

## Editorial

*Alison Brettle and Diane Pennington*

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### Alison Brettle

As Chair of LIRG I am delighted to welcome you to this special issue of Library and Information Research. Although I am now an established academic, this was never part of my game plan, and I began my career as an information specialist, supporting research projects linked to evidence based practice in health and social care. My boss at the time made me very much part of his research team, encouraged me to question and examine my practice as an information specialist and write up my findings. Over time I became more confident as a researcher and passionate about evidence based library and information practice. I began to encourage other health librarians to do the same through a range of projects and helping develop the evidence base for clinical librarians (Brettle et al., 2011; Brettle, Maden, & Payne, 2016) and on the impact of health libraries more generally (Ayres et al., 2018; NHS Health Education England, 2020) as part of the Knowledge for Healthcare (KfH) Quality and Impact Workstream. Throughout my work with health librarians I have always been amazed at their enthusiasm for innovation and their support of research. I was therefore delighted to combine my work with

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health librarians with my role as Chair of LIRG and co-facilitate the workshops that have led to this special issue.

**Diane Pennington**

Like Alison, I am a former library practitioner who became an academic over time. My path was somewhat different, as all of our paths are. I started thinking about doing a PhD and becoming a researcher when I was still in my master's course based on the encouragement of my master's supervisor. I was afraid that if I went straight through both degrees, however, I would miss the opportunity to work in the field in which I wanted to teach and research. I completed my PhD part-time while I worked as a systems librarian at the University of Texas at Arlington in America. I soon wondered whether our OPAC and catalogue records could be improved if we talked with some students and watched how they use the OPAC. While I faced institutional hesitation at first (after all, what librarian would possibly need to do an ethics application?) the project went well, and I used the results to improve our catalogue. I was enamoured with conducting and applying research from there.

Unfortunately, we do not use evidence-based practice in our field as much as we should. In a recent article I co-authored with a now-former student (Kerr & Rasmussen Pennington, 2018), not a single library in Scotland that had implemented a mobile app asked their users what they wanted in the app before or during implementation. We can do better than this, all information professionals are educators and researchers in some way! I hope this special issue inspires others to start using research in practice as these authors in this issue have shown we can do so well.

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