LGBTQ+ LIBRARIANSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

ADVANCES IN LIBRARIANSHIP

Editors:

LGBTQ+ LIBRARIANSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY: EMERGING DIRECTIONS OF ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DIVERSE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENTS

EDITED BY

BHARAT MEHRA

ISOQAR certified
Management System,
awarded to Emerald
for adherence to
Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.

ISOQAR
REGISTERED
Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CONTENTS

PART III
RECOGNIZING THE NEEDS OF
EMERGING COMMUNITIES

PART IV
CREATING COMMUNITIES
COMING TOGETHER

PART V
LOOKING AHEAD: EMERGING QUESTIONS

VOLUME EDITOR BIOGRAPHY

In January 2019, **Bharat Mehra** joined the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama as Professor and EBSCO Endowed Chair in Social Justice. From January 2005 to December 2018, he was a faculty member in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee. His research focuses on diversity and social justice in library and information science (LIS) and community informatics or the use of information and communication technologies to empower minority and underserved populations to make meaningful changes in their everyday lives. He has applied action research to further engaged scholarship and community engagement while collaborating with racial/ethnic groups, international diaspora, sexual minorities, rural communities, low-income families, small businesses, and others, to represent their experiences and perspectives in the design of community-based information systems and services. In the position of the EBSCO Endowed Chair in Social Justice he is very excited to have the opportunity to collaboratively shape the LIS area of the college-wide doctoral program through a concentration in social justice research.

This page intentionally left blank

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Jeanie Austin is a librarian with San Francisco Public Library's Jail & Reentry Services program. Their publications largely concern the provision of library services to people held in state custody and the gendered, racialized, and ability-centric political and social systems that surround this work. Jeanie earned their PhD in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Donna Braquet is a subject specialist of Biological Sciences and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies at the University Libraries, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and holds the rank of Professor. She has published several articles and book chapters on LGBTQ+ issues in higher education and librarianship. She established the first LGBTQ+ campus center at a public university in Tennessee and served as Director until the state legislature defunded the office and removed her from her position. She has resumed her full-time position as a Librarian and is currently working to create an archive of East Tennessee LGBTQ+ history called, *Voices Out Loud.*

Melinda F. Brown is Librarian for Inclusion Initiatives and Librarian for Women's and Gender Studies, Vanderbilt University, received their B.S. in Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin – Madison and their M.S.L.S. at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. They have been in the library field 23 of the 27 years they've been involved in bisexual+ activism. They were invited to the Bisexual Community Briefing at the White House in 2016 and most recently were a founder of the organization, Bi Tennessee. Their research interests include academic achievement and health/social disparities for bisexual/pansexual+ college students.

Eric Sancho-Brú is a graduate in Literary Studies at the University of Barcelona. His final dissertation was titled *Trans Voices: Creation of Identities and Occupation of the Space in the Collective Imaginary Through Literature*. He created and is responsible for the library collection "Trans Identities and Gender" at the Nou Barris Library in Barcelona. He is the co-author of an article in *Item: librarianship and documentation magazine, nº66* of the COBDC. He is a trans activist for Trans*forma la Salut.

Kai Ewing (pronouns: they/them/their) currently works as the Reserves Processing Assistant and Evening Circulation Supervisor at the R.B. House Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). They received their Master's in Library Science from the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) at UNC-CH in 2015. Kai previously served as the alumni representative on the 2017–2018 SILS Diversity Committee and currently serves on the 2018–2019 UNC-CH Library Diversity and Education Committee. They were chosen

as the first recipient of the UNC-CH LGBTQ Center Faculty & Staff Advocacy Award in May 2018 for their work advocating for LGBTQ+ populations and issues on campus and in the community. Additionally, Kai received distinction at graduation as a SILS Diversity Advocate Certificate Recipient. Prior to their contributions to this anthology, Kai published their Master's paper, *LGBTQ center resource library access: A case study,* in the Carolina Digital Repository (2015). They can often be found giving library presentations around transgender needs in libraries – most recently at the 2018 Joyner Paraprofessional Conference (*Supporting & Advocating for Trans & Gender-Variant People in Your Library*) and in a Fall 2018 SILS course on YA Resources at UNC-CH (*Gender Identity in the Library*). Kai's research interests include building, promoting, and maintaining LGBTQ+ collections; naming and resisting subtle/overt classification and subject heading biases; and the library's role in advocating for services to all. See more about Kai at https://www.kai-ewing.com.

Gabriel Gomez earned his PhD in Radio, Television, and Film from Northwestern University in 1996. Since 1998, he has been a full-time faculty member at Chicago State University, an institution committed to social justice located on Chicago's south side, where he is currently a Full Professor in the Information Studies Department. His numerous publications and presentations reflect research interests that span library science, technology in education, community service, and big data. He has received numerous awards and grants including two Fulbright Awards to India, that bracket more than a decade of interaction in that country through teaching, publishing, and numerous conferences. Throughout this time, he has also remained politically active with a number of groups dedicated to activism and non-violence. He is a union representative for Local 4100 of the University Professionals of Illinois, a union of the American Federation of Teachers, and also serves his local community as Co-executive Director of the Legacy Project Education Initiative, and as a board member for its parent organization, the Legacy Project.

LGBTQ Center of Durham is committed to improving the quality of life for LGBTQ+ people in and around Durham through programming, resources, and networks of support; by acting as a hub for Durham's LGBTQ+ community; by sharing and affirming all LGBTQ+ lived experiences; and by educating our neighbors in order to enhance understanding of and sensitivity to LGBTQ+ issues. Since the Center opened, one of the most anticipated programs has been the LGBTQ Center of Durham Library. The library room at the Center has been designed to accommodate a diverse collection of LGBTQ+ focused books, magazines, CDs, DVDs, and zines to serve the local community. They have a small collection of materials on the shelves right now that users are welcome to peruse and read in-house. Once the library is fully up and running, community members will be able to check out materials. For more information about the Center, please visit https://www.lgbtqcenterofdurham.org/.

Deborah L. Lilton is the Librarian for English, African American and Diaspora Studies, and Theatre at the Jean and Alexander Heard Library at Vanderbilt

University. Deborah is one of the founding members of Bi Tennessee, and a Tennessee Prison Book Project volunteer. A grateful Spectrum Scholar and ARL Institute to Recruit a Diverse Workforce participant who received her M.L.I.S. from University of Alabama as an Institute of Museum and Library Services fellow in 2006, her varied research interests include psychological contracts of minority employees, prisoners' right-to-read, and critical librarianship. She also has a M.A. in English from Rutgers University where she studied composition pedagogy.

Jessa Lingel is an Assistant Professor at the Annenberg School for Communication and core Faculty in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania. She received her PhD in Communication and Information from Rutgers University. She has an MLIS from Pratt Institute and an MA in gender studies from New York University. Her research interests include information inequalities and technological distributions of power. Her first book, *Digital countercultures and the struggle for community,* was published in 2017 by MIT Press.

Paul McIntyre is a graduate in English Literature from the University of Surrey. He is an activist who grew up in Apartheid South Africa and is the father of a trans daughter. He is interested in how multiple intersections including race, ethnicity, class and gender intersect especially with family and education. He is currently involved in three projects, one on trans families, another on changing education and the last a communication programme between prisoners and students.

Martin Morris joined the Library at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, in 2012, where he currently holds the rank of Associate Librarian. He serves as a health sciences liaison to the Faculty of Dentistry, in the indigenous health program, and to various other departments. He was formerly the hospital librarian at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, and, before moving to Canada from the United Kingdom in 2011, a public librarian in Hertfordshire, England, where he focused on reference work. His current principal research interest is the improvement of library services to traditionally underserved communities, particularly LGBTQ+ communities, and with a strong focus on health sciences librarianship. He has also published on knowledge synthesis, and the spread of innovations in library information settings. Since 2017, he has been a member of the Health and Biosciences Section Committee of the International Federation of Library Associations, and of the Indigenous Matters Committee of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations.

Tony Nguyen is the Executive Director for the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Southeastern/Atlantic Region in the Health Sciences and Human Services Library at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, where he oversees the Regional Medical Library program. He has published articles on informational resources and outreach to LGBTQ+ populations and has taught Safe Space classes and the course "Improving the Health Safety and Well-being of LGBT Populations" throughout the region. He is an active member of the Medical

Library Association (MLA) serving as co-convener of the LGBTQ Health Sciences Librarians Special Interest Group (2015–2017) and Secretary/Treasurer of the Research Section (2016–2018), MLA Leadership Education Curriculum Committee, and MLA News Technology Column Editor since 2017. He is currently Chair of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the MLA.

Ian Bermúdez Raventos graduated in English Philology at the University of Barcelona and has a Master's degree in Translation from Rovira i Virgili University. He has translated Daniel Goleman's *Ecoeducación* and part of *Políticas Trans: Una antología de textos desde los estudios trans norteamericanos* (selected essays from The Transgender Studies Readers). He has published a volume of poetry, *Ser h(u)ome*∞(à)*, and a graphic novel, *TRANsito*. He created and is running a workshop with Eider Elizegi, *DesenCaixa el gènere (Unboxing// unpacking Gender)*, to create awareness of the wealth of gender diversity.

Gregg A. Stevens is Senior Assistant Librarian and Health Sciences Librarian at Stony Brook University in Stony Brook, New York. He is the liaison to the university's School of Nursing. He previously worked as a Health Sciences Librarian at Mercer University in Atlanta and at Tallahassee Community College. He is an active member of the Medical Library Association (MLA) and its New York/New Jersey Chapter, and he has been a Convener of MLA's LGBTQ Health Sciences Librarians Special Interest Group (2017–2019). He was selected as a participant in MLA's Rising Star program in 2016–2017. His research interests include librarian participation in healthcare education and the reduction of LGBTQ+ health disparities through outreach and health information.

Emily Vardell is an Assistant Professor at the School of Library and Information Management at Emporia State University. She teaches classes on the foundations of library and information science, research methods, reference, consumer health, and health sciences librarianship. Her research interests are in the area of health information behavior with a focus on health insurance literacy and how people make health insurance decisions. Dr Vardell completed her PhD in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Prior to returning for her doctoral studies, Emily was the Director for Reference and Education at the Louis Calder Medical Library at the University of Miami. Emily earned her Masters of Library Science from Texas Woman's University in 2007 as a distance education student while working as a Fulbright Scholar in Austria. She began her medical librarian career as a National Library of Medicine Associate Fellow. Emily is an active member of the Medical Library Association (MLA) and has served as Chair of the MLA Public Health/ Health Administration Section, Chair of the MLA Professional Recruitment and Retention Committee, and Section Council Liaison to the National Program Committee for the 2017 annual conference where she was responsible for organizing all the paper presentations. She is the Online Updates Column Editor for *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, where she reviews a health-related database each quarter.

John Vincent has worked in the public sector since the 1960s, primarily for Hertfordshire, Lambeth, and Enfield public library services. In 1997, he was invited to become part of the team that produced the United Kingdom's first review of public libraries and social exclusion (from which The Network, which he now coordinates, originated). John runs courses and lectures, writes, produces regular newsletters and ebulletins, and lobbies for greater awareness of the role that libraries, archives, museums, and the cultural and heritage sector play in contributing to social justice. He is particularly interested in supporting the work that libraries do with young people in care, with LGBTQ+ people, and with "new arrivals" to the UK. In September 2010, the book he co-wrote with John Pateman, *Public Libraries and Social Justice*, was published by Ashgate (now Routledge); and, in January 2014, he published *LGBT People and the UK Cultural Sector …* (also by Ashgate, now Routledge). In 2018, John's report to Arts Council England was published, *Libraries Welcome Everyone: Six Stories of Diversity and Inclusion from Libraries in England*. In 2014, John was given a CILIP CDEG Special Diversity Award, and, in September 2014, he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of CILIP.

Rachel Wexelbaum is Collection Management Librarian and Associate Professor at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. She teaches faculty and students about open access and teaches courses on social media and LGBTIQ+ Studies to undergraduates. Currently, she is pursuing her doctorate in higher education administration at St. Cloud State University, where she is studying the impact of academic libraries on LGBTQ+ undergraduates. Rachel is the Editor of *Queers Online: LGBT Digital Practices in Libraries, Archives, and Museums* (Library Juice Press, 2015), and has written several articles and book chapters dealing with emerging library resources and services for LGBTIQ+ populations. Currently, Rachel serves on the IFLA LGBTIQ+ Special Interest Group, collaborating on a survey to develop international guidelines for LGBTQ+ library resources and services. She is also the Twitter administrator for Wikimedia LGBT+, a global thematic user group devoted to promotion, creation, and improvement of LGBT+ content on Wikipedia and providing support for LGBTQ+ Wikipedians.

Julie Ann Winkelstein, MLIS, PhD, is a librarian, writer, activist and teacher. She is the author of several book chapters, as well as journal articles, and she was a contributing author and primary editor of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) "Guidelines for Library Services to People Experiencing Homelessness." She was also a founding member of the IFLA LGBTQ Special Interest Group. Julie has presented internationally on the topic of libraries and LGBTQ+ youth homelessness and, through an IMLS grant based on her award-winning dissertation, provided trainings and workshops for library staff on this topic. She worked for 20 years as a public librarian, in a range of roles, from jail and prison librarian to family literacy coordinator to young adult and children's librarian. Julie takes an activist approach to librarianship, and her research, writing, and organizing work focus on the relationships between public libraries and social justice, including their roles in addressing homelessness, health disparities, and other social inequities. Julie believes social justice is the backbone of responsive and responsible library services.

This page intentionally left blank

PREFACE

Libraries have always been queer. This is true in a conceptual sense, where philosophers like Foucault (1986) have claimed libraries as heterotopic spaces, meaning portals into other worlds, sites of multiplicity, serendipity, and otherness. But it is also true in a concrete and grounded sense, with libraries as spaces where queer and questioning youth have explored their identities and desires, and where groups on the margins find sites of community and connection. That an enduring image of libraries in mainstream American narratives emphasizes quiet solitude or solid Middle Class normativity only demonstrates the radical capacity of libraries, which are able to support heteronormative visions of the good life while simultaneously offering a lifeline to people on the margins.

This book is also a lifeline. *LGBTQ+ Librarianship in the 21st Century* collects the scholarship and knowledge of librarians, academics, and activists, with the goal of providing a common vocabulary and a set of strategies to aid the work of queer librarians and patrons. Another goal of the essays gathered here is providing a form of solidarity and support, a multi-faceted message of encouragement and enthusiasm for the work that libraries and librarians can do and are doing in the everyday work of librarianship. Contributors to this volume offer accounts of successes and challenges of providing resources for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer+ (LGBTQ+) health and for supporting archival projects, of contributing to online resources like Wikipedia and developing best practices to support marginalized sexual identities. In the pieces gathered here, authors grapple with the responsibilities of working in libraries as social institutions, and also celebrate the opportunities for radical kinship between librarians, texts, technologies, and patrons.

The stakes are high. Around the world, extremist ideologies are becoming louder and receiving more attention. Hard-fought victories for queer visibility and political agency are at the risk of being walked back, and sanctuaries for queer organizing and education are being threatened, politically, culturally, and economically. In her book *Kindred,* Octavia E. Butler noted, "Repressive societies always seemed to understand the danger of 'wrong' ideas." In the twenty-first century, libraries must continue to protect the knowledges, histories, and gathering points of the oppressed and marginalized. In the twenty-first century, libraries must fight to stay queer.

THE SOCIAL ROLE OF THE LIBRARY

From an economic standpoint, the public library as a social institution is unusual. As one librarian from the United Kingdom wryly noted,

> If someone suggested the idea of public libraries now, they'd be considered insane. If you said you were going to take a little bit of money from every taxpayer, buy a whole load of books and music and games, stick them on a shelf and tell everyone, "These are yours to borrow and all you've got to do is bring them back," they'd be laughed out of government.

> (Bathurst, 2011)

Capitalist societies have developed in ways that render libraries suspect and dangerous. The profit-making capacity of the library defies normative accounting. The profit of libraries lies in values allied with queerness: curiosity, community, and exploration. At the same time, academics, policy makers, and activists have increasingly signaled the alarm that libraries represent one of the few remaining public spaces, and are being asked to shoulder more and more social services, from children's programming to job services, digital literacy to ESL classes (see Mattern, 2014).

Although classic library literature has a tendency to categorize a library's ethical responsibility in terms of its collection (of books and media), this view narrows the radical capacity of the library. In addition to (and crucially, not instead of) asking whether a library is inclusive because it collects books that speak to marginalized experience, we must also (re)consider lending policies, classification schemes, and staffing demographics. As many of the essays in this collection illustrate, a more expansive view of library politics extends beyond collection development to include policies and programming. Put another way, inclusiveness means thinking about the materials we collect, as well as decisions about staffing, scheduling, and architecture. These are ambitious metrics, bringing challenges in professional development as well as budgeting. Libraries are already being asked to do more with less. But a discussion of queer politics in the library must start with understanding the wants and needs of patrons on the margins, which include but extend beyond the material on the shelves.

AN ACTIVIST AGENDA FOR QUEER LIBRARIANSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Stop me when this sounds familiar:

> So you're a librarian? Let me ask you something.

> I already know the question – who needs librarians when we have Google? Who needs libraries when we have ebooks?

When I was working as a librarian, this conversation happened to me many times, in many places. At cocktail parties, on the subway and even at border control as a customs officer was inspecting my passport. As frustrating as these questions are, they are also an opportunity to explain the necessity of libraries, the

ways that libraries are a vital home for parents with young children as well as the elderly, for those with a love of books, films, and comics as well as those searching for answers to sometimes subversive questions.

As I noted earlier, the library is one of the few, maybe the only, genuinely accessible public spaces for DIY education, community building, and civil discourse. All three of those factors can converge on issues of where technology fits into building a good life, particularly for those who experience forms of marginalization and discrimination on a daily basis. To close this preface and in the spirit of the energizing contributions in this collection, I want to make the case that digital literacy around privacy and surveillance is one of the key agenda items for supporting queer lives and politics.

Surveillance is a queer issue. There is a long history of antagonistic monitoring of queer people, whether as activists or simply in their everyday lives. Libraries have a proud history of defending their patrons' reading privacy, and LGBTQ+ librarianship in the twenty-first century must equip patrons with the tools to protect their privacy. Much of this work is already happening with librarians producing guides to feminist cybersecurity (Harrington-Johnson, 2015; Radical Reference, 2014) and leading workshops on privacy tools (Carpenter, 2015; Macrina & Glaser, 2014). Alongside classes that teach basic skills in office applications, librarians are increasingly programming workshops on how to manage online privacy in a world of corporate and government surveillance.

This work can go even further. For example, libraries can encourage their communities to be thoughtful about the "Internet of Things," which refers to a world of ubiquitous computing, where everyday objects are linked and talk to each other. Typical examples include a refrigerator that tells your phone when your food is expired, or an item of clothing that updates your doctor about your biometric data. Before the Internet of Things becomes more of a reality than it already is, librarians could do an incredible amount of awareness raising about the opportunities and obstacles of this shift. Programming around interconnectedness of devices! Kids programming on cyborgs! Positioning the library as a place where people can turn for questions of how technological change shapes their lives, making them sometimes better and sometimes worse, is one of the best and most vital resources a social institution can play in its community. At times, libraries have been quick to embrace new technologies such as 3D printing (Halsell, 2014) or drones (SD Library, 2018). But new technologies come along with politics that aren't always obvious at the outset, and can bring real challenges for maintaining privacy. Introducing patrons to new technologies has always been an important role in libraries, but these initiatives must come with a contingent commitment to addressing the ethical implications that come with innovation.

I'm not suggesting that libraries embrace an all-digital future and set aside their print collections. But when people ask questions about why librarians are necessary, they (still, somehow) imagine libraries as full of books and librarians as ladies wielding stamps and shushing people. I'm calling for conversations that imagine something radically different, and it shouldn't take that much imagination because we're already part way there.

As librarian and activist Jenna Freedman has argued, "The professional is political." I'm grateful to the editor and authors for sharing their commitments, experiences, and tactics in LGBTQ+ librarianship. The pages that follow offer advice, encouragements and a guide for radical action. While the stakes are high and the obstacles challenging, the work is also rewarding and vital. This collection makes an important intervention in conversations about librarianship, queerness, and service.

Jessa Lingel,
University of Pennsylvania, USA

REFERENCES

Bathurst, B. (2011). The secret life of libraries. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/may/01/the-secret-life-of-libraries. Accessed on October 22, 2011.

Butler, O. (2004). *Kindred*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Carpenter, Z. (2015). Librarians versus the NSA. *The Nation*. Retrieved from https://www.thenation.com/article/librarians-versus-nsa/

Foucault, M. (1986). Of other spaces. *Diacritics*, *16*(1), 22–27.

Halsell, L. (2014). 3D printing and libraries. *American Libraries Magazine*. Retrieved from https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/3d-printing-and-libraries/

Harrington-Johnson, H. (2015). Must read: The DIY guide to feminist cybersecurity. *Vice*. Retrieved from https://creators.vice.com/en_us/article/mgpxgy/must-read-the-diy-guide-to-feminist-cybersecurity

Macrina, A., & Glaser, A. (2014). Radical Librarianship: How ninja librarians are ensuring patrons' electronic privacy. *Boing Boing*. Retrieved from https://boingboing.net/2014/09/13/radical-librarianship-how-nin.html

Mattern, S. (2014). Library as infrastructure. *Places Journal*. Retrieved from https://placesjournal.org/article/library-as-infrastructure/?gclid=Cj0KEQjw0fOoBRDn88Pol8bqhN0BEiQARGVJKhzZvTd1MCh5HrD0gp6ebJZX4ySF_FCfty5XeCUrr4waAiBo8P8HAQ

Radical Reference. (2014) Reading guide for race and social justice. Retrieved from http://radicalreference.info/blogs/%5Buser-raw%5D/reading-guide-race-and-social-justice

SD Public Library. (2018). Library next: Coding with do it yourself drones. Retrieved from https://sandiego.librarymarket.com/library-next-coding-do-it-yourself-drones

PART I

EMERGING SCOPE

This page intentionally left blank

INTRODUCTION

Bharat Mehra

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning/queer (LGBTQ+) individuals experienced a long history of human rights denial and persecution around the world (Montague & McKeever, 2017). Nothing new, right? Shockingly, even in today's modern age, we continue to suffer hate-motivated trials, violence, ridicule, and discrimination owing to enveloping cultural/social norms of heterosexual hegemony, patriarchal taboos, heterosexism, and homophobia (Mehra et al., 2018). Are we surprised? Probably not! In a recent occurrence, on September 6, 2018, the Supreme Court of India unanimously dismantled a colonial legacy of one of the world's oldest bans on consensual gay sex, and ruled all the protections of the Constitution to LGBTQ+ people moving forward (Gettleman, Schultz, & Raj, 2018; Kidangoor, 2018). Reporting from the operative section of the court's verdict, Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra indicated that "Social morality cannot be used to violate the fundamental rights of even a single individual .... Constitutional morality cannot be martyred at the altar of social morality," (Sinha, 2018). It has taken the highest court of the world's second most populated country, with its long civilized history and self-proclaimed, righteous spiritual and religious tolerance, more than 70 years of freedom from imperialist rule, to awaken from its slumber toward this realization only now in the second decade of the twenty-first century. A joking commentary on the state of affairs if it was not so tragic.

In his speech *Tryst of Destiny*, the astute politician Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, noted to the Indian Constituent Assembly in The Parliament, on the eve of the country's independence on August 15, 1947:

> At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity ("*Great Speeches of the 20*th *Century*," 2010).

I guess LGBTQ+ people have not been considered part of this humanity for a long, long time. Obviously, from law formulation to shaping change in people's prejudiced behaviors and heterosexist attitudes is another story (Mehra, 2016). Not even a month had passed from the groundbreaking judgment when on September 27, 2018, the Allahabad High Court that has jurisdiction over the most populous state of Uttar Pradesh in India with its more than 200 million inhabitants, turned down a request for police security cover of protection sought by a gay couple from their parents' intimidations and threats (Pandey, 2018). The roots of heterosexism are long and deep. Indicative of probably a slow and tortuous journey, a potential for educators and librarians, among others, to play an important role to challenge centuries of dogma, patriarchy, stigma, and cultural brainwashing in the traditionalist country (Mehra & Hernandez, 2016).

This scenario, however, reflects a trend all around the world. Even closer home in the United States, though lately LGBTQ+ people have won the battle of marriage equality, yet, they face ongoing and constant threats of political and legal disempowerment as well as hateful rhetoric from right-wing religious factions and conservative vote bank constituencies (Irby, 2017; Montegary, 2018; Sethi, 2018). The reverberating LGBTQ+ implications of targeted political bombast, politics of threats, fake news, and social media attacks in the aftermath of the 2016 American presidential elections at the local, regional, national, and international levels in terms of challenging actualities and potentialities of damage do not look pretty (Byne, 2018; Cahill & Makadon, 2017).

Why do I use the word "shockingly" to capture this present-day moment of LGBTQ+ marginalization in today's society across every corner of the globe? Because, we assume that in our so-called enlightened cultures that our politicians and leaders do not hesitate to speak about in glorious terms, the reality that a segment of the population marked by their sexual orientations/gender identities has to constantly watch over their shoulders and "walk on eggshells" not knowing when their lives, their securities, and everything of who they are as human beings, can get threatened and taken away, is a phenomenon that is, indeed, shameful and shocking. Nothing for us human beings to be proud of, irrespective of the "growth" and "progress" that we have made. No other way to say it, in my "non-Western" English and all. Indeed, apt even today, from a different time and culture, are the last lines from Robert Frost's (1922) famous poem "*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*." We still have miles to go before we sleep.

Really.

Seems better days of the America of the nineteenth century, represented in the 44 years' union of *Charity and Sylvia* (Cleves, 2014), that provided a rare glimpse of an unexpectedly diverse society of the past, more compliant than the contemporary public might choose to imagine. Historically, trailblazers wearing their two hats as librarians, archivists, historians, and other information professionals, on the one hand, embracing their roles as advocates and activists in promoting change on behalf of LBGTQ+ people, on the other, have been few and far between. Sanford Berman, Ann Curry, Israel Fishman, Barbara Gittings, Cal Gough, Ellen Greenblatt, Steven Joyce, Yolanda Retter Vargas, and others, come to mind who have "carried the torch of liberty" in their attempts to get library

and information science (LIS) to open up its privileged doors of inclusivity and acknowledge the existence of the "LGBTQ+" from its margins. In the process, these beacons have significantly extended and mobilized library discourse and practice. And, they did indeed struggle in getting their voices heard, "shouting and screaming" and "doing a jump and dance," to finally receive some recognition of LGBTQ+ existence in their esteemed mainstream collegiate networks. A bow of gratitude to these LGBTQ+ information movers and shakers throughout history for their continued efforts in poking holes in our moralities and prejudices. We would not be here but for their courage and perseverance.

Only now, as a profession with our diversities and varieties of form in the delivery of information-related work, are we moving forward, cynically stated, thanks to the globally widespread climate of fear and repression of LGBTQ+ people (and others), coming out in the face of hostilities that have become so blatant due to the political directives emerging even from the highest office in the United States (Brown & Keller, 2018; Ng & Rumens, 2017). So, we are beginning to see in recent years of the twenty-first century, the progressive LIS professional embracing a more proactive role as a social justice advocate, venturing out of their institutional bastions of privilege and power to promote fairness, justice, equality, equity, and activism on behalf of LGBTQ+ people (Hill & McGrath, 2018; Lymn, 2015). The silver lining of the recent politicized pomposity of hate targeted at LGBTQ+ people (and others) has brought diversity and inclusion towards the center of attention in our short-term cultural memory span. This is reflected at least based on the ubiquitous "lip service" verbiage across institutions we are beginning to see. These are also gaining self-congratulatory representations in becoming part and parcel of our mainstream LIS professions that have historically tried to get by with their cursory and feeble past attention, however well-meaning their intentions (Hennessey, 2017). Unfortunate, in that we had to reach such a state of political siege for our consciousness in the mainstream LIS professions to even awaken to this need. Well, better late than never, I say.

As a result, there have been some passionate and strong convictions in the last few decades integrating LGBTQ+ to newly acknowledged and re-envisioned constructs and core beliefs in LIS related to diversity and inclusion, freedom of speech, information ethics and social justice, intellectual freedom, human rights advocacy, and human information behaviors, to name a few. We are also now observing more libraries and information agencies actively acknowledge, identify, represent, and integrate LGBTQ+ needs, wants, expectations, behaviors, and practices in the design and development of many of their programs, services, systems, resources, and collections, among other efforts, as compared to the isolated few of our historical past. This small collection provides a glimpse of some of the new kinds of alliances involving the LIS professional in community engagement that are getting forged and consolidated across all forms of individual, social, organizational, and institutional boundaries. It represents "out-of-the-box" collaborations, partnerships, and relationship-building with a variety of stakeholders to further support and inclusion of LGBTQ+ content, issues, concerns, and representations.

Additionally, LGBTQ+ is getting acknowledged in the core mission of mainstream librarianship surrounding the information creation–organization–management–dissemination processes that has got re-invented in traditional library settings (i.e., academic library, public library, school library, and special library – medical, corporate/business, law) with the integration of new technologies and social media, increased user involvement and user-centered design, and positive service responses to the community's changing demographic characteristics. The "LGBTQ" is also now emerging from the dark realms of "invisibility" in core librarianship as it has expanded in diverse non-traditional information environments including cultural heritage memory institutions (museums, archives, historical societies, and special collections), organizations in the public and private sectors, research centers and educational institutions, non-profit community agencies, and others. Interdisciplinary convergences of information studies (including librarianship) are helping us better incorporate LGBTQ+ elements as re-strengthened ties emerge to psychology and sociology, communication and public relations, advertising and journalism, computer science and software development, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, business and organizational management, education and public administration, among others. We will continue to witness cross-linkages, semantic mapping overlaps, and inclusion of the "LGBTQ+" as part of these vivacious conversations in the coming years.

This edited collection of just a few gems represents select newly emerging and exciting directions of thought and praxis, policy and education, case studies, and best practices in diverse information environments that are reflective of some changing social realities and cultural conditions of the twenty-first century. The work highlights how library professionals, information practitioners, educators, students, policy makers, managers and administrators, public officials, community activists, and others can develop and adopt innovative approaches to better represent and serve LGBTQ+ patrons/users/clients/customers (variously defined) via information-related work in diverse information settings.

As a contemporary collection on LGBTQ+ topics in diverse information environments, this book builds on past scholarly literature drawing upon theory, frameworks, concepts, practice models, best practices, and case studies in LIS and other disciplines. LGBTQ+ issues and concerns are briefly covered in relation to the kind of work currently engaged in the width and depth of the LIS professions, including LIS practice, research, management, and education. Insights from both the library science and information science traditions and information content from other disciplinary sources related to the LGBTQ+ (e.g., queer or LGBTQ+ studies, women's studies, social work/sociology, psychology, etc.) are touched upon in the reflective narratives on how we can continue toward enhancing more inclusiveness of content support delivery to effectively serve our LGBTQ+ patrons and user communities.

The purpose of this book is to present a collection that is current with the times in providing the LIS professional a top-tier model of excellence based on empirical knowledge and research relevant to the contemporary context. The term "LGBTQ+" in this text recognizes a fluidity that exists in the nature and representation of human sexuality, sexual orientations, gender, gender identities,

and other "non-conforming" behaviors, attractions, and intersecting dimensions of human experience and understanding. The "+" is a symbolic marker of the dynamic and ever-emerging nature and representations of sexuality in the psychosexual and psycho-behavioral aspects of the human experience. Select authors have used variants of the acronym to reflect nuanced aspects, especially in the international context. The connecting thread tying the collection in its definitional scope of the "LGBTQ+" represents a "non-heterosexual" reality of these constructs, internalized, externalized, or both. It challenges the stifling, hegemonic, patriarchal, chauvinistic, and related narrow characteristics that are associated with the term "heterosexual" that categorizes human feelings, thoughts, actions into a black box with the inclusion of the word "sex" and its allusion to only the physical aspects.

The content and coverage of *LGBTQ+ Librarianship* is rich in representing contemporary aspects of advocacy and community engagement across a variety of information settings. Each chapter is a prized jewel that underwent rigorous review and feedback was collected from at least two external peers who provided critical assessment of the content and constructive directions for strengthening the deliverable product. In some instances, based on reviewer's permission an excerpt of their evaluative critique is intentionally included to spotlight the value of the work. Thanks to our reviewer colleagues for their timely and attentive feedback that has only strengthened the collection. A special note of appreciation to the support team at the Advances of Librarianship Series and Paul Jaeger for recognizing the possible value of the topic and collection.

Specific themes emerged as important threads weaving through the different voices in the book. Readers will notice a few that connect the chapters together and logically string them as part of this collection in semantically and/or symbolically linking the content to the terms included in the title. Both "advocacy" and "community engagement" are action-oriented active nouns that go beyond the neutral passive bystander role that librarians and information researchers (among others) have traditionally been proud of. Hence, the inclusion of the chapters related to the twenty-first century, as compared to a bygone past and some of its outdated practices and values. Social justice and social equity form the spirit driving these narratives even though the authors might not explicitly use the words. "Emerging" captures the ongoing, dynamic nature and journey development progression representing Heidegger's always "being possible," a.k.a. the process of becoming, and connected to the nature of doing (Krell, 1977). Generating socially relevant outcomes via information-related activities is also intertwined with another significant thread across the works, namely, the development of a "deliverable" takeaway product for readers (Mehra, 2015). Examples such as a strategic action plan or a mapping schema illustrate this concrete deliverable in some chapters.

One collateral damage as a result of historical positivist paradigms in academic research and scholarly publication business has led to a step-brotherly treatment toward qualitative research that also lingers in preconceived notions toward community advocacy and community engagement (Mehra, Bishop, & Partee II, 2018). There are also many poorly written examples of qualitative advocacy efforts in LIS. An often cited reason we hear for marginal documentation has been the professional's immersion in the "doing" of information activities to

generate community impact. This might very well be a myth or the truth though an unfortunate consequence is seen in the suffering of the writing via formal publication channels that has been detrimental in a limited inclusion of such efforts to the body of world knowledge. As a result, an intentional thread across this collection has been for authors to strongly consider articulating their "methodology" to explain the systematic protocols followed to generate the findings and experiences presented in their narratives. In some instances, authors did not follow traditional "research methods." Yet, they inform readers about the systematic approach in data collection and data analysis they adopted to identify the contributions in their chapter. The agenda is that the chapter should not come across as based on a random anecdotal approach. In articulating and describing their strategy, authors, thus, add value to their contributions and address critiques of past work in this genre. Also, such a strategy might help others interested to pursue similar efforts.

Chapters are grouped into five sections. Fig. 1 visualizes the sections and their chapters to present a conceptualization of the content.

The first section of the book, "Emerging Scope," introduces the coverage and subject with a contribution by Bharat Mehra that highlights the interdisciplinary nature of understanding thoughts, feelings, and actions that are associated with the LGBTQ+. Donna Braquet provides a selective glossary of LGBTQ+ terms that an information professional should know in the twenty-first century as well as a glimpse of select scenarios and strategies and current web-based resources with brief annotations.
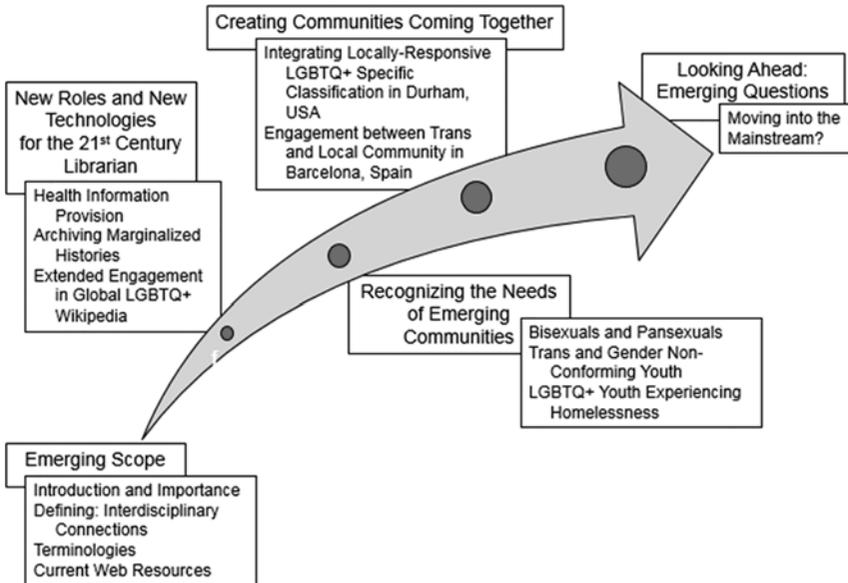

Fig. 1. Visualization of Book Sections and Their Chapters Representing a
Conceptualization of the Content.