, the university transitioned back to its historical roots as a non-profit institution (GCU 2020). For the fall semester in 2019, the campus served more than 22,000 traditional students, and more than 80,000 online students (Larrison 2019).

The library staff growth has reflected the successful growth and transition of the university over time. In 2007, there were two professional librarians and one paraprofessional on the library staff. In 2010, with seven professional librarians and four paraprofessional staff, the GCU Library established a new model of centralized Ask-A-Librarian services to answer all questions regardless of subject and origin, providing virtual and face-to-face, on-demand individualized research assistance to students, faculty, and staff. The academic library contact center launched as a full virtual instruction and consultation service.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although contact or call centers are discussed in the published literature in a variety of organizational settings, there is very limited discussion regarding the academic library contact center, much less continuous quality assurance programs for virtual library services. In their 2004 article "Call

Nita Mailander is Director of Library Services at Grand Canyon University.

Centres for Enhanced Reference Services," Sattar Chaudhry and Jeanne identified Monash University Library and the New Brunswick Libraries of Rutgers University in New Jersey. Both academic call centers handled general inquiries and transferred any subject-specific inquiries to branches or specialists. Calls were generally expected to be resolved in five minutes and there was no mention of quality assurance measures. In 2006, Burke and Berenak wrote about the telephone enquiry service (TES) which was implemented at Bundoora Campus Library at La Trobe University in Australia which served the need "to answer in a central location those repetitive directional queries such as opening hours and queries about library holdings" (212). There was again no mention of quality assurance measures.

Likewise, there is literature discussing telephone reference in academic libraries, but very limited discussion of academic library contact centers. In 2009, Murphy published her findings regarding applying Six Sigma philosophy as an example of continuous quality improvement at the Ohio State University Libraries. The discussion regarding assessment and reference services continues with the case study "Implementing the Customer Contact Center," which describes the model that Ohio State University Libraries adopted. Murphy and Cerqua (2012) not only describe the centralized academic library services but also provide insight and detail into the quality assessment of calls recorded through their "Ask Us!" library services. They assert that "libraries that develop systems for monitoring and improving the quality of their interactions with customers can maintain their relevance" (299).

Brehm-Heeger et al.'s (2013) article "Library Call Centers" reviews public library call centers. Each of the five public libraries and library systems described had call centers that had a primary role for "redirecting calls from the public service desk" (33). Some of the call center staff also handled email and chat reference services when not providing phone service. Johnson County Library's call center in Kansas was identified as including a quality assessment program through the use and review of voice recording software, but no details were included.

THE GCU LIBRARY CONTACT CENTER

The GCU Library has a team of twenty-two librarians and seven paraprofessionals. Fourteen full-time and three part-time librarians, along with five paraprofessionals and a team of student workers, staff the Ask-A-Librarian contact center through the in-person, phone, email, and chat service points. Staff are cross-trained to provide support for all the library's resources, regardless of subject matter or type of resource. On-demand customized research assistance is provided, including assisting with interlibrary loan requests, appointment scheduling, computer and media instruction, and answering and referring questions regarding the University's academic services and resources. The Ask-A-Librarian service is open for students, faculty, and staff ninety-nine hours per week.

Group library instruction is also a responsibility of librarians on the Ask-A-Librarian service team and the one-shot library instruction sessions are scheduled virtually or face-to-face as requested by faculty. The library also runs a robust webinar schedule of recurring virtual instruction sessions across twelve webinars, including such topics as library introduction, doctoral research, APA formatting, and more. The Ask-A-Librarian Service answered over 73,000 inquiries from July 2018 to June 2019, and the librarians taught 562 sessions with 13,955 attendees, with the mission to support and meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff where they are academically and geographically (Grand Canyon University Library 2019).

QUALITY ASSURANCE INITIATIVE

In 2012, phone queue software was implemented in the GCU Library Ask-A-Librarian service to further provide efficient call flow and maximize customer service efforts. The library joined the ongoing university-wide QA initiative in 2018 with the launch of the recording and analysis of inbound and outbound phone calls to the Ask-A-Librarian service. The library's chat service was also added to the QA initiative in 2019.

The library's phone and chat QA initiatives measure eight areas of staff competency focused on customer service, including the following areas: opening, knowledge and understanding, communication, advising and problem solving, ownership, branding, and closing. Two inbound calls and one outbound call are evaluated each month for the librarians and student workers who answer phone calls for the Ask-A-Librarian service. Additionally, for the librarians who staff the chat service, three chat sessions are evaluated. Calls and chat sessions are graded by the university's quality assurance team evaluators and the evaluation results are accessible via a personal staff dashboard for each staff member and are reviewed by library department supervisors and managers who provide individualized feedback and coaching. Staff members reaching and maintaining one hundred percent compliance are recognized quarterly and become part of the university's QA 100 Club.

QUALITY ASSURANCE METRICS

Since implementing the phone QA initiative in September 2018, over 42,000 phone calls were received by library staff through April 2020. For the Ask-A-Librarian chat service QA implemented in June 2019, over 4,000 chats were received by library staff through April 2020. As a result of these initiatives, 1,020 evaluations were completed resulting in an average departmental score of 98.55% percent (out of 100%). This quality assurance model promotes and sustains a high level of customer service and supports an organizational culture of assessment and improvement across the library team.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of quality assurance to the GCU Library's Ask-A-Librarian service has strengthened the library's continuous improvement processes, enhancing the library's quality and overall effectiveness in providing academic support to students, faculty, and staff. Library staff, although initially cautious to embrace the new quality assurance model, have found great success and external confirmation of the quality, caring customer service provided. For library supervisors and managers, the quality assurance model has allowed a new level of norming, training, and accountability to high customer service standards across the library's in-person and virtual service points. By using a continuous quality improvement process coupled with centralized services and an emphasis on customer service with a servant's heart, the academic library contact center can provide a level of dynamic, distinctive services that demonstrate the library's value to the academic community.

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Special Forum: Distance Learning

Life Together at Wartburg Theological Seminary in a Digital Age

by Craig L. Nessan

Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS), founded in 1854, was for most of its history a highly residential seminary with a strong focus on life together in community. About 15 years ago, however, we began a process of developing distance education in both our master's degree and certificate programs that are preparing candidates to become church leaders as pastors and deacons. This shift has made theological education accessible to many more students. We now have students in 36 states, including Alaska, and are equipped also to work with international partners.

The WTS faculty employed findings from the "Learning Pastoral Imagination" project of Auburn Seminary in the design of new curriculum. Christian A. B. Scharen and Eileen R. Campbell-Reed (2016) write: "We find through listening to ministry leaders across the country that ministry today is less about exercising the authority of an office or role and more about embodying an authentic contextual wisdom only gained by daily practice of leadership on the long arc of learning ministry."

We value the six key findings of the Learning Pastoral Imagination study: (1) learning pastoral imagination happens best in formation for ministry that is integrative, embodied, and relational; (2) learning pastoral imagination centers on integrated teaching that understands and articulates the challenges of the practice of ministry today; (3) learning pastoral imagination requires both the daily practice of ministry over time and critical moments that may arise from crisis or clarity; (4) learning pastoral imagination requires both apprenticeship to a situation and mentors who offer relational wisdom through shared reflection and making sense of a situation; (5) learning pastoral imagination is complicated by the intersection of social and personal forces of injustice; (6) learning pastoral imagination is needed for inhabiting ministry as a spiritual practice, opening up the self and community to the presence and power of God (Scharen and Campbell-Reid 2016, 14).

A deep commitment to learning in context, specifically congregational contexts, informs the WTS curriculum design. Four years ago, we implemented an innovative new curriculum with three models—residential, collaborative, and distance—and two tracks—synchronous and asynchronous (Stache and Nessan 2018). Residential students (RL) attend class on our campus in classrooms equipped with interactive video technology. Collaborative students (CL) are doing ministry in congregations while they are attending classes synchronously in real time using Zoom. Distance students (DL) participate in the very same classes but can do so either synchronously or asynchronously, using materials prepared by instructors just for them. We approach each population of students as adding value to the whole: residential students bringing their experiences in robust on-campus activities, collaborative students bringing learnings from their contextual sites, and distance students reflecting on their daily work and local congregations.

The changing role of partners is significant for this paradigm shift. Historically, a limited number of congregations served as internship sites for students in the third year of their four-year degree program. A new category of "collaborative congregations" has been developed. These unique congregations, supervisors, and mentors work with students in their congregational placements during their entire four years of seminary—teaching, learning, and accompanying the student on

Craig L. Nessan is Academic Dean and Professor of Contextual Theology and Ethics at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

the journey. The vital role and responsibility that partnerships have in all three models, particularly for the CL students, becomes even more indispensable for the ongoing formation of students. Moreover, it is incumbent on the seminary to be in a state of readiness to learn from these partners, including especially from the congregations, supervisors, and mentors who are working with our students daily.

The addition of new models and tracks in theological education demands new ways to accumulate and assess data. WTS has built on previous methods of data collection for assessment by adding real-time listening posts to gather student feedback. Regular formal and informal faculty conversations take place about what we are learning through formal and informal assessment in and out of the classroom, in order to constantly improve the educational experience. Gathering information is only the first step, however. We need to employ feedback mechanisms to make midcourse corrections as needed. Becoming nimble as an organization has been crucial for our ability to learn and respond, envision, and execute.

As one example of our efforts at ongoing assessment, distributed and collaborative students had been asking about new modes for WTS to embody what it means for us to be a worship-centered community. A Vital Worship Grant from the Calvin Institute had begun to facilitate a study process on digital worship with consultants in Fall 2019. A series of podcasts (www.buzzsprout.com/949903) were one fruit from grant activities to inform our practices in digital worship. The consultation was occasion to generate creative reflection on the possibilities and limits of livestreaming chapel services, something that we then were able to implement for the participation of all students and members of the WTS community at a distance in March 2020 with the onset of the pandemic.

The new WTS curriculum gives attention not only to education but to the formation of students. This accords with significant research on reimagining theological education as "practical wisdom" (Bass, Cahalan, Miller-McLemore, Scharen, and Nieman 2016). The origins of this undertaking are ancient, rooted in the classical notion of *phronesis*. How does theology become incarnate in bodies, in praying, in everyday life, in congregations, and in popular culture? Formation focuses on how theology becomes embedded in every fiber of life—personally, communally, and ecologically.

Our distance education program has been enhanced by membership in the Digital Theological Library (DTL), which provides more than half a million resources to our students in a digital format. As its website states, "The Digital Theological Library is a co-owned, born-digital library of religious and theological studies. The mission of the DTL is to provide its co-owning institutions with the highest quality digital resources in religious and theological studies at the lowest possible costs. Use of the DTL's leased and purchased information resources is restricted to the DTL's co-owning institutions." The DTL became an even more indispensable resource for study and scholarship now under the conditions of social distancing during the pandemic.

We are involved in a brave new experiment in becoming one seminary and one community with one curriculum in a digital world. This effort has been led by a creative faculty working together to deliver theological education that is accessible to students, who have many different life circumstances. Now with the COVID-19 pandemic, WTS has been able to transition to a totally online delivery of courses to our students, including those who have needed the flexibility of accessing their education either synchronously by Zoom or asynchronously through our course management system. While this has been a profoundly stressful time for all of us, we have been able to provide a new structure to our seminary life, including daily chapel for all our students at a distance.

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Special Forum: Distance Learning

Serving Our Distance Learners

The Work of the Styberg Library at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

by Daniel Smith

The Ernest and Bernice Styberg Library, formerly known as the United Library, serves the students, staff, and faculty of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and Bexley Seabury Seminary. Both institutions have a growing number of online/distance students in their programs, and we are working to better connect with them to meet their information and educational needs. To this end, we have updated our policies, programs, and services to better serve this population, which is predominantly made up of students. We also continue to evaluate our policies and programs in order to best meet the needs of our online/distance community. Finally, we intentionally listen and observe how our community is using online resources and seek to incorporate this into the way that we offer our services. While this work can be challenging at times—particularly connecting with distance learners—we remain committed to it.

First, in an effort to make our distance learning policies, programs, and services more accessible and findable, we have created dedicated webpages with relevant content. On our website (library.garrett.edu), we have created a custom tab for distance learning that highlights the services and policies that are relevant to online/distance students. This tab features tutorials for some our most popular databases as well as brief tutorials about using the online discover layer—USearch. There is also a page with information about how to access electronic resources, like databases and e-book platforms. The tab also includes links for the most popular, promising electronic resources that are available through the library, specifically select databases and e-reference collections.

Regarding physical resources and access, we aim to extend our physical library to students at a distance (over 50 miles) by offering to freely mail any circulating materials to them, as long as they agree to send them back to us. This has proven to be a very popular service for our Doctor of Ministry students; however, others have taken advantage of this resource as well. In a similar vein, we offer an electronic document delivery service that allows students to request scans of materials that are available in our library. We then scan and send requested materials to students. Similarly, we offer to interlibrary loan and email articles and chapters for our patrons who are online or at a distance.

In terms of reference and research consultations, we are available via chat from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during the week. This service is attractive to our distance students, and we regularly assist online students with their questions about the library. Currently, we use LibraryH3lp which allows us to share links, content, and screens with our users. We have also created a virtual study room via Zoom where we keep regular virtual office hours, and many students have connected with us this way. Our online forms have also been a beneficial way of connecting with our distance students. Of course, we continue to be available via phone and email as well.

To assist our distance learning students with finding library resources, we have also increased our library research guides and aim to always include online content that is either freely available or available through the library. Similarly, we have curated a list of religion databases that features

Daniel Smith is Research, Instruction, & Digital Services Librarian at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

many open access, online resources. Likewise, we work with our faculty to develop course guides and highlight our relevant, online resources. We also continually digitize our special collections and archives and make those available online. All of our digital content and library research guides are incorporated into USearch, which increases their discoverability and usability with our online/distance community. Tutorials that show how students can utilize these resources have also been created and continue to be expanded and enhanced.

In addition to these services and resources, we endeavor to offer an online option (via Zoom) for every program that we host in the library, including monthly writing nights, periodic workshops and instruction sessions, and faculty book talks. We also have online-only instruction sessions for online courses. Embedded librarianship has proven to be a great way of connecting with distance students as well.

Being in the Chicagoland area offers a lot of possibilities for supporting students, including those who are online or at a distance. We are affiliated with the Northwestern University Libraries, which gives us access to thousands of electronic resources, primarily in the form of articles, e-books, and media. This wealth of electronic resources is available to all of our online/distance students, and we are working to expand it to include even more relevant content. Regarding additional connections/partnerships, whenever possible, we also highlight the reciprocal borrowing program that is available through Atla, and we have found that students are very excited about this possibility.

As a recent graduate of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign LEEP program, I seek to continually reflect upon my experience as a distance student to better meet the needs of our online/distance students. This experience has proven to be invaluable for me because I had previously only experienced online learning in a limited way. I am also currently a mentee in the ACRL Distance Learning Section's beta mentorship program for new librarians who are engaged in supporting distance learning students. This has been a very rewarding experience, as it has connected me with a more seasoned distance-learning librarian who regularly encourages, challenges, and resources me, and this opportunity has motivated me to look for articles, like the many that have been published in *Theological Librarianship*, about distance learning. This online community of practice has given me ideas for future programs and services for our online/distance community.

The Styberg endeavors to serve our distance learners in the best ways possible. We try to offer a comparable experience to our on-campus students. The pandemic has given us opportunities to improve upon our policies, services, resources, and programs, and we continue to evaluate the ways that we can best serve all of our distance students. This continues to be exciting and rewarding work for us, and we are excited about what the future will bring in this regard!

Special Forum: Distance Learning

Library Support for Distance Learning at Colorado Christian University

by Oliver Schulz

Colorado Christian University (CCU) is a four-year liberal arts school founded in 1914 as Denver Bible Institute. Its student population currently exceeds 8,400 students (about 3,500 FTE), enrolled in one of two colleges: the on-campus/in-seat College of Undergraduate Studies (CUS—50+ degree programs) and the College of Adult and Graduate Studies (CAGS—80+ degree programs), which offers classes at extension centers and online. The CAGS programs currently represent about 75% of the enrollment.

The Clifton Fowler Library, named after the founder of the Denver Bible Institute, currently employs four full-time librarians: the dean of the library, an information services librarian, a technical services librarian, and a research and instruction librarian. The librarians are supported by a library services assistant, a part-time reference and web library coordinator, and up to nine student employees.

The library has been methodically and strategically improving its collections and services towards the increasing off-campus student population. First, CCU has increased the number of online journal databases to the current 142, ranging from general databases such as EBSCO Academic Complete to specialized ones such as the Atla Religion Database with AtlaSerials. Simultaneously, the library has reduced its physical holdings for journals as they became available online. The library also conducted an overlap analysis of its resources and discovered significant duplication in two large databases, one published by EBSCO and the other by ProQuest. After evaluating various aspects of the two, the ProQuest database was canceled. Naturally, some titles were lost; however, the library invested those savings to upgrade the EBSCO database, resulting in a significant increase of unique resources without additional expenses.

Second, since 2018, the library has shifted significant resources from physical to electronic book purchasing. The library previously preferred physical resources for CUS patrons and electronic resources for CAGS patrons. However, the increasing duplication of academic programs in both colleges, and the commonly-cited advantages of e-books (title is available 24/7, accessible from anywhere, can't be lost/damaged, etc.) led to a change in policy: the library now purchases the electronic format whenever it is available and will purchase physical titles only if the electronic format is unavailable and if they are requested by CUS faculty or students. This has led to a reversal of acquisition numbers; while CCU purchased more physical than electronic books in 2017–18, the library now acquires electronic books at a 2:1 ratio over physical books.

Third, in order to increase the e-book collection, CCU has increased the number of vendor and publishing partners. CCU has added OverDrive in order to provide a limited number of academic titles to patrons. While the access models offered by OverDrive are less preferable compared to others, this move has allowed CCU to provide access to e-books that are not available through other vendors. CCU has also established agreements with other vendors, including various university presses, Project Muse, JSTOR, etc. By increasing its base of vendors, CCU has improved its ability to purchase products on the best-possible terms: vendors and publishers sometimes differ in either

Oliver Schulz is Technical Services Librarian at Colorado Christian University.

their pricing or access models, allowing CCU to purchase titles at reduced rates and/or through better access models.

However, we also discovered that certain desirable titles were not available electronically; some smaller publishers simply did not convert their titles to e-books. CCU librarians have reached out to such publishers and have successfully linked several of them to e-book vendors. In another case, a publisher expanded its e-book offerings after extensive communication with a CCU librarian. While not every interaction with publishers has led to increased availability of resources, the successful ones have led to access to important, even essential, resources in a number of CCU's academic programs.

A fourth way that the CCU Library has increased its support of off-campus students is by consistently reviewing and updating the library's website and LibGuides. We had previously conducted a usability survey test of the website and had planned to conduct another one that had to be canceled because of the COVID-19 crisis. Similarly, LibGuides, accessible directly from the library's homepage, are constantly being reviewed and updated. The library currently has 33 guides grouped into 12 different subject areas reflecting the academic programs at CCU. A recent review revealed that many titles were not merely outdated, but were also only available as print copies. While financial restraints prevented the library from bringing all LibGuides up-to-date, it was possible to update many in the past year, almost exclusively with titles in electronic format. Trying to be fiscally responsible, the library first investigated various options, and then either waited for items to be on sale or negotiated lower prices with the publisher/vendor.

In terms of serving the online student population, the CCU Library implemented an appointment reference service called "Book a Librarian" (BAL) in 2013. From the start, librarians offered this service both in-person for the CUS community and as online video conference meetings for the online CAGS community (currently using Zoom). Students click on the BAL link located on the library's homepage, provide their contact information and research topic, and then pick a time to meet with one of the librarians. A librarian then uses a purpose-built template to draft an email with links to the appropriate LibGuide(s) and search results of both books and journal articles, along with information regarding which databases were used and a post-interview survey. During the reference interview, the librarian discusses various search strategies with the student. At the end of the session, the librarian sends the email with the links to the student so that the student can continue their research. Additional resources that are not available as full text can easily be requested by the student through the interlibrary loan system. These reference appointments have been immensely popular with students as well as faculty. Some professors now require their students to make BAL appointments; their feedback has been that the quality of resources used in research papers has dramatically improved. Besides word-of-mouth, librarians have pushed for active advertisement for BAL services in several ways. First, the research and instruction librarian promotes BAL during CAGS-oriented instruction sessions, which are held three times a year (summer, fall, spring). Librarians have also lobbied to add a BAL link in addition to the library link to the course shells of CCU's learning management system. While this has not yet happened for all courses, there has been some success.

Finally, even though limited in its staff, the library attempts to cater towards all students by offering extensive hours with librarians on duty, in person, and via phone, chat, or e-mail. Librarians are usually available all week during the fall and spring semesters, with evening hours four days a week. Students in the CAGS programs often work during the day; others may live in a different time

zone. By being available outside of the regular office hours, the librarians are able to serve those students, including with BAL reference services. The library does provide after-hour chat reference services by subscribing to a third-party provider. This service is particularly popular during the summer months when the library does not provide extended hours.

In March 2020, like so many other institutions, CCU decided to move all on-campus instruction to an online format. No institution or library could have foreseen the extent of the COVID-19 crisis. However, this switch was relatively smooth for the CCU Library because it was already supporting a large off-campus student population. The library shifted some funding from physical to electronic acquisition, purchasing a number of high-demand electronic titles/licenses to support the university's mission in this emergency. All in-person BAL appointments were simply moved to Zoom meetings.

It is immensely satisfying to personally hand a student a resource that will help them in their studies. The current COVID-19 crisis and the greater trend to distance education do not always allow for that kind of experience. However, by planning, implementing, and refining access to electronic resources and online reference interviews, the librarians of the CCU Library believe that they significantly contribute to the education of the next generation no matter where they are located.

Special Forum: Distance Learning

How Can We Help?

Supporting Online Students through Asynchronous and Synchronous Library Services

by Joshua Waltman and Jeremy McGinniss

In addition to serving residential students, the Jerry Falwell Library at Liberty University provides library resources and services to thousands of online students enrolled in over 450 online programs, including divinity programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. As the majority of Liberty students are studying from a distance, the library has adapted its model to ensure comparable levels of service and access are available to students who are not on-site. Examples of how the library has addressed this issue include expanding e-resource purchases and shipping physical items from the library's collections to online students through interlibrary loan processes. The library has also reimagined the workflows for supporting online students' research and for providing virtual library instruction. It is on this front that we would like to share both successes and learning opportunities gleaned from our experiences.

The library's multi-year evolution supporting online students in research and library instruction has taken on both asynchronous and synchronous components. Asynchronous services are needed because of time zone differences, non-traditional student scheduling, and the fact that online students are working within a digital environment that creates different expectations and questions. Accordingly, our library has addressed this need in three ways: website development, testing, and usability; the development and maintenance of a library FAQ knowledge base; and the development of a video tutorial channel. Synchronous services are also needed to give "real-time" feedback and interaction to provide a sense of connection to the library's resources along with more detailed instruction and assistance as needed. Our synchronous efforts have involved leveraging a variety of technologies to facilitate communication as well as the creation of our Research Support Center, which serves as the library's "virtual front desk."

The first asynchronous focus is in our general approach to website development, testing, and usability. After all, for online students, the website *is* the library. The library site prominently features an assistance dropdown with multiple points of contact (phone, chat, and email). An online student landing page was created to highlight specific resources available for this student population. We have found that our thought processes have fundamentally changed in regards to the website development process. We now are as concerned, if not more so, about the online user perspective and experience in navigating the website. For example, new website changes should always include testing from mobile devices, since we have found that a significant percentage of our online users rely on smartphones when accessing library resources.

In addition to the shift in attitude toward website development, another asynchronous component of our approach includes the creation and maintenance of a library FAQ knowledge base using Springshare's LibAnswers. Users are able to filter according to topic and also search by keyword for their research question. This knowledge base provides opportunities for library faculty and staff to provide information to help users develop library skills, such as Boolean search formations,

Joshua Waltman is Coordinator of the Learning Commons at Liberty University. Jeremy McGinniss is Coordinator for Research & Instruction at Liberty.

and also to foster some basic information literacy competencies at the point of need in the more expansive entries.

A last major component of our asynchronous approach involves the creation of a video tutorial channel to complement both the website and the FAQ knowledge base. At the time of this writing, there are 179 tutorial videos on the channel, all of which include requisite library branding, include closed captioning, and adhere to our internal set of best practices for video recording. Tutorials are created using Camtasia—a screen capturing and video editing software. Tutorial videos are hosted through Kaltura, a video-hosting platform, and embedded into many of the knowledge base FAQs as well as the database listings on our website. One major lesson for us has been the success of embedding these tutorials in the library's database descriptions on the webpage to make them available at the point of discovery and use. Some students are indeed proactively searching for tutorials through the library video channel, but embedding these at the point of database access encourages use by those who are more inclined toward serendipitous discovery or who have more restrictive deadlines that prevent video tutorial browsing.

We have found the videos to be highly used, with 44,988 total views to date. However, ongoing challenges with this use of technology are twofold. First, librarians and staff must develop effective video capturing and editing abilities. While it has become more commonplace in recent years to expect academic librarians to acquire these skills, it nevertheless can be a learning curve for those with no previous background in this area. Second, effectiveness hinges on ensuring tutorials are kept up-to-date, reflecting ongoing changes to the website and databases. We have found that even small discrepancies between the live website environment and the presentation of that environment in our video tutorials are confusing for users. Accordingly, establishing a plan for the maintenance of video tutorials is a prime consideration before starting any such initiative. For us, part of this maintenance effort has included incorporating evaluations of our tutorials in our regular workflow. We have also found that making the homepage of the featured database the starting point for many of our tutorials helps to decrease the number of video updates we have to make since our website changes more frequently than the database interfaces.

Last, the creation of the Research Support Center (RSC) is the most impactful effort we have made to provide synchronous library support for online students. The RSC consists of eight highly trained full-time staff members, titled "research consultants," who provide front-line assistance to online students through phone, chat, and email. Along with contributing to the creation of the tutorial videos, maintaining the knowledge base entries mentioned above, and providing proactive resource checks and testing, these staff are dedicated to fielding all manner of library questions. They provide extended hours during nights and weekends and respond knowledgably to the vast majority of research inquiries. They are likewise trained in providing customer service-friendly referrals to the appropriate departments or liaison librarians. While the increase in online students served as the impetus for the creation of the RSC, on-campus students have benefited as well from the increased library support.

A challenge with such an initiative can be the initial personnel cost. However, the student-to-librarian ratio increase that comes with a burgeoning online population creates a logistical problem for libraries who still serve the residential population as well. This model efficiently uses the Research Support Center to ensure librarian expertise is directed toward higher-level research and instruction needs while also working within current faculty personnel budgetary allocations. Thus, the hiring and training of these staff has arguably greatly increased the library's reach to students,

demonstrating a strong return on investment in creating these positions. We have found that the Research Consultants field, on average, 14,988 emails, chats, and phone calls per year.

One major lesson we have taken from the creation of the RSC has been the need to cultivate strong lines of collaboration and communication between departments in order to facilitate effective customer service in the interactions between research consultants and the students they serve, both residential and online. Matters relating to circulation and group study reservations, for instance, require consistency in communication between the research consultants and our Learning Commons department. Additionally, cross-training in these areas as well as the development of cross-departmental documentation of workflows has further aided in the communication. Determining best practices in practical procedures, such as call transfers, has been important as well.

Various technology has likewise been leveraged to efficiently facilitate synchronous research instruction for online students by librarians. Namely, individual research consultations are conducted not only through phone but also through teleconferencing technology. Through Cisco Webex or MS Teams, librarians can share their screen while talking with students across the globe. The investment in this technology has also opened opportunities to host online student research presentations during our annual research symposium as we pursue a comparable and seamless integration of the online population into the event. Moreover, teleconference technology supports the library's regular webinars highlighting subject specific research skills and issues. In this way, distance students are able to attend these library instructional sessions alongside residential students.

The areas highlighted in this essay demonstrate how the faculty and staff at the Jerry Falwell Library are utilizing technology and personnel to provide a range of research assistance and learning support for the online students at Liberty University. It is important to point out that we have found there is no one-size-fits-all model that perfectly identifies how to support online students. Rather, any model needs to recognize that student populations are very fluid because student needs are ever-changing, as they may be pursuing degrees entirely online, fully on-campus, or a combination of the two. What is present in each of these areas is a commitment to library service regardless of the medium, a willingness to experiment with different models and tools, and an outward communication that demonstrates the library is present to answer questions regardless of how a student receives his or her education.

Special Forum: Distance Learning

Distance Learning at the General Theological Seminary

by Melissa Chim

The General Theological Seminary is located in the heart of Chelsea in New York City. The seminary is fortunate enough to keep classes very small, and as the reference librarian I am able to know all of the students by name. The library plays an integral role in upholding the seminary's sense of community. This proved challenging with the onset of the coronavirus, which required faculty and staff to work from home and hold classes via Zoom. However, with the seminary's introduction of a new online Doctor of Ministry program, discussions around distance learning had already happened before the changes brought by the pandemic. Additionally, as a student who attended my MLIS course completely online while working, my experiences have inspired me to serve both as a reference librarian and archivist to students at a distance. I aim to provide services to remote students with a three-pronged approach: webinars, online communication tools, and library guides.

WEBINARS

As an MLIS student, I chose to pursue a concentration in both academic librarianship and archives. While taking courses online, I was also able to get hand-on experiences in archives through my internships in local historical societies. However, my current and future online students at the seminary may not have the same opportunity to come visit our special collections as often as they would like. Women's History Month was the perfect time to celebrate the history of women at the seminary, and I coordinated with the library's manager, the academic deans, alumni relations, and many other departments to construct a webinar for the end of March 2020. Our archives hold a wealth of information regarding the first female students, and this webinar was able to bring the rich resources of special collections to students in the comfort of their own homes.

At the beginning of this project, I used the remaining days I had working physically in the library to collect copies of relevant photographs and institutional publications. I collected graduation photos, particularly those of the first female students from the class of 1974, Peggy Muncie and Paige Bigelow, and materials related to famous activist Pauli Murray and Christian education pioneer Professor Doris P. Chaplin. I also gathered board meeting minutes from as early as 1917, which revealed that Grace Amelia Littel served as interim librarian without being afforded the title. I framed these experiences into the context of women as a whole in the Episcopal Church and encouraged female students and faculty members to share their own stories.

Next, various departments helped me in advertising my webinar through our seminary newsletter and by posting flyers through high traffic areas, such as the refectory and dormitories. I organized all of my findings into a PowerPoint and broadcast it via Zoom, giving students and faculty the opportunity to submit questions and feedback live. Ultimately, the webinar's success was due to timing. In lieu of the regular academic advising hour taking place each Wednesday, the deans gave faculty and their advisees permission to attend my webinar instead. I had thirty participants in total, which reflects more than half of the current student body.

Melissa Chim is Reference Librarian at General Theological Seminary.

In order for future students to have access to this webinar, the library plans to upload the MP4 to its website. One challenge to consider before creating future webinars is the platform. I was the only participant to have both audio and video. Students and faculty who wanted to join in the discussion were limited to using the chat function, which resulted in unformatted blocks of text. For future webinars, I intend to work with the registrar in structuring these presentations as one would an online class. This will allow all participants to be able to use both audio and video, which will strengthen their sense of community and engagement.

ONLINE COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Communicating with students is an essential component of being a reference librarian, and often remote students express feeling cut off from the library while away from campus. This is especially true in the weeks leading up to final exams when the Writing Center (of which I am the manager) is inundated with questions regarding citations and formatting. Our library has recently started to implement a live chat function on our webpage in addition to answering questions by email and phone.

In my experience, I have found that my students are overall more comfortable contacting me by email than through the live chat. On average, I may receive one message through the live chat during the day, compared to dozens of emails from students. The chats I receive are usually easy to answer queries, such as what the library's hours are and if a student can renew a book. My students feel much more comfortable asking more in-depth questions via email, such as asking for help in finding sources and how to construct strong thesis statements.

As we welcome more distance learning students in the future, I expect to see an increase in the amount of live chat questions I receive. The library advertised our live chat function by campus-wide email, but as our student body grows we may explore other options, such as advertising in the weekly newsletter. Curating a stronger social media presence, especially on Instagram and Twitter, will also be beneficial for communication and increasing the visibility of the special collections. Fortunately, I am able to stay connected to the student body and continue providing reference services using these virtual resources.

LIBRARY GUIDES

In lieu of an in-person tour of the library, I compiled a library guide for the incoming Doctor of Ministry students and a separate guide for MA students. They are comprehensive instruction manuals on how to use the library, ranging from how to register as a patron to how to submit their thesis. Although directions for accessing the collections are the same for both sets of students, the requirements for the thesis differ in length. The guides are in a PDF format and will be located on the resources section of our website. I paid the most attention to crafting sections on how to access our collections and other important resources remotely.

Our library is fortunate enough to have access to a wide range of e-books through our catalog. In my guides, I added step-by-step instructions with screenshots on how to access these books through our catalog and how to subsequently create accounts for ProQuest and EBSCO. Additionally, I included information on the Atla Reciprocal Borrowing Program. I hope to make these guides helpful for both on-campus students and students at a distance.

As the General Theological Seminary welcomes more remote students, I plan to develop LibGuides on subjects related to theology, history, and philosophy. Due to budget restraints, we may not be able to afford a traditional LibGuide platform. However, I may pursue nontraditional platforms such as creating online resource guides through Google Docs and sharing them with the student body.

CONCLUSION

Serving students at a distance presents both opportunities and challenges for the General Theological Seminary. The library is an essential resource for both remote and on-campus students. The coronavirus pandemic and the implementation of a new online program allowed us to consider how to best reach students who are away from campus. As the reference librarian, my approach to serving remote students is to provide webinars, online communication, and library guides. My goals for the future are to provide more web-based services and to increase the library's online presence while bringing visibility to the special collections. Consequently, the library will continue to be an integral component of both the online and virtual General Theological Seminary campus.

Out of the Cloister

Theological Libraries as Spaces for Spiritual Formation

by Briana Grenert

NOTE This essay is the winner of our 2020 Student Essay Contest. For more information on the winner and the contest, please visit: www.atla.com/blog/theological-librarianship-briana-grenert. *Theological Librarianship* plans to run another essay contest in 2021; announcements will go out early next year.

So many people warned me that seminary would not nurture my soul. Well-meaning people admonished me to cautiously discern—was God calling me to "cemetery"? The problem they were not so subtly hinting at is laid out in clearer terms by Eugene Peterson in *Subversive Spirituality*. He claims that

> The most frequently voiced disappointment by men and women who enter seminary has to do with spirituality...[students] commonly enter seminary motivated by a commitment to God and a desire to serve their Lord in some form of ministry, and then find they are being either distracted or deflected from that intention at every turn. [T]he professors seem far more interested in in their spelling than in their spirituality. They find themselves spending far more time on paradigms than in prayer. (Peterson 1997, 54)

Students frequently complain that their academic work is disengaged from their spirituality and in fact working against their formation. Peterson (1997, 55) explains that "ever since the Enlightenment split between the heart and the head in the seventeenth century, schools have not been easy allies in a life of worship, prayer, and the love of God." Many innovative and bright minds have written books and articles to address the issue of spiritual formation in theological education (see, e.g., Amirtham, Pryor, and World Council of Churches 1991; Bain, Hussey, and Sutherland 2018; Muszkat-Barkan and Rosenstein 2018; Paulsell 1998). New courses, new disciplines, new committees, and new initiatives have been launched to address this issue. One vital campus space, though, that has already been re-examining its role on campus by diversifying its programming, is underutilized in the quest for institutional support of spiritual formation: the theological library.

In this paper I would like to suggest that theological libraries have unique potential to contribute to the spiritual formation of students. I begin by sharing how Princeton Theological Seminary's library space has already been intentionally (and successfully) used to connect academic and spiritual formation. Then, I consider how theological libraries have a unique opportunity to contribute to resisting that post-Enlightenment divide between the heart and mind, first by exploring medieval monastic conceptions of learning and formation before introducing how Descartes's disengaged reason decoupled experience from the mind, contributing to the artificial separation of education from formation. Finally, I open a discussion on how the intentional use of the library as a space that fosters academic compassion, vis-à-vis disengaged knowledge, can challenge the dissonance between spirituality and academic work in theological education.

Briana Grenert is an MDiv student at Princeton Theological Seminary.

USE OF LIBRARY SPACE

Some students naturally are drawn to a sense of transcendence and theological creativity within the walls of the library. Libraries serve students with a wide variety of needs. For some students, library spaces are inherently conducive to spiritual connection and formation. Some students here at Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS) can be found praying silently on the couches or by the windows or aloud in group-study spaces to re-center themselves in the midst of exhausting work. Some students are guided and formed by the content of the books they read, or the papers they write within the library. At least one student, upon finding that the PTS library had the entire *Patrologia Graeca Cursus Completus* in print, spent several hours there connecting with the Divine by pulling volumes off the shelf at random and just reading for the joy of reading. But many students do not naturally see the connections between the work they do in the library and their calling, or between their academic work and their formation. How can libraries participate in spiritual formation for these students?

I would like to begin with a practical answer, concerning how the PTS library has already participated actively in spiritual formation. First, PTS is blessed to have a new library (opened May 2013) whose space was intentionally designed by Rayford Law ("New Library Building Welcomes Scholars, Pastors, and the Community," *Library Place* 1, Fall 2013, library.ptsem.edu/newsletter/new-library-building). In the words of the Reverend Jan Ammon (2020), the minster of PTS's chapel, the library "creates the space for beautiful things to happen." It is a space full of light, with wide open windows and atriums, grounded in the seminary's vision to, as Caryl Chambers recorded for posterity in his notes from the tours Law gave,

> provide a library to the world. With that in mind, [Law] sought to create the sense of being in the world when one is in the building. This inspired the design of the large bay or oriel windows that project beyond the surface of the exterior walls, placing anyone occupying a bay window space "outside" the building. Then, to allow the world "in," transparency was important so that those outside could witness what is taking place inside. Mr. Law stressed again and again that the intent was to break down the barriers between the world of the scholar and the world outside. (Chambers 2015, 1)

The oriel windows, rough-hewn sandstone walls, tower, colonnade, entrance arch, all hold great symbolism, and the building is designed to be inviting: "from every angle, the building, as well as its colonnade, should pull one inside along a natural path" (Chambers 2015, 3). The tower, for example, according to Law,

> is physical, as it literally guides one's eyes to the heavens and cosmos and thus, it is symbolic of the expansive character of its purpose, but supportively, it is also a beacon, a traditional marker of safety and enlightenment. As part of the Library's outreach and reaffirming presence in the Princeton community, we also saw the Tower, amongst the many others in the vicinity, as a building element and a welcoming icon, signifying its role in the common fellowship of scholarly pursuits. (Chambers 2015, 3)

Not every theological library is blessed with such a beautiful, intentionally designed, light-filled space (and certainly PTS's previous libraries were not). However, that does not remove the potential for theological libraries as sacred spaces that can intentionally be used for more holistic approaches to learning and knowledge, in line with the seminary's mission.[1]

What brings the formation to life is the use of the space, as in PTS's "Wandering Worship." The concept of "Wandering Worship" was born as a thoughtful response to the fact that, even prior to COVID-19, seminary life was disrupted because many buildings on campus are under construction,

leaving classes and residences shifted. The Rev. Ammon and the chapel office wondered what might happen "if worship was invited to move," too, and so a set of services was designed for spaces other than the chapel (Ammon 2020). The inaugural service was held Wednesday, September 18, 2019 in the library. The experience was profound for the chapel office, for the library staff, and for many students. People who would not normally attend worship gathered together and took time to intentionally pray for the library itself and the people who serve there. It was possible to name out loud and to bless the activities that happen there and to frame the work of the library staff as ministry. This sense was only amplified when an Ash Wednesday service was held in the library this past February.

The circumstances of Ash Wednesday's move to the library were different: the chapel had flooded over winter break, so worship became permanently wandering. The chapel office asked to use the library because of the size of the atrium. For the Rev. Ammon (2020), "having these worship services in the library really helped to name that formational piece." In fact, having worship in the library a second time was like finding herself at a crossroads: people from disparate parts of the community were drawn together. At seminary, theological education is central to everything, and liturgy, worship, community, spiritual practices, paper-writing, and exam-taking all participate in that wider goal. Frequently, though, it is easy to lose sight of that, so bringing worship into the library gave clarity to that connection between formation and academic work, and added an invitational piece to worship. Students who frequently feel lost in the academic whirlwind stopped, sang, and blessed the space. The library was recognized as sacred space in a way that was both profoundly disruptive to its normal function and in harmony with its design, and the activities of study and research were specifically honored as works of formation.

THE UNIQUE POSITION OF THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIES

A satisfying analysis of why theological education and formation are so divorced is far beyond the scope of this paper. That given, a few remarks on the issue are necessary to better elucidate how libraries are uniquely endowed to challenge that post-Enlightenment division of the mind from the heart.

First, this divide is not inevitable. Historically, libraries and schools have linked love of learning and spiritual formation. That very connection is explored thoroughly in Jean Leclercq's (1982) *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, which studies the relationship between *les lettres* (literature, philology, etc.) and monastic culture/theology in 12th- and 13th-century Europe. In that monastic culture, "love itself is knowledge: the more one loves, the more one knows" (208). Quite the opposite of the grueling and bleak picture that many people in theological education paint today, education "was not a screen between the soul and its God, but rather it was transcended" (143). Study was the way into love, rather than a block to that love, and that shaped monastic theology and monastic practice both. For monks, "in the monastery, the *lectio divina*, which begins with grammar, terminates in compunction, in desire for heaven" (72). The role of grammar in that process "is to create in him an urgent need for total beauty," which came together with eschatology's role, which was to "indicate the direction in which to look for its fulfillment" (260). Knowledge, even things as mundane as paradigms, was seen as essential because even "elegant style" was homage rendered to God (258). Education could not be separated from spiritual effort.

Libraries were central to that effort. Libraries provided monks with access to that learning they so desperately needed to fuel and to quench their desire for the Divine. Scripture, works of the Fathers, works of pre-Christian Greco-Roman writers, and all other sorts of "scientific" knowledge were necessary to cultivate and use an "attention full of curiosity" (20).

Now, students of today are not premodern European monks, nor should we try to be—and the libraries of today do not hold the same place as a medieval monastic *bibliotheca*. Both learning and love and education and formation can be linked, and theological libraries can actively participate in that, as they have in the past, but in a new way adapted to the modern world. Already, there is extensive discussion about the changing/expanding role of academic libraries in a more diverse, digital age (e.g., Fallon and Breen 2012; Hisle 2005, 10). Academic libraries are rediscovering the possibilities of libraries as communal spaces (Gayton 2008). Can theological libraries adapt to intentionally use their space resist the separation of knowledge from love, and to participate in spiritual formation?

As I said above, the exact causes of this separation are beyond the scope of this paper, but one possible contributing factor is "disengaged reason," which first, according to Charles Taylor's (1989) *Sources of the Self*, comes to fruition in Descartes, who takes an Augustinian emphasis on inwardness and redefines it to situate the source of morality within the self (143). Descartes famously said "I can have no knowledge of what is outside me except by means of the ideas I have within me," which is a fundamental rejection of self-revealing reality (144). Reality is constructed by the individual, and this causes a strikingly different separation of the mind from the body than had previously existed. In order to know anything "we have to objectify the world, including our own bodies, and that means to come and see them mechanistically and functionally, in the same way that an uninvolved external observer would" (145). We have to disengage ourselves from our experiences to really know anything. Cartesian dualism "no longer admits that the bodily can be a sort of medium in which the spiritual can appear" (146).

This is in sharp contrast to the monastic understanding of knowledge and love as irrevocably intertwined. Instead, "the Cartesian option is to see rationality, or the power of thought, as a capacity we have to construct orders which meet the standards demanded by knowledge" (147). The self is effectively buffered from not only the experience of other selves but from our own self, as well.

While most of us do not go around actively thinking about this, we in the West are heirs to this post-Enlightenment limitation on knowledge, which is particularly keenly felt in theological education. Students enter, filled with love and desire for service, and find that education demands that they disengage from that love in order to know. As I have mentioned above, many sources and even branches of theology itself (for example, constructive theology in the Christian tradition) are trying to reclaim lived experience as a legitimate source of knowing and spirituality as an embodied experience, but the organization of schools (and Western society) is still built around dividing knowledge from love and education from formation.

This distancing of knowledge and learning from the rest of life, particularly from feelings such as compassion, is particularly alien in theological education and has certainly contributed to that sense of the seminary as a cemetery. Bo Karen Lee (2019, 55), in her chapter of *The Soul of Higher Education*, shares that "as a scholar, I have wrestled with the pressing task of bringing compassion explicitly into my academic discourse—and also with stewarding our shared academic work to increase compassion in the world." She also notes that "compassion and academic rigor often seemed at odds with each other," which is particularly problematic and disorienting in spaces where stu-

dents are pursuing theological education. While it is impossible for modern people to replicate the experience of 12th-century monks, is it possible that academic compassion is a path towards resisting that divide? Lee's concern, in her work, is for how the academic environment can be a space that nurtures and encourages compassion in the classroom, but bringing that discussion into the library is equally legitimate. How can the library be a space that encourages and fosters compassion through its provision of resources, to feed the mind and the soul together? Lee suggests the use of contemplative techniques in the classroom. Even more than classrooms, libraries, with their combination of quiet and group-oriented spaces, are equipped to create an environment of contemplation and thoughtful engagement with knowledge. Ajit Pyati (2019) has already argued that the public library is a contemplative space and has a role to play in cultivating the inner lives of patrons, well beyond information access and public sphere functions. How much more, then, are these opportunities open to the theological library?

CONCLUSIONS

Theological libraries have a unique opportunity to address that divide and to participate in formation because they are wells of resistance to too much emphasis on inwardness. They carry works that demonstrate that the mind-body divide, which so much of Western epistemology takes for granted, is neither inevitable nor the only viable way to be in the world. Further, because libraries are so strongly associated with academic work, whenever libraries are able to host events or use their spaces in ways that connect knowledge to ministry and community, the relegation of knowledge to something separate from normal life is inherently challenged. As academic libraries in general adapt and rediscover their identity as communal spaces, theological libraries have the particular opportunity to reclaim the library as a space of spiritual formation.

I think that is why PTS's "Wandering Worship" was so profoundly meaningful to the students, staff, and guests present. It did feel like a crossroads that connected theological education with the vocation of all present and named the library as a space where formative activity happens. Because libraries are inherently academically formative spaces, it is a particularly meaningful space to foster an active connection between that academic labor and students' callings, be it academia or ministry or some other activity. Many people miss the opportunity to really see the relationship between their daily activities and their spiritual development, which falls back into that Cartesian divide. Libraries are spaces people take for granted as academic. What would happen if that space were claimed as something formative, and if that academic work were named as something both quotidian and sanctified by the library itself?

It is noon on Ash Wednesday and the library is full of light and filled with the voices of hundreds of students, staff, and guests singing. It is midnight on a frigid December night, and a student is blearily trying to finish her last paper in the florescent-lit bowels of the library basement. A guest is combing the library's commentary collection, trying desperately to understand the meaning of a *hapax legomenon* before their sermon on Sunday. A church history professor is wishing his Syriac was not so rusty because he cannot for the life of him figure out what a stray feminine pronominal suffix could possibly be referring to (and misinterpreting it could collapse his whole argument!). All of these are acts of love and devotion and contributions to a religious community as much as they are, in many ways, mundane acts.

By the nature of their collections and the populations they serve, theological libraries have already crossed the divide between "secular" and "sacred." Some libraries, like PTS's, have the advantage of being able to invite a sense of transcendence with their architecture and the opportunity to hold services in their spaces. But all theological libraries have the opportunity to own their space, the work of librarians there, and the activities of library users as in some way sacred—to name the activity within their walls as ministry and service. In that way, theological libraries, whose ministry is the conservation, accumulation, and organization of knowledge, have both a particular opportunity to help students connect their knowledge to compassion and a particularly high calling as spaces of spiritual formation.

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ENDNOTES

1 As the ACRL says in its *Academic Library Impact Report*, libraries have a unique call to balance the pressure of ranking and the demands of prestige while they "also must conversely strive to address the unique needs of specific stakeholders and surrounding communities." See Lynn Silipigni Connaway et al., "Academic Library Impact: Improving Practice and Essential Areas to Research" (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017), 3.

Theologians and Philosophers Using Social Media: Advice, Tips, and Testimonials

Oord, Thomas Jay, ed. *Theologians and Philosophers Using Social Media: Advice, Tips, and Testimonials*, 2017. 523 pp. $25.00 ISBN: 9780578193991.

Thomas Jay Oord begins his introduction to *Theologians & Philosophers* with several musings on Marshall McLuhan's often-quoted phrase, "the media is the message." While Oord believes McLuhan overstates the matter, he does believe that our media, in this case social media, significantly shape the content. In a few words, "media matters" (1). *Theologians and Philosophers* attempts to offer readers a glimpse into how the changing media landscape affects the mode of communication in the titular academic fields.

Remaining true to its title, *Theologians & Philosophers* is composed of ninety-one testimonials of scholars in the fields of religion and philosophy. Each contributor loosely follows a set of guiding questions, posed by Oord, which ask the scholars to reflect on why they entered the public arena of social media, what projects have emerged due uniquely to the nature of social media platforms, and tips for other theologians and philosophers wanting increase their social media presence. In Oord's words, "the essays lean more toward a 'How to' than toward a 'why so'" (18).

Topics covered in the book that the title does not anticipate are blog sites (just about every contributor references their stint with WordPress), open access journals through open source platforms like PubPub (48–62) and massive open online courses as explored by Dr. Christine Helmer (344–52). In these latter two chapters, the authors detail the origins of their projects, their learning process with the technology, and their reflections on the project's impact and what they would do differently if given the chance to do the project over. These two chapters are highly recommended for those interested in communication technologies outside of social media. Moreover, their project-oriented testimonials accentuate their contributions among the banal majority of contributions, which essentially say many of the same things about WordPress, Facebook, and social media practices (more on this below).

There is neither a stated nor an apparent organizational logic behind the arrangement of contributions, short of the alphabetical listing by last name. While the general disciplinary field of each contributor is listed by each name, this designation does not seem to influence the contribution; there are few who attempt to offer musings on social media from the perspective of a "systematic theologian," for example. This makes the addition of each contributor's field seem superfluous.

Reflections by scholars from the fields of "theology & media" and "religion & science" explore the relationship between social media, doctrine, and religious practice. For example, David Dault's chapter reflects on the connection between how people treat others in person and how interpersonal dynamics play out in virtual spaces (188–90). Dault portrays social media as a space which can not only amplify our unsavory characteristics, but can also help us practice social virtues to embody in person as well—virtue ethics through social media!

Within another generation, most students of religion and philosophy will be "digital natives." Religious Studies and Philosophy must explore the implications of these digital horizons. Indeed, the global pivot to telecommuting for everything in 2020 to the vital role of social media platforms in racial justice movements betray humanity's dependence upon communication technologies. Theo-

retically speaking, the greatest strength of the book is providing readers an inside view of how academics in these fields navigate these virtual spaces.

Now, theoretical is the operative word. As alluded to, a majority of the contributions blend together: the author recounts the advent of certain social media platforms and other digital technologies, explains why she or he hones in on one or two platforms (usually Facebook and Twitter), and offers advice on using social media, which more or less pertains to knowing your audience, striving for a healthy balance between your time on social media and your time with people, and being yourself. While hearing a renowned theologian, like Miguel de la Torre, share his social media strategy was exciting, overall the book becomes less engaging as the same formula is followed by scholar after scholar.

This is not to say, however, that all contributions read the same. There are some contributors whose testimonials stand out. Along with the authors already mentioned, there were other contributors whose testimonies were particularly insightful and unique. For example, Bradly Shavit Artson (Rabbinic Studies) not only offers a brief glimpse into the required work of successfully managing multiple platforms to promote and communicate content, but also reflects on what interactions with others on these platforms reveal about this generation's spiritual longings. By engaging new audiences, Artson recognizes that modern communities still desire wisdom that affirms human flourishing. These new audiences have pushed Artson to reimagine what his faith tradition has had to say to such audiences. To grow his audience, he did not have to generate new content, but rather discern how to communicate that wisdom and perspective in a meaningful way for interested audiences. Artson's story with social media goes beyond the rote "know your audience" or "popularize your scholarship" syllogisms in most chapters.

To be fair, the differences between memorable contributors like Artson and the more uniform ones reflects the need for a more intentional prompt (or perhaps more collaboration between editor and contributor). Encouraging the writers to root their chapters in a current project or narrative might have yielded more insightful testimonies. In Oord's words, perhaps a little more "why so" would have increased the value of this book.

On a related note, it would be a mistake to blame the overall uniform nature of this book on the editorial guidelines. The *who* matters just as much as the *what*. In academic fields notorious for being primarily composed of cis-straight, White men, more work needs to be done if one wishes to collect a diverse range of voices in these fields. There is no apparent intentionality shown in this area by the editor. As Grace Ji-Sun Kim, along with other female-identified contributors in their chapters, notes, there "are not many diverse voices in the mainstream religion, politics, society. We must have diverse voices… social media provides such a platform for various voices to be heard and it is good that I can share my voice through such a platform" (434). Unsurprisingly, every contributor coming from a disenfranchised background tells similar stories about finding a voice in hegemonic spaces. As social media experts like Zenyep Tufecki remind us, social media platforms give voices to the voiceless and create momentum for grassroots movements. If another version of *Theologians & Philosophers* were to be published, hopefully it would include more voices who speak to the way social media is changing the social landscape of academic Religion and Philosophy.

Despite its shortcomings, this book still carries value for certain demographics of readers. Scholars in Religious Studies and Philosophy new to the world of social media will find many of these chapters insightful. Moreover, well-established scholars who publish frequently might find helpful tips on using social media to promote their work. In addition to wanting writers with scholarly ex-

pertise, publishers are becoming significantly more interested in a (prospective) author's social media following. As Alexis James Waggoner notes, "nowadays publishers, event bookers, and others who may look to hire me are interested in follower numbers—for good or ill" (629). Even veteran scholars, like Amos Yong, are encouraged by their publishers to increase social media activity (656).

Related to scholarly interest, there are several authors whose reflections might prove helpful for instructors looking to incorporate social media tools into their pedagogy. Some of these authors, like Darren Iammarino, present examples from their classes where integrating social media or other digital communication technologies in the classroom has improved content retention, increased class engagement, and raised students' grades. In the pertinent chapters, authors describe various ways of incorporating these tools in their teaching style: Facebook groups for student discussions, YouTube recordings for asynchronous lectures, blog sites for student reflection (instead of the comments section of their course management system) and more.

A book like *Theologians and Philosophers* is a risky venture. The complexity and functionality of social media and other tools are constantly evolving on social and technical levels. In another decade, these reflections and testimonials may seem archaic to the next generation of theologians and philosophers, indeed all scholars. However, as Oord's quotation of McLaughlin reminds us, our deep, human questions about media never age. Each generation's insight will offer some guidance on the perennial dynamic of the "media and the message." This book is not the end-all-be-all of this conversation, but it does get the conversation going in a few promising directions.

Christopher Lopez
Public Services Assistant & Religious Studies Liaison
UCLA
Los Angeles, CA

Oxford Handbook of Mary

Maunder, Chris, ed. *Oxford Handbook of Mary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 736 pp. $150.00. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780198792550. Also available electronically as a part of *Oxford Handbooks Online.* DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198792550.001.0001.

The *Oxford Handbook of Mary* is a collection of forty-two essays which examine the effect Mary—a Jewish woman from an insignificant village within Roman-controlled Palestine—has had on believers throughout history via multiple lenses. The numerous authors of the essays have varied backgrounds, both scholastically and theologically. Many are Christians from across various denominations and roles. This enhances the unity and diversity regarding the role of Mary in living out a Christian faith. Muslim and Jewish authors are likewise represented, allowing the reader to note how Mary is seen in those religions. Anthropologists, artists, historians, and theologians in combination shine different lights upon Mary's identity. The editor arranged the essays into five sections that approximate the development of Christianity.

The first portion presents Mary from the Apostolic Age through the Great Schism. In this section, essays focus on Mary in the Christian Gospels and apocryphal writings, interpretations of these by numerous Church Fathers, and dogmatic presentations developed during the early Church Councils (431 and before). An essay dedicated to the role of Mary in Islam is also presented in this first part, as Islam came into being before the Great Schism of 1054.

The second section of essays in the *Oxford Handbook of Mary* focuses on how Mary is presented in the eastern Churches, picking up a division in Christianity that occurred as a result of the Great Schism of 1054. The focus of these contributions is the liturgical life of the Byzantine churches aligned with Constantinople, with special focus on Greek and Russian Orthodox understandings of Mary. These liturgical contributions include various hymns and homilies from significant figures in Greek Orthodoxy like Proklos, a fifth-century archbishop of Constantinople; Romanos the Melodist; and the monk and Marian visionary Gregorios Palamas. From the Russian tradition is a commentary on the works of Pyotr Bessanov, a nineteenth-century hymnist. The final essays in this section examine Marian devotion in the Eastern Church during our times, focusing on Finland, the eastern Mediterranean, Romania, and Russia.

After this exploration of the East, the journey moves to western Europe and is spread over the next two essay groups. The first set examines the life of Mary in the Roman Church from the Great Schism until the Reformation; the second from the Reformation to the current age. In certain essays, some authors examine a particular strand of Marian thought throughout both eras; other essayists focus solely on one timeframe. In these clusters, some writers have contributed works on Mary in the fine arts of the Western Churches. Others focus on the development of Marian doctrine in Anglicanism, Lutheranism, and Roman Catholicism. Further writers explore what Marian devotion looks like in Asia and the Americas, both within culture and within different religious traditions. Certain essays reflect on Marian devotion and how this helped and hindered women's growth.

In the final collection of essays, a major shift occurs in that the writers focus on Mary as less a theological figure and more a cultural icon. Authors examine Mary as a cultural icon by examining pilgrimages, miracles, and apparitions. The initial essays discuss the role of pilgrimages to Marian shrines with miracles, either healing or mystical. This theme of pilgrimage continues through ex-

amining this devotion in light of multi-faith programs and migration as pilgrimage. Later essays in this group examine the modern-day phenomenon of Marian apparitions and how the messages are misappropriated to accommodate certain agendas that can be seen as fringe if not outright schismatic. While seemingly disparate, the articles on pilgrimages and apparitions are connected by the reactions of numerous devotees to Mary.

Certain weaknesses do appear in this volume. First, no chapter attempts to place Mary within her context as a poor Jewish woman and mother in Roman-controlled Palestine. An essay on this topic would have been an excellent starting point for this volume. Another weakness is that no exploration occurs in who Mary is in the Oriental Churches, whose history reaches to the Apostolic Age. This gap is disconcerting because, while these Christians may not be as well-known as their European counterparts, their contributions would have allowed exposure to how Mary is seen by these believers. The editor rightfully acknowledges that a single tome cannot adequately serve as a thorough book on Mary in the introduction, and these weaknesses reflect this statement.

Overall, this collection of essays is worthwhile for understanding how Mary has been viewed throughout time and place, as well as in a myriad of religious traditions and academic fields. Its transdisciplinary nature effectively moves Marian studies outside the sole realm of theologians and asks scholars in different fields to assist in sharing how Mary affects others. Creating new connections among diverse disciplines is a needed trend in academia, and the *Oxford Handbook of Mary* does this well. This book is highly recommended as an item that demonstrates current scholarship regarding trends in Marian studies.

Br. Andrew J. Kosmowski, SM
Librarian
North American Center for Marianist Studies
Dayton, OH

Religion Around John Donne

Eckhardt, Joshua. *Religion Around John Donne*. Religion Around. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019. 208 pp. $49.95. ISBN: 9780271083377.

The Religion Around series from Penn State University Press explores the religious contexts surrounding writers, artists, and other "cultural icons." The work of some of the figures treated in this series, such as Virginia Woolf and Billie Holiday, contains little that is overtly religious. Not so for this recent entry on John Donne. Through his devotional poetry and his sermons, Donne's reputation is built on religion. In fact, Joshua Eckhardt, Associate Professor of English at Virginia Commonwealth University, points out that the religious themes and contexts of Donne's work have been exhaustively charted by literary and religious historians. Why then, is another volume on religion and John Donne called for, and how should it be approached?

Eckhardt's unique approach makes his book particularly relevant to librarians, archivists, and manuscript historians. Eckhardt aims to read Donne's work by surveying "the religion around Donne in the manuscript collections, composite volumes, private libraries, and bookshops of some of the people responsible for reproducing and preserving his works" (2). Rather than looking broadly at the religious culture of early modern England or giving a close reading of Donne's writing in light of other important religious texts of the day, Eckhardt "zooms in on the religion right around Donne in his library, and in his hands" (3). This gives the project a very concrete shape as Eckhardt seeks out the "religion that has been actually, physically 'around' Donne and his writing" (4). In this way, Eckhardt's approach is quite literal, and it makes his book of particular interest to those of us who spend our lives developing and preserving collections of religious literature.

By honing in on personal collections and examining how readers treated Donne's work in relation to those collections, *Religion Around John Donne* functions as a focused history of certain early modern religious libraries. By looking closely at the way Donne's books were handled in various personal libraries and bookshops, Eckhardt engages in "proximate" or "material intertextuality" (3). Instead of a standard intertextuality that would examine Donne's treatment of religious texts in his own writing, we see how Donne himself collected and arranged physical copies of the writings of other English religious figures. We also see how collectors distributed Donne's books and manuscripts in their own libraries. While Donne's poems are filled with the language of heaven, hell, and individual souls, Eckhardt's book "makes no claims about heaven or souls, but it has a lot to say about actual library books" (12).

The Bridgewater collection, currently held at the Huntington Library in California, is the first collection that Eckhardt explores. This family library includes items collected by Thomas Egerton, a contemporary of Donne, and developed by his son and daughter-in-law, John and Frances Bridgewater. This collection includes manuscript copies of several of Donne's poems and some of his printed sermons. Surveying the shelves of this family library places Donne amidst the religious controversies of his day in a way that a 17th century reader would have experienced them. The other books and manuscripts in the library provide context that enlivens and complicates Donne's work, also showing certain blind spots in Donne's own perspective on English religion. For example, Donne sends Egerton poems that show concern for persecution of Catholic recusants, and Egerton's papers show his own involvement with the prosecution of recusants. However, those same papers detail prosecution of nonconformists, a group that Donne did not have in view.

While Eckhardt looks to collections curated by others to interpret Donne's religious writing, he examines these collections through a grid provided by Donne himself. In an interlude between chapters one and two, Eckhardt highlights the three types of religious characters that Donne describes in his poem "Satyre III." There is "Mirreus," the Roman Catholic, "Crawle," the Calvinist, and "Graius," the conforming Church of England parishioner. Eckhardt uses these types to explain how the Bridgewater library and the subsequent collections discussed give a picture of the range of early modern English religion. As he puts it, "The characters that Donne devised to see the religion around him… help us see the same in the rest of this book" (54). While Donne himself critiques each of the three types described in the poem, he can look more or less like Mirreus, Crawle, or Graius—depending on the viewpoints represented in the books that surround his own.

Other collections explored include Donne's own personal collection, the books sold alongside Donne's in several London bookshops of the day, and the personal holdings of Donne's biographer, Izaak Walton. Eckhardt's approach also brings Donne into conversation with some less-than-obvious partners. He crosses the Atlantic in the library of the Mather family, indicating some of the ways that readings of Donne influenced the developing religious culture of colonial America through a figure like Cotton Mather. One important feature of *Religion Around John Donne* is its demonstration of the essential nature of archival work and the preservation of personal libraries as collections, not just as individual volumes. This is particularly evident in the manuscript copies of Donne's poems from which Eckhardt works. Trying to follow along with some of the poems in my Everyman's Library edition of *The Complete English Poems* is tricky but informative. There is significant disparity between the texts. Some of Donne's poems in the Bridgewater library were transcribed from original manuscripts and, as Eckhardt points out, errors in transcription can indicate something about the theological assumptions of the day—or at least of the individual doing the transcribing. These nuances only fully come to light when these unique collections are considered as a whole.

Eckhardt's discussion of some of the mistakes made in early editions of Donne's published poetry illustrates another way that his literal approach to the religion surrounding Donne offers insight into the history of Donne scholarship. Specifically, the second edition of Donne's work features an important mistake: "the inclusion… of a defiantly Catholic poem that Donne could not possibly have written" (93). The poem, written by Elizabethan Catholic Henry Constable, was often included in manuscript collections alongside Donne's. It quickly became so associated with Donne that it was mistakenly included in early editions of his poems. Through examining this error of attribution, Eckhardt shows how varied and unsystematic methods of manuscript composition created a context where misattribution became possible. In this case, the religion around Donne gave a warped and inaccurate view of Donne's poetry and thought. The poem in question served to highlight passages in other poems that could be interpreted as sympathetic to Catholicism. It made Donne appear more Catholic than he was. Eckhardt demonstrates how collection practices and the physical history of manuscripts can either warp or clarify our collective memory of religious figures.

Though his focus is on the material culture surrounding Donne's work, Eckhardt's approach actually makes a significant, if backdoor, contribution to the task of interpreting early modern literature. Through examining specific practices of collecting, annotating, and organizing books and manuscripts in this period, he draws out nuances of the religious views of those who valued and preserved these materials. By offering a focused history of particular early modern personal libraries, Eckhardt demonstrates how the curation and evolution of collections function to interpret the

work of the authors and the views of the collectors. Book and manuscript collections do not only preserve the religious culture of previous periods; they also serve as texts to be interpreted.

As library collections develop and librarians make important and difficult decisions about building our collections, providing diverse materials in varied formats, and strive to make those collections accessible and functional, it is essential to remember that these collections are not simply deposits of information. The act of providing literary materials, and the means through which we provide them, have an interpretive function. As theological librarians, we influence the way that our patrons access, understand, and think about religion. The ways that we choose to collect and preserve religious literature influence the development of our various traditions. These are not new issues for libraries and archives, but Eckhardt's illustrations from early modern collections add historical depth and specificity to these considerations.

Other features of the book that deserve mention are Eckhardt's discussions of Donne's marginalia and Donne's collection of *Sammelbände*, which were "composite volumes made of multiple slender books bound together" (59). Eckhardt describes one *Sammelband* as a "mega-book," or "physical database" (16). He discusses various *Sammelbände* found through the various collections dealt with in the book, and they serve as the perfect example of Eckhardt's larger project. By showing which books Donne and various collectors chose to bind together into larger volumes, we get concrete examples of the religion that surrounded Donne.

Andrew C. Stout
Associate Librarian for Public Services
Covenant Theological Seminary
St. Louis, MO

Believing in Bits: Digital Media and the Supernatural

Natale, Simone and D. W. Pasulka, eds. 2020. Believing in Bits: Digital Media and the Supernatural. New York: Oxford University Press. 264 pp. $35.00. Paperback. ISBN: 9780190949990.

In the NBC television series *Parks and Recreation*, two characters show what we might call the extremes of the reception of technology's place in the everyday human life. On one end is the curmudgeonly department director Ron Swanson, a staunch libertarian and immensely private person. After receiving a personalized ad while shopping online for a model airplane, he calls in his assistant, April, to explain how such an invasion of privacy occurred. While explaining cookies and the personalized ads they inform, she tells a gobsmacked Ron to put his home address into Google Earth if he really wants to see the extent of the invasion of privacy, which he does to his horror. The scene cuts to Ron carrying the computer and monitor outside and throwing them into the dumpster with much aggression. At the other end is the entrepreneurial Tom Haverford. In a different episode, Tom's propensity for using his phone while driving ends in a car accident. A judge rules that Tom must refrain from using any screens for one week. Tom cannot navigate his short commute from home to work without a GPS, creates a disappointing cork board Pinterest page, observes a coworker using a computer with a handheld mirror, constructs a paper iPhone, and finally laments to Ron, "Life without screens is pointless." Later, after failing his digital detox and again crashing a vehicle, he tells Ron that he is so fixed on his digital life because "a lot of the stuff in my real life isn't going that great. So I'd rather play [an online game] than think about that."

April and Ron's conversation demonstrates the language many use to describe digital interactions. It remembers, creates, and learns, underscoring the separation between human programmer and machine that makes us believe the machine actually knows us or reads our minds. Tom's addiction reveals how others construct digital identities to project a desired reality or escape from one's "real" life. In religious studies language, digital media is taboo for Ron and a totem for Tom; Ron must avoid the digital at all costs, while Tom structures his life around the digital. *Believing in Bits: Digital Media and the Supernatural*, edited by Simone Natale and D. W. Pasulka, explores the spectrum of digital media and the religious. The central category informing this conversation is belief, and the unifying assertion of the book is "that religious belief and practices are inextricably linked to the functioning of digital media" (3).

This argument is worked out in three parts. "Archaeologies of the Digital Supernatural" shows how contemporary applications of digital media are rooted in the language of spirituality in the past. A person who wonders how digital products and platforms from Amazon, Google, and other developers read her mind interprets the phenomena through an imaginary informed by nineteenth-century psychic studies. Victorian mindreading has provided a metaphor utilized by the fields of cybernetics, programming, and artificial intelligence. This metaphor makes computer technology appear magical and supernatural. Another Victorian movement, spiritualism, is relevant to contemporary media and literary history because its nomenclature considers how technology intersects with human consciousness and mortality. As humanity creates and uses new technology, spiritualism offers language useful for both endorsing and criticizing the technology as either a mode of immortality or a paragon of human annihilation. It is also useful for assessing new media modes in contrast

with their antecedents, such as the loss of sounds in digital media compared with the phonograph. This archaeology exposes the importance of belief in assessing technology.

Part two, "Believing in Digital Worlds," considers the function of belief in four examples: digital gaming, Safety Kitty on Instagram, Karma memes, and Disciples of the New Dawn (DOTND). Digital gaming shows the potential of the medium in evaluating belief because of the unique experience gaming offers. The rules governing digital games, both in terms of player ability and computer actions, introduce a balance of power that gaming explores in profound ways, though the game itself ultimately has the most power. Belief in the rules and world of the game makes the immersive gaming experience possible. Thus digital gaming presents *religio*—"the subjective disposition to believe" (74), belief itself, and the experience of transcendence. Belief in magic underlies the use of Safety Kitty on Instagram. These memes function like a digital trinket to protect users from chain posts of harmful or grotesque images, while also signaling danger for those who do not participate in the chain. Belief in the power of #safetykitty forms a community of users who propagate #safetykitty and perform the rituals associated with it. Karma memes offer mass interpretation of a complex religious teaching that reduces it to mere retribution. Karma, in these instances, is meted out by users as they interpret good or harm that comes to particular people. This belief in a co-opted Karma gives users the power to determine how actions shape outcomes, though this belief is almost always deterministic. DOTND offers users a digital performative space that mirrors the religious by providing ritual, community, identity, and authority. On the other hand, it offers opponents a space to identify what is *not* religion in their critiques of the actions and purpose of DOTND. Though DOTND is, by all measures, a fake religion, belief in its positive or negative messages makes it real in the minds of participants and opponents.

The final part, "*Entre Nous*: Spiritual Relationships Between Technology and Humans," explores the boundaries of the human and the computer through telepathy, tulpa communities, revelation and secrecy in UFO communities, virtual reality, and algorithms. Digital advancements that incorporate physiological phenomena like eye tracking or facial expressions reveal the possibility of alternative modes of communication. Online communities that co-opt the Buddhist idea of tulpas create non-corporeal, autonomous entities within themselves who provide companionship. The internet is the space where these tulpamancers describe their tulpas and acknowledge their own identities as plural beings. This tulpamancy introduces positive internal plurality that challenges the stigma of mental illnesses manifesting in plurality that are almost always diagnosed as harmful. Ufology offers a rich ground to complicate simple notions of belief. These communities circulate government secrets through digital means and thrive not in the proving or disproving of alien UFOs, but in the labyrinths of secrecy extended by these so-called revelations. Digital repositories allow ufologists to collect these secrets and distribute them. In other words, the digital world allows ufologists to produce UFOs. Digital repositories also provide spaces for augmented and virtual reality devices to mediate immersive religious experiences like digital pilgrimages. In addition to these possibilities, the study of algorithms through the lens of animism and magic shows the hermeneutics used in human-algorithm interaction and reveals the potential of religious discourse to elucidate the digital world.

There are some weaknesses in this book that undermine its otherwise instructive nature. One problematic feature is its loose interpretations of religion, worship, ritual, spirituality, supernatural, the sacred, etc. For instance, the chapter on Safety Kitty likens the use of the hashtag as religious ritual and its community of followers as worshipers. These correlations seem overstated, especially

since worship goes undefined and the use of ritual is murky in its scope. The chapter on DOTND is the most problematic essay. A stated aim is to problematize defining religion. Yet, this aim is explored at the expense of coherence. One notable moment is when the author describes the DOTND in the language of postcolonial theory. Using Homi Bhabha to evaluate the hybridity of DOTND on the digital borderlands is a confusing, albeit original, take (132). However, applying postcolonial theory to an anonymous group of internet trolls who antagonize for antagonism's sake (127) is nonsensical. Without fail, the chapters most interested in problematizing definitions spend so much space in theoretical grounding and/or are so full of jargon that they are incoherent and unconvincing.

Perhaps problematizing the definition of religion, explicitly or implicitly, is the point of the book, in which case, mission accomplished. Perhaps the taxonomies provided by academic religious studies do not adequately consider the religiosity behind human interaction with digital media. Does muddying the waters constitute a contribution to the field? *Believing in Bits* is indeed a quirky book, but this quirkiness is a welcome intrusion into religious studies. Though some attempts at muddying the waters—such as those listed above—miss the mark, other essays demonstrate the value of digital media studies as a fresh source of interlocutors for scholars and students of religion. The essays on Victorian spiritualists and their discursive contributions to common language of digital media are both fascinating and convincing. The highlight of the book is the essay on digital gaming. It is a medium that so frequently intersects with religion and is beginning to receive scholarly attention. The essay's discussion on the nature of belief in the act of playing games is a welcome contribution to that scholarship.

As to its usefulness, it may be best read in bits (no pun intended) and pieces. Graduate students in religious and media studies will find several chapters useful depending of the focus of their research. Historians of religion will appreciate part one for its evaluation of Victorian spirituality. Theological librarians should be aware of its features and recommend it especially for those studying the nature of belief.

Alex Gunter Parrish
Information Services Librarian
Moody Bible Institute
Chicago, IL

Digital Humanities and Buddhism: An Introduction

Veidlinger, Daniel, ed. *Digital Humanities and Buddhism: An Introduction*. Boston: De Gruyter, 2019. 234 pp. $29.99. ISBN: 9783110518368.

The first volume in the series Introductions to Digital Humanities – Religion, *Digital Humanities and Buddhism* is an essay collection created for the purpose of tackling the various ways that Buddhologists can and have accessed resources in a digital environment, how they are created, and the methods by which they are used. While the back cover of the book clearly states that the audience for this text is scholars at all levels interested in the use of technology in the study of Buddhism, it is important to clarify this statement. Scholars on all level will find something in this volume to take away and use; the essays, however, vary widely in their necessity for understanding the technologies used, and a depth of knowledge of Buddhism is essential for much of it to make sense beyond a computational understanding.

Beyond the two introductory essays, which, in themselves, offer an extensive set of information on the variety of digital spaces one can engage in the study of Buddhism, this collection is broken into three major themes: theory and methodology, conservation and archiving, and digital document analysis. Carefully constructed and arranged, in most cases the essays follow one another in a logical progression of knowledge. However, that does not always mean that the required background knowledge of the field remains consistent and, in some cases, the reader still might choose to pass by essays that range in the highly technical areas or, alternatively, focus their study in technical specifics.

The two essays contained in theory and methodology could not be more different. The first essay, written by the volume editor, requires some level of advanced knowledge of computational linguistics to be understandable, analyzing term frequency within the Buddhist corpus through the utilization of different methodologies. In contrast, the second is a case study using a traditional methodology applied in a digital environment. Specifically, it is an ethnographic study of Zen Buddhist communities in the environment of Second Life. This particular essay requires little background knowledge in Buddhism, digital humanities, or even ethnography, but is still an informative and interesting read.

The essays in the section on conservation and archiving all provide similar, useful information on the history of digital preservation and conservation of Buddhist texts in their original languages. The essays are separated by the languages of the Buddhist texts' origins: Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Thai/Lao, and Chinese/Japanese/Korean. These essays will be of interest to anyone focusing on digital archives regardless of the field. What makes these essays of greatest use to Buddhologists is the extensive information on the variety of digital sources created and still available.

The three essays of the final section are devoted to digital analysis of Buddhist documents. Similar to the ethnographic study in an earlier section, these essays show a more practical application of particular systems and methods, rather taking a theoretical and historical stance. Each focuses on a different lens. The first essay utilizes a particular set of Chinese digital resources to build a geospatial map of history. The second uses a purely computational analysis, contrasting terminology without meaning by searching by syllable rather than word within Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese texts. The final essay considers the Tibetan canon through the methodology of phylogenetics. The

author analyzes and compares different versions of the Kangyur in an effort to trace how the text itself evolved over time, thus painting a picture of how and why texts differ across tradition.

In the end, what the reader is left with is an excellent academic work that captures the broad array of what the digital humanities can and has to offer in the study of Buddhism. Is it an essential read or essential to a library collection? This answer to both is not so straightforward. For a researcher interested in the intersection of digital humanities and religion, it is an excellent source and a worthwhile read. For those working in the field of Buddhist Studies, however, it is a mixed bag. The appendix of digital resources alone is worth keeping this on the shelf for the modern researcher. The essays can offer history and some level of guidance when using the resources described, but most would not be something a researcher in Buddhism would return to in order to peruse again and again for insight. That being said, this collection is a useful tool due to its identification of where to find resources in the digital environment and the insights it provides about the differing manners said resources can be manipulated to extract data.

Alexis Nicole Weiss
Reference and Instruction Librarian for Theology
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, CA