Editorial

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Assembling and bringing an issue of *Library Resources and Technical Services (LRTS)* to publication and your mailbox is a lengthy process. This issue (v. 52, no. 2) has been in progress for several months. I am preparing to send the papers for this issue to our publisher, ALA Production Services, at the end of December. The three-month production process means that this issue should reach you in April. During these three months, I review the copyedited manuscripts once and the page proofs twice. Authors also receive the page proofs for their papers and have a short window in which they can send corrections to me to incorporate.

Authors often ask when their paper will be published. The simple answer is that an author could add three to six months to the date the paper is accepted, and this will vary depending on when a paper is accepted and the publication schedule. For example, I could accept a paper December 30, the day after I mail the content for the April issue. That paper would not appear until the July issue—a nearly six-month lag.

Another step on the path to publication is the paper review. All papers submitted to *LRTS* go through a double-blind review process, which means the reviewers do not know the name of the author or authors, and authors do not know the names of the individuals (usually two) who review their papers. Reviewers evaluate the paper according to several criteria. First is whether the paper is relevant to the aims and scope of *LRTS*. The purpose of *LRTS* is to support the theoretical, intellectual, practical, and scholarly aspects of the profession of collection management and development, acquisitions, cataloging and classification, preservation and reformatting, and continuing resources. In addition, reviewers consider documentation of sources and background information (appropriate sources should be referenced, and they should be cited according to the *LRTS* format), research methods employed (if this is a research paper), analysis of findings or results, and presentation (clarity, format, style, etc.). If a paper reports a research project or a practical solution to a problem, the reviewers look for a clear statement of the problem and clarity with which the findings or results are reported. *LRTS* publishes papers that report on library-specific initiatives, but these must be broadly applicable and of interest and value to other librarians and libraries.

After the reviewers send their assessment of the paper to me, I compile their comments into a letter that is sent to the author, often accompanied by the edited manuscript. Reviewers can make one of four recommendations: accept, accept pending revision, reject, or reject while encouraging the author to make substantial revisions and resubmit for a second double-blind review. Our goal is to get a response to the author within six to eight weeks. This allows time for the reviewers to complete their work and for me to transcribe comments onto the manuscript and write a letter to the author or authors. This letter is often lengthy because our goal is to give authors everything they need to prepare the best possible paper—one that meets the high standards of *LRTS* and conforms to *LRTS* style and format requirements.

Nearly every paper requires some revision, and the time this takes depends on the authors. Authors who turn around their papers quickly reduce the time

to publication. If a paper goes through the double-blind review process again, this adds another six to eight weeks to the process. The *LRTS* editorial board voted in July 2008 to reduce the length of time in which their reviews must be completed, and I am working to reduce the time I spend assembling the response to the author. If authors carefully read and follow the instructions for authors available on the *LRTS* website (www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alcts/resources/lrts), examine recent issues, consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* (15th ed.), and check for typographical and grammatical errors, they can save themselves and me effort and time in the review and revision process. One improvement already implemented is the ability for authors to use the automated endnote feature in word processing software. This makes managing references much easier.

I am hoping that the new online manuscript submission and peer review system will be in place by the time you read this. Until that happens, the system I use to manage submissions and the review process is paper-based and manual, excluding receiving and sending papers as e-mail attachments. This means I track submissions, reviewers and reviews, decisions, and assembly of issues through various unlinked files—a tedious and complex process. A link to the new system, Editorial Manager from Aries, will be found on the *LRTS* website. We expect this system to simplify and expedite the process of bringing authors' papers to publication. Please check the site and begin using the online system as soon as it is available.