Call for Papers

The Joy of Information

A Library Trends Special Issue

Guest Editors

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Joy is a pleasant and often quite intense emotion which usually occurs within a safe and secure environment and is experienced bodily as a warm glow which emerges from the center of the body and moves upward and outward. The expansive feeling of joy is accompanied by a corresponding broadening of perception, a powerful sense of connection to others, a profound feeling of being rooted in the present moment, a sense of existential freedom, and/or the belief that the world is nurturing, life-affirming, and benevolent.


This special issue of Library Trends features writings that explore the relationship between information and joy. Embracing the definition of joy above, we hold that information, in its myriad forms (Bates, 2006), is implicated in this “quite intense emotion” whether as a harbinger, trigger, carrier, dimension, or document of joy. In the spirit of a positive information science (Kari & Hartel, 2007), the forthcoming collection brings together bright and uplifting views of information to contrast with critical or problem-oriented perspectives that color our literature in grayscale.

Submissions may focus upon joy, broadly construed, and its intersection with information history, theory, methodology, technology, education, or practice. By design, the special issue will showcase work that may fall outside the comfort zone of our core research journals. One
objective is to establish a virtual meeting place for today’s most innovative, artful, and precocious information scholars and professionals and to have their outlying individual voices assembled into a chorus. Another objective of this anthology is to mark the regions and borders of a new research frontier. Rather than favoring interdisciplinary representations, we want contributions rooted unabashedly in the heart of library and information science—which can be traced to the ideas of Jesse Shera, Suzanne Briet, and Paul Otlet.

Forays into the crossroads of information and joy have employed varying terminology and diverse conceptualizations, yet attention has been increasing steadily of late. Kuhlthau (1989) established an affective dimension to information behaviour and affirmed students’ feelings of exuberance and confidence during information seeking. Bates’ (1999) comedic rift on the study of information, *Nevertheless*, is an assuredly playful and even joyful monument in our literature. Kari & Hartel (2007) raised a call to action for information scholarship related to pleasurable and profound experiences of life in which information processes often seem different. Fulton (2009) has posited that a pleasure principle underlies leisure-based information behaviour; Latham (2009) has characterized numinous or transcendent experiences with museum objects; and Tinto and Ruthven (2016) have defined happy information. Statements on serious leisure (Hartel, 2005); contemplation (Latham & Gorichanaz, 2019); personally meaningful activities (Gorichanaz, 2019); and fun (Ocepek, 2018) fall in the same neighborhood as joy. Meanwhile, methodological advances such as document phenomenology (Gorichanaz & Latham, 2016) and arts-informed methods (Hartel, 2014) provide new tools that are well-suited to explore the coupling of information and joy. These wide-ranging but energetically concordant ideas form points of departure for the special issue, which may include the themes below:

- The theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote, “Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God.” Hence we welcome submissions related to information phenomena within religious or spiritual contexts, potentially extending Kari’s (2007) framework of spiritual information.
- The definition above contends that joy is “experienced bodily as a warm glow...”. Thereby, studies of embodied or corporeal information phenomena are appropriate, especially as pertaining to experiences known to be joyful, such as music, dance, sex, leisure, or nature.
- Laughter is a universal way to express joy. So, papers that examine the information dimension of humor, play, and creativity are on-point. Following in the footsteps of Bates’ *Nevertheless*, spoofs and other unconventional genres will be considered, providing they make substantive and scholarly contributions to the theme.
- Mother Teresa said, “Where there is love, there is joy.” It follows that information research into loving contexts, such as the family or friendship, would fortify this special issue, given that such realms are overlooked in LIS scholarship.
In contrast with most social scientific scholarship, which eschews personal revelations, we proclaim this anthology as a place for intimate firsthand accounts – ideally joyful! – of library and information science. If your work in this discipline or profession brings you joy, please tell us about it. To that end, storytelling, autoethnographic, or autobiographical pieces are invited. On a more practical note, reports of joyful information resources, systems, or programs within libraries or other information institutions fit within the remit of this special issue.

Our tongue-in-cheek title, *The Joy of Information*, gestures to *The Joy of Cooking* (1936) and *The Joy of Sex* (1972). These best-selling reference works brought a new clarity and vitality to their topics, outlined fundamentals, and spoke in accessible and conversational prose; such winning qualities are appreciated in all submissions. Papers that analyze the informational features of *The Joy of...* genre would be deemed relevant to the collection, too.

**Important Dates**

- August 1, 2020 - Full paper submission deadline
- September to December 2020 - Reviewing by Editorial Board
- January 15, 2021 - Acceptances announced to authors
- July 1, 2021 - Revised manuscripts submitted to co-editors
- November 1, 2021 - Final manuscripts sent to *Library Trends*

**Submission Instructions**

A full paper (*not* abstract) submission is required by August 1, 2020. Papers submitted to the special issue must be original, and must not be under consideration for publication elsewhere. Articles of various lengths will be accepted, but generally no more than 7,000 words. For more information, see the *Library Trends* author instructions at [https://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/library-trends/author-instructions](https://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/library-trends/author-instructions).

**Link to the Call at Library Trends**

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**References**


