# Publication Patterns of U.S. Academic Librarians and Libraries, 2018–2022, with Comparison to Previous Studies

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This study continues a series on publication patterns of refereed library and information science journal articles by United States academic librarians (USALs). Following previous studies conducted in 5-year increments starting in 1993, this study covers 52 journals from 2018 to 2022. The proportion of USAL-authored articles decreased despite an overall increase in USAL publications. Coauthorship and the percentage of USALs who publish three or more articles in 5 years increased. Large public research universities remain the most productive. The change in percentages of USAL and non-USAL articles in the studied journals points to differences in growth among journals. COVID-19 appeared to impede USAL productivity.

## Introduction

The field of library and information science (LIS) informs library practice. Faculty employed in LIS education are one group of contributors to the research field. Another group is academic library practitioners, often with faculty status, who apply the field's knowledge in their practice and contribute through their own scholarship. Practitioners offer a perspective unique from LIS educational faculty and information scientists, as they are more likely to address practical issues that directly impact the library setting and facilitate evidence-based decision-making. Thus, it is important to understand the extent to which both individual practitioners and their institutions contribute to the field and if or how these contributions may change.

The present study of publication patterns of United States academic librarians (USALs) is the fifth in a series conducted by researchers at the University of Illinois Chicago University Library. Each study in the series has covered five-year periods (Blecic et al., 2017; Weller et al., 1999; Wiberley et al., 2006, 2023). The present study continues the preceding studies by

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examining the next five-year span, 2018 to 2022. It covers all refereed journals from the preceding studies that are still being published (two have ceased) and adds two journals that meet the study criteria. Comparing the current findings with previous studies in this series, particularly the previous five years, provides a longitudinal perspective, while additional metrics allow further exploration of current trends.

This study addresses findings from previous iterations and explores additional areas, with the following research questions:

1. Is the proportion of USAL articles larger or smaller compared to previous years, particularly in the most recent previous iteration of the study (2013–2017)?
2. Has coauthorship by USALs continued to increase? Who are USAL collaborators?
3. What percentage of USALs met the productivity benchmark of three articles in five years?
4. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact productivity?
5. How have the journals covered by these studies changed over time?

## Literature Review

As the literature reviews in the preceding studies from this series have covered much of the literature relevant to USAL publication patterns, most of the literature reviewed in this study discusses the relevant literature of USAL publication patterns published since 2018. This includes literature exploring coauthorship, factors affecting the productivity of librarians, LIS journals in which librarians are most likely to publish, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on publishing productivity.

### *Productivity and Coauthorship of Librarians*

The research productivity of academic librarians has been studied for decades. A recent study examining academic librarians' reasons for publishing in peer-reviewed journal articles included gaining tenure and/or promotion at their academic institutions as research success is typically measured through productivity and output (Hoffman et al., 2017). Logically, it follows that the productivity of U.S. research librarians has also been found to correlate with faculty status (Hoffman et al., 2017; Wiberley et al., 2023). Factors that can increase librarian productivity include time management, awareness of the current literature and trends, confidence in research methods, and collaboration with coauthors (Crampsie et al., 2020).

Productivity in relationship to coauthorship has also been explored. In general, academic researchers have become more productive over time, and they also have become more collaborative (De Groote et al., 2024). A positive correlation exists between the number of articles written by an author and the number of coauthors on the publications. Within the field of library sciences, similar findings are reported. Researchers have become increasingly collaborative in library and information science (Owens, 2023), and collaboration has positively affected researcher productivity (Kong et al., 2019). When highly productive librarian-researchers were surveyed about their professional training, research environment, research networks, and views on the research process, a key finding was that having a large number of interconnected individuals in their networks who collaborate on research is significantly linked to higher research output (Kennedy et al., 2020).

Collaboration and coauthorship among librarians on an international level appear less common. Kozlowska and Scoulas surveyed U.S. librarians about their collaboration with

international librarians to explore the publications and other forms of scholarship generated from these partnerships. The results showed that 83.15% reported never collaborating with an international librarian, and only 16.85% reported publishing with an international collaborator (2020).

### *LIS Journals and LIS Authorship*

Several studies have explored the contributions of non-LIS authors and LIS authors (including library practitioners) in LIS journals. One study examining LIS journals indexed in Web of Science between 2005 and 2014 found that 46.6% of articles in LIS journals had at least one non-LIS author (Chang, 2018). Non-LIS authors are likely interested in LIS research topics given that LIS is a broad topic that merges with many disciplines, including education, medicine, computer science, and communication. Another study explored the contribution of LIS authors to 75 LIS journals (Chang, 2019). In only 25 of the 75 journals studied did the LIS author contribute to more than half of the articles. When the researchers looked at the sub-categories (e.g., library science, information science, interdisciplinary, non-LIS) of the LIS subject category journals, they noted substantial differences in the percentage of LIS-authored journals. In the 13 library science-oriented journals, LIS authors contributed to more than 75% of the articles. Wiberley and colleagues reported similar findings when examining USAL contributions to library science journals; certain journals were more oriented towards academic librarians and a greater percentage of USALs published in them, compared to those not oriented towards academic librarianship (2023). This study also reported a decline in academic librarian authorship in journals that were not oriented toward academic librarianship and an increase in academic librarian authorship in academic librarian-oriented journals. Gender differences have also been found in the authorship of LIS publications, where men are likelier to be the authors of LIS publications despite more women in the LIS field (Monroe-Gulick et al., 2024). These findings highlight the complex nature of LIS journals and authorship.

### *Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic*

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic caused many disruptions to the work of librarians. Librarians quickly responded to the circumstances and developed plans to continue services in light of changed needs and expectations during the pandemic. These changes also impacted librarian research productivity. Key challenges during the pandemic included increased workload, increased childcare and family responsibilities, and diminished mental health and wellness (e.g., stress, isolation, guilt, and uncertainty). Other emerging themes related to COVID-19 and libraries included learning new technologies such as virtual meetings and conferences, online learning such as remote teaching and learning, fake news, information literacy, and knowledge management (Berg et al., 2021). Sheikh et al. (2023) note that a substantial amount of research on COVID-19 was published in LIS journals. One study exploring life sciences publication output using the PubMed database found that as COVID-19-related research increased, publications using unrelated MeSH terms had decreased by 10% to 12% (Riccaboni & Verginer, 2022). However, the authors acknowledge that COVID-19 publications may have been fast-tracked, which could have impacted the balance of non-COVID articles that appeared. Demographic changes related to productivity were also observed. For example, significant disparities in scholarly

productivity by gender and child age were noted, as well as a "decrease in senior- and coauthor's articles submitted and grants submitted relative to pre-pandemic productivity" (Krukowski et al., 2021). It was speculated that increased childcare responsibilities among parents with very young children contributed to this group's reduced productivity.

## Methods and Data

The present study focuses on the contributions of USALs to the LIS journal literature. As noted above, the study builds on previous iterations back to 1998 (Blecic et al., 2017; Weller et al., 1999; Wiberley et al., 2006, 2023). The goal of each study has been to investigate the extent to which USALs contribute to core research journals in LIS. As publications appear, evolve, and cease over time, the set of journals has changed.

### *Journal Inclusion and Data Collection*

This study included all still-published journals covered in preceding studies, except for two titles that ceased, and it added two titles. *Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services* and *Behavioral & Social Science Librarian* both ceased and were dropped from the study. The authors explored LIS journal titles for potential journals to add to the study. Two titles were added based on criteria described in the 2013–2017 study (Wiberley et al., 2023): *Journal of Access Services* and *Journal of Information Literacy*. The journals needed to 1) be listed in UlrichsWeb Global Serials Directory with the subject heading *library and information science* and be identified as refereed or 2) be either covered by *Journal Citation Reports* (JCR) or have a percentile ranking of 40th or higher in Scopus's CiteScore.

The authors examined each journal issue from 2018 to 2022 for each of the journals included in the study. The total number of refereed articles, the number of refereed USAL articles, the total number of authors for each refereed article, and the number of USAL authors per issue was recorded. For each USAL author article, the name(s) of the USAL authors and their affiliations were recorded. For coauthors on these publications that were USALs, their names and affiliations were recorded in a separate column. Editorials, columns, book reviews, news notes, and non-peer-reviewed articles were excluded. Conference proceedings and articles on special theme issues were also excluded unless there was evidence that the articles were peer-reviewed.

Similar data were collected for the 2013–2017 period for the two journals added to the current study so that comparisons and changes between identical journal title lists were possible between 2013–2017 and 2018–2022. Similar updates were made to the institutional data for the two journals that were dropped and the two that were added. Individual author data for 2013–2017 were not updated elsewhere in the datasets due to the complexity of the task and because the overall averages of combined data were unlikely to make significant differences in the reported percentages. Based on the two journals dropped from the current study, 81 peer-reviewed articles (57 by USALs) were published between 2013 and 2017 compared to 83 peer-reviewed articles (70 by USALs) studied in the newly added journals. The overall percentage of USAL-authored articles remained at 35% between 2013 and 2017 despite the change in the two journal titles.

As in previous studies in this series, the authors defined USALs as persons who held an MLS or equivalent degree and worked or had emeritus status in a library in a U.S. institution listed in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions for Higher Education. As needed, the

authors searched the internet for data to confirm whether someone had an MLS. However, because of the evolving nature of academic librarianship, not all professionals hired in academic libraries have an MLS. In a shift from past studies in this series, the definition of USALs was expanded to include other practitioners with advanced degrees employed in academic libraries due to their engagement as library practitioners. MLS holders who worked for an academic unit other than the library were not counted as USALs.

### *Data Coding and Analysis*

Affiliations and author names were standardized in the same way as outlined in Wiberley et al. (2023). The data were analyzed using Excel. The distinct count feature was used in Excel to count the number of articles per academic library. Hence, an article only counts once for a library, even if it is counted individually when multiple authors are on an article from the same institutional library. If USALs coauthored an article and they were from more than one library, the article counted for each library represented.

## Results and Discussion

### *USAL articles and authors*

A total of 52 journals were examined for the current study; a summary of the journal and peer-reviewed articles' attributes are presented in Table 1. In 1,160 discrete issues of the 52 library literature journals, 8,007 peer-reviewed articles published between 2018 and 2022 were identified. This illustrates an overall increase in publications compared to the previously studied period, with 6,874 articles in 1,104 issues in the same 52 journals between 2013 and 2017. Of those 8,007 peer-reviewed articles, 2,484 (31%) were authored by at least one USAL. Proportionally, this is a decrease of 11.4% compared to the USAL articles published in the same journals from 2013 to 2017 (35% authored by USAL). However, the actual number of peer-reviewed articles and USAL peer-reviewed articles increased from 2013–2017 to 2018–2022. The average number of authors per article also increased (2.3 to 2.61), as did the number of USAL authors per article (1.75 to 1.95). However, in 2018–2022, only 23% of the authors were USALs compared to 2013–2017, when 30% were USALs. The number of libraries where USALs contributed to the body of literature increased compared to previous years.

The number of sole-authored USAL articles also decreased compared to the previous study. In 2018–2022, 909 articles (36.6%) were sole-authored by a USAL compared to 2013–2017, when 943 (39.2%) were sole-authored by a USAL. In contrast, 1,575 (63.4%) USAL articles were written with at least one other author. Of the USAL articles written in collaboration with others (1,575), 505 (32.1%) were written by coauthors who were not USAL. Conversely, 1,328 (84.3%) USAL collaborative articles were written with at least one other USAL. Of these (1,328), 863 (65%) were collaborations with USALs only at their institution, and 465 (35%) were with at least one other USAL at another U.S. academic library. Only 1.6% of articles were collaboratively written by at least one U.S. academic librarian and an academic librarian not in the United States. Compared to Kozlowska and Scoulas (2020), who looked more broadly at international librarian-author collaborations, the current study illustrates even smaller international collaborations in the context of U.S. academic libraries.

**TABLE 1**
**Contributions of United States Academic Librarians (USALs) to Journals, 1993–2022**

| | 1993–1997 | 1998–2002 | 2003–2007 | 2008–2012 | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of journals studied | 32 | 32 | 41 | 39 | 52 | 52 |
| Number of issues in journals studied | 703 | 716 | 855 | 843 | 1,104 | 1,160 |
| Number of refereed articles | 3,624 | 3,488 | 5,038 | 5,537 | 6,874 | 8,007 |
| Refereed articles per issue (mean) | 5.16 | 4.87 | 5.89 | 6.57 | 6.23 | 6.90 |
| Number of USAL articles | 1,579 | 1,380 | 1,997 | 1,916 | 2,406 | 2,484 |
| % of USAL articles | 43.57 | 39.56 | 39.64 | 34.60 | 35.00 | 31.00 |
| USAL articles per issue (mean) | 2.25 | 1.93 | 2.34 | 2.27 | 2.18 | 2.14 |
| Instances of authorship of refereed articles | 5,477 | 5,834 | 9,372 | 11,451 | 15,841 | 20,898 |
| Instances of authorship of refereed articles per issue (mean) | 7.79 | 8.15 | 10.96 | 13.58 | 14.35 | 18.01 |
| Instances of USAL authorship | 2,032 | 2,003 | 3,120 | 3,188 | 4,206 | 4,856 |
| % of instances of USAL authorship | 37.10 | 34.33 | 33.29 | 27.84 | 26.55 | 23.23 |
| Instances of USAL authorship per issue (mean) | 2.89 | 2.80 | 3.65 | 3.78 | 3.81 | 4.19 |
| Authors per refereed article (mean) | 1.51 | 1.67 | 1.86 | 2.07 | 2.30 | 2.61 |
| USAL authors per USAL article (mean) | 1.29 | 1.45 | 1.56 | 1.66 | 1.75 | 1.95 |
| Number of sole-authored USAL articles | 869 | 893 | 1,026 | 890 | 943 | 909 |
| Number of coauthored USAL articles | 710 | 567 | 971 | 1,026 | 1,463 | 1,573 |
| % of USAL articles that are coauthored | 44.97 | 41.09 | 48.62 | 53.55 | 60.81 | 63.38 |

| | 1993–1997 | 1998–2002 | 2003–2007 | 2008–2012 | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unique USAL names | 1,515 | 1,487 | 2,182 | 2,268 | 2,877 | 3,143 |
| Unique USAL names per issue | 2.16 | 2.08 | 2.55 | 2.69 | 2.61 | 2.71 |
| Unique USAL names per refereed article | 0.42 | 0.43 | 0.43 | 0.41 | 0.42 | 0.39 |
| Unique USAL names per USAL article | 0.96 | 1.08 | 1.09 | 1.18 | 1.20 | 1.27 |
| Unique libraries | 386 | 379 | 515 | 511 | 593 | 609 |
| Unique libraries per issue (mean) | 0.55 | 0.53 | 0.60 | 0.61 | 0.54 | 0.53 |
| Unique libraries per refereed article (mean) | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.10 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.08 |
| Unique libraries per USAL article (mean) | 0.24 | 0.27 | 0.26 | 0.27 | 0.25 | 0.25 |
| Published source | Weller et al., 1999 | Wiberley et al., 2006 | Blecic et al., 2017 | Blecic et al., 2017 | Wiberley et al., 2023 | Current study |

As noted above, the percentage of USAL articles published in 52 journals between 2018 and 2022 was 4% lower compared to 2013 to 2017. While the number of USAL articles increased, when compared to the total articles published by non-USALs, USALs proportionally published fewer articles than non-USALs. During both periods, the range of percentages of USAL articles published in each journal varied widely, spanning from 0% to 93% for the period 2013–2017 and from 0% to 89% for 2018–2022. Table 2 includes the individual journals studied, listed in descending order from those with the highest USAL article percentage to the least in the current study. Upon closer examination of individual journals, the differences in inclusion rates between the two time periods varied. Specifically, journals such as SL, IRSQ, and DLP exhibited the most significant disparities, recording differences of over 38% between 2013–2017 and 2018–2022 (see Appendix I for journals by abbreviation).

The average number of USAL authors published in each journal between 2018 and 2022 was 2.8% lower than in the 2013 to 2017 period. This suggests a decrease in the representation of USAL authors across scholarly publications compared to the previous study. From 2013 to 2017, the percentage of USAL authors published in each journal varied widely, ranging from 0% to 91%. Conversely, for 2018–2022, this range narrowed slightly, with percentages ranging from 0% to 85%. Upon examining individual journals, the differences in inclusion rates between the two time periods varied. Like the USAL article data, Internet Reference Services Quarterly (IRSQ), Serials Librarian (SL), and Digital Library Perspectives (DLP) exhibited the most significant disparities, recording differences of over 34% between the periods of 2013–2017 and 2018–2022.

Taken together, certain journals, notably SL, IRSQ, and DLP, experienced substantial differences in the inclusion rates of USAL-referred articles and USAL authors between the two time periods, suggesting potential shifts in publication patterns or authorship trends.

**TABLE 2**
**Percent of USAL Articles and USAL Authors in Journals Studied, 2013–2022**

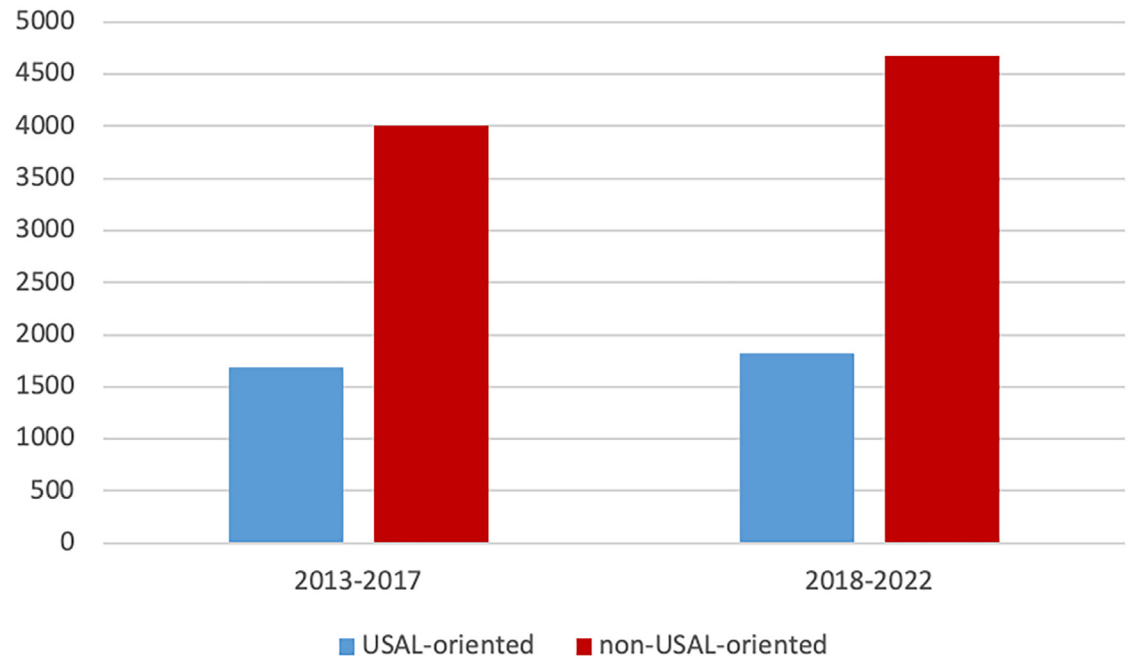
| | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 | Difference in USAL refereed articles | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 | Difference in USAL authors |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % USAL refereed articles | % USAL refereed articles | | % USAL authors | % USAL authors | |
| Technical Services Quarterly (TSQ)* | 90.7% | 88.9% | -1.8% | 86.5% | 84.6% | -1.9% |
| Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship (ISTL)* | 87.9% | 88.1% | 0.2% | 81.2% | 80.2% | -1.0% |
| Library Resources & Technical Services (LRTS)* | 86.4% | 86.4% | 0.0% | 73.5% | 81.0% | 7.5% |
| Collection Management (CM)* | 75.3% | 84.4% | 9.1% | 67.5% | 74.6% | 7.1% |
| College & Undergraduate Libraries (CUL)* | 93.4% | 82.9% | -10.5% | 81.9% | 75.8% | -6.1% |
| Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries (JERML)* | 88.5% | 81.8% | -6.7% | 74.1% | 78.7% | 4.6% |
| Journal of Access Services (JAS)* | 88.5% | 81.5% | -7.0% | 85.3% | 78.4% | -6.9% |
| Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship (JERL)* | 82.5% | 80.0% | -2.5% | 73.7% | 75.4% | 1.7% |
| Reference and User Services Quarterly (RUSQ)* | 62.7% | 80.0% | 17.3% | 52.0% | 81.1% | 29.1% |
| Reference Services Review (RSR)* | 80.6% | 79.6% | -1.0% | 73.6% | 79.0% | 5.4% |
| Journal of Library Resource Sharing (JLRS)* | 76.2% | 78.8% | 2.6% | 66.2% | 70.8% | 4.6% |
| portal: Libraries and the Academy (PORTAL)* | 82.0% | 77.9% | -4.1% | 67.0% | 67.5% | 0.5% |
| Journal of Web Librarianship (JWL)* | 78.0% | 77.4% | -0.6% | 68.5% | 76.5% | 8.0% |
| Medical Reference Services Quarterly (MRSQ)* | 91.2% | 76.7% | -14.5% | 77.5% | 68.3% | -9.2% |
| Journal of Library and Information Services in Distance Learning (JLISDL)* | 61.8% | 71.4% | 9.6% | 58.2% | 60.6% | 2.4% |

| | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 | Difference in USAL refereed articles | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 | Difference in USAL authors |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % USAL refereed articles | % USAL refereed articles | | % USAL authors | % USAL authors | |
| Journal of Library Administration (JOLA)* | 72.7% | 70.4% | -2.3% | 71.4% | 62.8% | -8.6% |
| College & Research Libraries (CRL)* | 77.8% | 68.8% | -9.0% | 66.1% | 54.6% | -11.5% |
| American Archivist (AA)* | 43.3% | 65.1% | 21.8% | 42.1% | 56.2% | 14.1% |
| Journal of Map & Geography Libraries (JMGL)* | 37.3% | 61.2% | 23.9% | 22.6% | 54.2% | 31.6% |
| Reference Librarian (RL) | 79.8% | 59.4% | -20.4% | 69.3% | 54.0% | -15.3% |
| Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA) | 61.0% | 57.0% | -4.0% | 42.3% | 42.2% | -0.1% |
| Notes of the Music Library Association (NMLA) | 50.0% | 56.4% | 6.4% | 54.9% | 56.8% | 1.9% |
| Information Technology and Libraries (ITL) | 56.6% | 55.5% | -1.1% | 54.2% | 45.7% | -8.5% |
| Internet Reference Services Quarterly (IRSQ) | 91.0% | 51.4% | -39.6% | 91.3% | 46.7% | -44.6% |
| Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP) | 47.5% | 48.1% | 0.6% | 45.8% | 40.7% | -5.1% |
| Journal of Library Metadata (JLM) | 55.4% | 47.9% | -7.5% | 42.6% | 41.8% | -0.8% |
| Journal of Academic Librarianship (JAL) | 55.7% | 46.9% | -8.8% | 43.9% | 36.2% | -7.7% |
| Science & Technology Libraries (STL) | 67.9% | 45.5% | -22.4% | 52.5% | 32.2% | -20.3% |
| Serials Review (SR) | 50.0% | 41.7% | -8.3% | 34.3% | 26.2% | -8.1% |
| New Review of Academic Librarianship (NRAL) | 21.6% | 40.8% | 19.2% | 14.7% | 38.5% | 23.8% |
| Cataloging & Classification Quarterly (CCQ)** | 45.5% | 35.6% | -9.9% | 38.2% | 35.5% | -2.7% |

| | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 | Difference in USAL refereed articles | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 | Difference in USAL authors |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % USAL refereed articles | % USAL refereed articles | | % USAL authors | % USAL authors | |
| Performance Measurement & Metrics (PMM)** | 45.5% | 33.8% | -11.7% | 26.2% | 25.9% | -0.3% |
| Serials Librarian (SL)** | 74.6% | 32.9% | -41.7% | 67.6% | 28.2% | -39.4% |
| Library Trends (LT)** | 16.8% | 32.7% | 15.9% | 19.0% | 27.5% | 8.5% |
| Journal of Information Literacy (JIL)** | 29.8% | 19.2% | -10.6% | 22.2% | 19.3% | -2.9% |
| Library Quarterly (LQ)** | 22.4% | 19.0% | -3.4% | 12.1% | 12.3% | 0.2% |
| Collection and Curation (CC)** | 40.0% | 18.9% | -21.1% | 31.5% | 15.1% | -16.4% |
| Digital Library Perspectives (DLP)** | 55.6% | 15.9% | -39.7% | 46.8% | 12.5% | -34.3% |
| Library Management (LM)** | 17.6% | 11.5% | -6.1% | 13.0% | 9.4% | -3.6% |
| Canadian Journal of Information & Library Science (CJLIS)** | 2.0% | 10.4% | 8.4% | 1.0% | 8.0% | 7.0% |
| Journal of Education for Library & Information Science (JELIS)** | 10.7% | 7.9% | -2.8% | 5.5% | 6.5% | 1.0% |
| Library & Information Science Research (LISR)** | 5.8% | 7.9% | 2.1% | 2.6% | 5.6% | 3.0% |
| Health Information and Libraries Journal (HILJ)** | 8.3% | 7.7% | -0.6% | 4.0% | 4.7% | 0.7% |
| Public Libraries (PL)** | 4.2% | 6.8% | 2.6% | 2.6% | 5.3% | 2.7% |
| Library Hi Tech (LHT)** | 17.3% | 4.5% | -12.8% | 10.6% | 3.1% | -7.5% |
| Information and Learning Sciences (ILS)** | 18.2% | 2.1% | -16.1% | 13.6% | 0.7% | -12.9% |
| Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology (JASIST)** | 1.5% | 1.7% | 0.2% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 0.2% |

| | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 | Difference in USAL refereed articles | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 | Difference in USAL authors |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % USAL refereed articles | % USAL refereed articles | | % USAL authors | % USAL authors | |
| Online Information Review (OIR)** | 0.7% | 0.5% | -0.2% | 0.4% | 0.5% | 0.1% |
| Journal of Information Science (JIS)** | 0.0% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| Government Information Quarterly (GIQ)** | 0.9% | 0.3% | -0.6% | 0.3% | 0.1% | -0.2% |
| Information Processing and Management (IPM)** | 0.0% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| Information & Culture (IC)** | 10.1% | 0.0% | -10.1% | 8.4% | 0.0% | -8.4% |
| | | | | | | |
| Average % per journal | 49.4% | 44.3% | -5.1% | 42.1% | 39.3% | -2.8% |
| Percent of total count | 39.5% | 31.0% | -8.5% | 30.6% | 23.2% | -7.4% |
| * USAL-oriented journal; ** non-USAL-oriented journal | | | | | | |

**FIGURE 1**
**Change in Number of Articles in USAL-Oriented and Non-USAL-Oriented Journals**



As in previous studies, the present study distinguishes between journals currently oriented to USALs and those not oriented to USALs. Those journals that had ≥60% USAL authors in 2018–2022 were considered USAL-oriented journals. Those that had ≥60% of articles with no USAL author in 2018–2022 were considered non-USAL-oriented journals. There were 41 journals (out of 52) that fell into one of the categories for the current study period; 19 journals were USAL-oriented (TSQ, ISTL, LRTS, CM, CUL, JERML, JAS, JERL, RUSQ, RSR, JLRS, PORTAL, JWL, MRSQ, JLISDL, JOLA, CRL, AA, JMGL), and 22 were non-USAL-oriented (CCQ, PMM, SL, LT, JIL, LQ, CC, DLP, LM, CJLIS, JELIS, LISR, HILJ, PL, LHT, ILS, JASIST, OIR, JIS, GIQ, IPM, IC). Between 2013–2017 and 2018–2022, the number of articles published by USAL-oriented journals grew from 1,691 to 1,821, or 7.7%, whereas the number of articles published by non-USAL-oriented journals grew from 4,001 to 4,680, or 17%. Although both grew and non-USAL journals did not match the dramatic 78.9% increase recorded in the last study, the number of articles published by non-USAL-oriented journals grew significantly. Although Chang (2018, 2019) explored LIS author contributions to the LIS literature more broadly than the current study (i.e., not just U.S. academic librarians), they also noted growing contributions to the LIS literature by non-LIS authors. The results of the current study demonstrate there is an overall growth in LIS publications, where the growth is seen more dramatically in non-USAL-oriented journals, perhaps as a result of non-LIS authors.

## *Productivity*

For authors who published, there was again an increase in productivity. The total number of article authors increased somewhat, from 2,877 to 3,141. However, the proportion of authors producing higher numbers of articles has increased. The percentage of authors who published two or more articles increased from 27.97% in 2013–2017 to 30.34% in the current study, an increase of 8%. Previous studies in the series have highlighted three articles in 5 years as a benchmark for high productivity. The proportion of authors meeting this benchmark has also continued to increase, from 8.14% in 2008–2012, to 10.8% in 2013–2017, to 12.07% in the current study. The increase was especially pronounced among those publishing four or more articles, from 4.13% to 5.73%. Although those publishing five articles had a modest increase, from 34 to 39 authors, those publishing six nearly tripled, from 11 to 29. Also remarkable was the "long tail" of the highest-productivity authors. In previous studies, the number of articles per author had topped out at 12 in 2008–2012 and at 10 in 2013–2017. From 2018–2022, there were individual authors with 13, 16, and 18 articles each. Increases in the number of articles per author are likely related to increases in coauthorship.

**TABLE 3**
**Productivity of U.S. Academic Librarians from 2003 to 2022**

| Number of articles per author | Cumulative percentage of authors 2003–2007 | Cumulative percentage of authors 2008–2012 | Number of authors writing the # of articles 2013–2017 | Percentage of authors 2013–2017 | Cumulative percentage of authors 2013–2017 | Number of authors writing the # of articles 2018–2022 | Percentage of authors 2018–2022 | Cumulative percentage of authors 2018–2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.03 |

| Number of articles per author | Cumulative percentage of authors 2003–2007 | Cumulative percentage of authors 2008–2012 | Number of authors writing the # of articles 2013–2017 | Percentage of authors 2013–2017 | Cumulative percentage of authors 2013–2017 | Number of authors writing the # of articles 2018–2022 | Percentage of authors 2018–2022 | Cumulative percentage of authors 2018–2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.03 | 0.06 |
| 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.06 |
| 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.06 |
| 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.03 | 0.10 |
| 12 | 0 | 0.04 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.10 |
| 11 | 0 | 0.08 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.10 |
| 10 | 0.05 | 0.08 | 2 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 1 | 0.03 | 0.13 |
| 9 | 0.1 | 0.08 | 0 | 0 | 0.07 | 4 | 0.13 | 0.25 |
| 8 | 0.1 | 0.17 | 5 | 0.17 | 0.24 | 6 | 0.19 | 0.45 |
| 7 | 0.38 | 0.39 | 2 | 0.07 | 0.31 | 6 | 0.19 | 0.64 |
| 6 | 1.11 | 0.74 | 11 | 0.38 | 0.69 | 29 | 0.92 | 1.56 |
| 5 | 1.71 | 1.4 | 34 | 1.18 | 1.87 | 39 | 1.24 | 2.80 |
| 4 | 3.54 | 2.72 | 65 | 2.26 | 4.13 | 92 | 2.93 | 5.73 |
| 3 | 9.64 | 8.14 | 192 | 6.67 | 10.8 | 199 | 6.34 | 12.07 |
| 2 | 26.46 | 26.61 | 494 | 17.17 | 27.97 | 574 | 18.27 | 30.34 |
| 1 | 100 | 100 | 2,072 | 72.02 | 100 | 2,188 | 69.66 | 100.00 |

## *Libraries*

Table 4 indicates the number of articles from the top-producing libraries in 5-year increments from 1993 to 2022. Because several libraries in 2018–2022 tied for several places, the table presents ranks and numbers of articles for 31 libraries. Fifteen institutions joined the top 20 for the first time, of which 12 were R1 (Very High Research Activity) institutions and three were R2 (High Research Activity). Part of the reason for the increase in institutions in the top 20 was several institutions tied in the number of publications, leading to 31 rather than 20 institutions in the list. If the list had been limited to the top 20, not considering ties, there would be seven new institutions in the list. Further research is needed to understand the increase in these institutions' overall productivity.

**TABLE 4**
**Library Productivity 2013–2022**

| Institution | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank (number of articles) | Rank (number of articles) | % Change |
| Penn State University (R1) | 2 (66) | 1 (80) | +21.2 |
| University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign (R1) | 1 (80) | 2 (72) | -10 |
| Texas A&M University (R1) | 3 (44) | 3 (66) | +50 |
| University of Illinois Chicago (R1) | 7 (33) | 3 (66) | +100 |
| University of Colorado at Boulder (R1) | 11 (29) | 4 (54) | +86.21 |

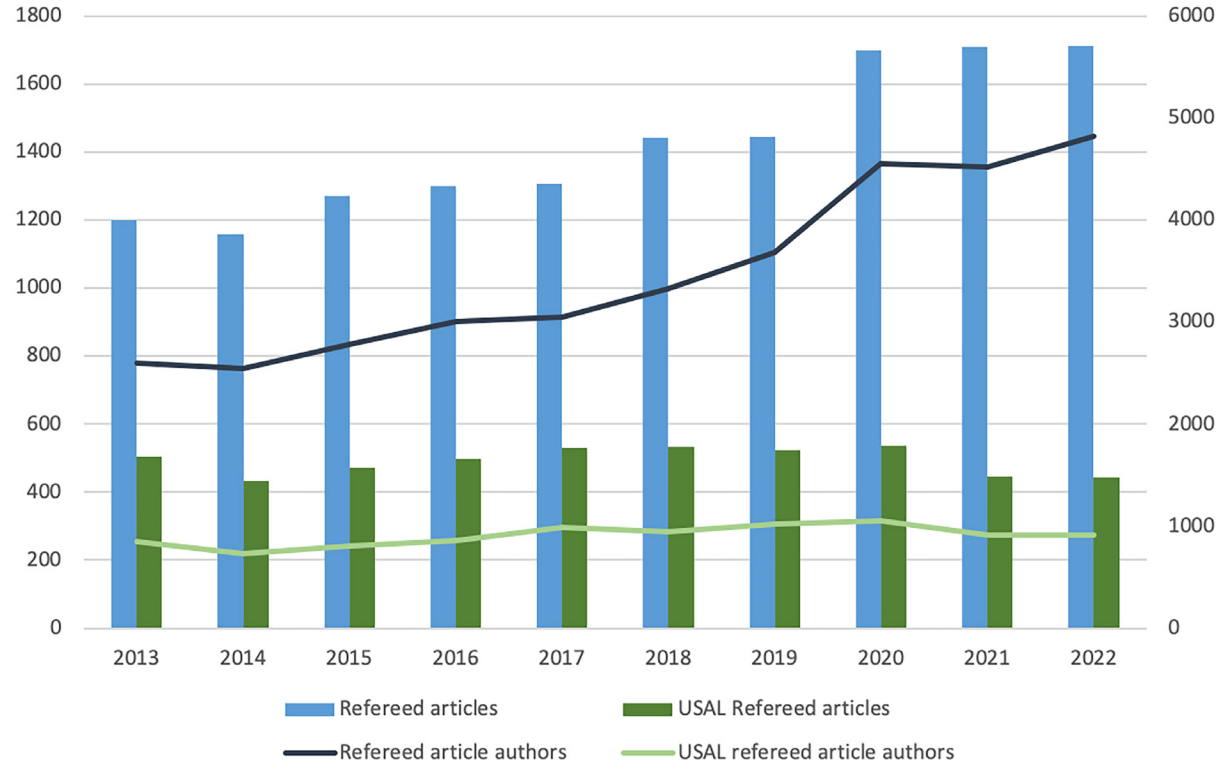
| Institution | 2013–2017 | 2018–2022 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank (number of articles) | Rank (number of articles) | % Change |
| Indiana University (R1) | not top 20 | 5 (43) | |
| The Ohio State University (R1) | 6 (38) | 6 (41) | +7.89 |
| Rutgers University (R1) | 4 (42) | 7 (38) | -9.52 |
| University of Utah (R1) | not top 20 | 7 (38) | |
| University of Alabama (R1) | not top 20 | 8 (37) | |
| Brigham Young University (R2) | not top 20 | 9 (34) | |
| Purdue University (R1) | 11 (29) | 9 (34) | +27.24 |
| Stony Brook University SUNY (R1) | not top 20 | 10 (33) | |
| University of Minnesota (R1) | 9 (30) | 10 (33) | +17.24 |
| University of Nevada, Las Vegas (R1) | 19 (22) | 11 (32) | +45.46 |
| University of Florida (R1) | 11 (29) | 12 (31) | +6.9 |
| University of New Mexico (R1) | 20 (22) | 12 (31) | +40.91 |
| University of Tennessee (R1) | not top 20 | 13 (27) | |
| Seton Hall University (R2) | not top 20 | 14 (26) | |
| University of Michigan (R1) | 16 (27) | 15 (24) | -11.11 |
| Harvard University (R1) | not top 20 | 16 (23) | |
| University of California Los Angeles (R1) | not top 20 | 16 (23) | |
| New York University (R1) | not top 20 | 17 (22) | |
| University of Arizona (R1) | 8 (31) | 17 (22) | -29.03 |
| University of Arkansas (R1) | 23 (19) | 17 (22) | +15.8 |
| University of Louisville (R1) | not top 20 | 18 (21) | |
| Kent State University (R1) | 17 (24) | 19 (20) | -8.33 |
| University of Idaho (R2) | not top 20 | 20 (19) | |
| University of Kansas (R1) | not top 20 | 20 (19) | |
| University of Oklahoma (R1) | not top 20 | 20 (19) | |
| Utah State University (R1) | not top 20 | 20 (19) | |
| University of Houston (R1) | 22 (20) | not top 20 (17) | -15 |
| Cornell University (R1) | 17 (24) | not top 20 (14) | -41.67 |
| Oakland University (R2) | 14 (28) | not top 20 (13) | -53.57 |
| Texas Tech University (R1) | 14 (28) | not top 20 (12) | -57.14 |

## *Impact of COVID-19*

The annual publication data (i.e., number of refereed articles and number of authors) from 2013 to 2022 was entered into a spreadsheet for all publications included in the study and those where there was at least one USAL author. While the overall number of publications increased between 2013 and 2022, as did the overall number of authors, the number of articles written by USALs and the total number of USALs decreased in 2021 and 2022 (see Figure 2). One explanation for the drop in articles may be related to COVID-19. COVID-19 did not fully impact U.S. academic institutions until March 2020, and for many journals, the articles to be published that year were already accepted or in the queue to be published. This lag may explain why 2020 does

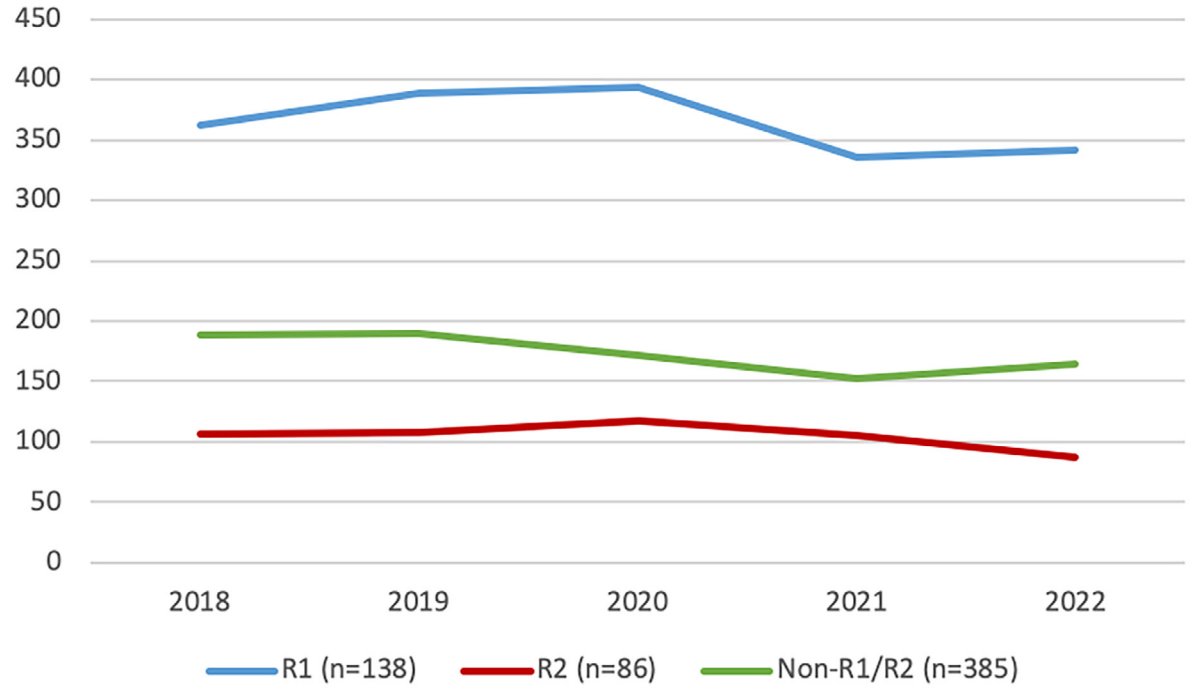
not reflect any decrease in productivity. Interestingly, the overall productivity of authors in LIS journals, which includes the non-USAL author data, contrasts with other studies that found a decrease in publications in conjunction with COVID-19 (Krukowski et al., 2021; Riccaboni & Verginer, 2022). The subsequent decrease for USALs may reflect how their research productivity was impacted by the demands placed on them as academic library practitioners. They faced increased competing demands, such as shifting to remote virtual service models, compared to the other non-USALs who contributed articles to the same journals. Additionally, academic librarians are predominantly female, with women comprising 72 to 74% of the profession (Eva et al., 2021). Furthermore, while LIS consists of more women than men, men have been identified as the primary authors of the library literature (Monroe-Gulick et al., 2024), As COVID-19 was found to impact productivity related to gender and childcare demands, these same factors likely impacted the productivity of female academic librarians, particularly those with children.

**FIGURE 2**
**USAL Productivity Before and After COVID-19 Pandemic**




The question arose as to whether productivity related to COVID-19 was different based on the research designation of the institution. The number of publications by each institution each year by Carnegie designation was explored. Institutions were grouped by Very High Research Activity (R1), High Research Activity (R2), and non-R1/R2 status. As seen in Figure 3, R1, R2, and non-R1/R2 institutions all experienced a decrease in research productivity in 2021 and 2022. In 2021–2022, R2 institutions experienced a 42% drop in publications, and R1s experienced a 40.1% drop. Non-R1/R2s experienced the lowest drop (36.6%) and showed some signs of rebounding in 2022. Academic libraries at R1 institutions are more productive than R2s and non-R1/R2s. On average, R1s published 13.2 articles, R2s published 6.08 articles, and non-R1/R2s published 2.25 articles per institution over the 5 years studied.

**FIGURE 3**
**USAL Productivity from 2018 to 2022 by Carnegie Research Classification**




COVID-19 appears to have inhibited the ability to sustain scholarship across all institutions, regardless of the research classification. The inability to find peer reviewers during the height of the pandemic and the overall impact on journal production also likely contributed to the decrease in productivity. Reflecting on the trends in productivity, an upward productivity trend appeared for USALs until the introduction of the pandemic. The divergent trends between non-USALs and USALs following the pandemic suggest that the overall productivity of USALs may have had a different outcome, such as an even greater increase in productivity, if not for the implications of COVID-19. It also points to the differences that being a practitioner in a field versus being a researcher may have on productivity and how vulnerable competing demands can be to outside forces. This may have been further impacted by the predominantly female makeup of academic librarians.

## Limitations

This study explored a subset of LIS journals; patterns may have differed in journals not included. In addition, librarians are also publishing in journals outside of LIS, and these publications were not explored in this study. This study expanded the definition of USALs to include non-MLIS degree holders. This would impact comparisons to previous versions of the study in this series, as more individuals could be counted as USALs. Conversely, it is possible that some authors who are USALs were not included in the count if their affiliations did not show their roles as librarians. As is common with manually collected data, the dataset may have some errors.

## Conclusions

Examining publication data with a consistent list of journals makes comparing data between different iterations of the studies in the series easier to calculate and interpret. This stability in the journals studied for the fifth iteration of the study was invaluable in comparing the trends

between non-USALs and USALs, particularly amid a pandemic. It reduced the possibility of introducing confounding variables, which are introduced by including new journals. It also helps highlight the ebb and flow of USAL contributions to the literature.

Overall, the proportion of articles by USALs decreased while the number of USAL-authored articles increased, suggesting other segments of LIS publishing are increasing faster than USAL publishing. Large public research universities remain the most productive, although it appears an increasing number of academic libraries are contributing to the literature of LIS journals. USALs are more likely to publish with other USALs, and USAL collaborators are more likely to be USALs at the same institution. The change in percentages of USAL and non-USAL articles in LIS journals points to differences in growth among journals and changes as to where USALs and non-USALs publish. COVID-19 likely impacted productivity for academic librarians but appeared to have less impact on non-USAL authors.

As publication patterns vary from study to study, we cannot concretely conclude that COVID-19 impacted productivity rates. Assuming this was the case, the next study period will need to closely examine whether, and how, publication patterns rebound or if the pandemic will have a longer-lasting impact on productivity. Given the divergent patterns observed in the USAL versus non-USAL authored articles, particularly as they correlated with the pandemic, it would be interesting to study author characteristics beyond being classified as a USAL or not. Exploring additional author demographics such as gender and field of study, or if the nature of the article focused on technological versus social sciences aspects, to name a few, would further inform factors influencing publication patterns in LIS journals.

Sole authorship decreased while coauthored publications increased. The percentages of USALs who publish three or more articles in 5 years increased as coauthorship increased. At the institution where this study was conducted, the results of this research series have guided the promotion and tenure norms. Given the increasingly collaborative nature of USAL scholarship and the increase in the number of USALs writing three articles in 5 years, it may raise the question of whether it is time to change the benchmark. Keeping this increase in perspective, the percentage of USALs hitting this mark remains relatively small at 12%. Additionally, the overall fluid nature of productivity and the unknown long-term impact of the pandemic suggest caution in making such changes. Further, promotion with tenure requires scholarly leadership, where sole and senior authorship remain important, and success should not be measured solely by metrics.

The study highlights the complex nature of library and information science journals and authorship. However, it also points to potential opportunities for enhancing the collaboration of academic librarians both with and beyond USALs and advancing the impact of research within the field.

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# Appendix I

## Journals by Abbreviation

| Abbreviation | Journal |
|---|---|
| AA | American Archivist |
| BBSL | Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian (ceased 2017) |
| CC | Collection and Curation |
| CCQ | Cataloging & Classification Quarterly |
| CJLIS | Canadian Journal of Information & Library Science |
| CM | Collection Management |
| CRL | College & Research Libraries |
| CUL | College & Undergraduate Libraries |
| DLP | Digital Library Perspectives (until 2016, OCLC Systems & Services) |
| EBLIP | Evidence Based Library and Information Practice |
| GIQ | Government Information Quarterly |
| HILJ | Health Information and Libraries Journal (until 2012 Health Libraries Review) |
| IC | Information & Culture (until 2006 Libraries & Culture; then, until 2012, Libraries & the Cultural Record) |
| ILS | Information and Learning Sciences (until 2017, New Library World) |
| IPM | Information Processing and Management |
| IRSQ | Internet Reference Services Quarterly |
| ISTL | Issues In Science and Technology Librarianship |
| ITL | Information Technology and Libraries (until 1982, Journal of Library Automation) |
| JAL | Journal of Academic Librarianship |
| JAS | Journal of Access Services (added for 2018–2022) |
| JASIST | Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology (until 2014, Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology) |
| JELIS | Journal of Education for Library & Information Science |
| JERL | Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship (until 2008, The Acquisitions Librarian) |
| JERML | Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries |
| JIL | Journal of Information Literacy (added for 2018–2022) |
| JIS | Journal of Information Science |
| JLISDL | Journal of Library and Information Services in Distance Learning |
| JLM | Journal of Library Metadata (until 2008, Journal of Internet Cataloging) |
| JLRS | Journal of Library Resource Sharing (until 2020, Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery, and Electronic Reserve; 2005–2019, Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Information Supply) |
| JMGL | Journal of Map & Geography Libraries |
| JMLA | Journal of the Medical Library Association (until 2002, Bulletin of the Medical Library Association) |
| JOLA | Journal of Library Administration |

| Abbreviation | Journal |
|---|---|
| JWL | Journal of Web Librarianship |
| LCATS | Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services (until 1999, Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory; ceased/merged with JLRS in 2017) |
| LHT | Library Hi Tech |
| LISR | Library & Information Science Research |
| LM | Library Management |
| LQ | Library Quarterly |
| LRTS | Library Resources & Technical Services |
| LT | Library Trends |
| MRSQ | Medical Reference Services Quarterly |
| NMLA | Notes of the Music Library Association |
| NRAL | New Review of Academic Librarianship |
| OIR | Online Information Review (until 2000, Online & CD-ROM Review) |
| PL | Public Libraries |
| PMM | Performance Measurement and Metrics |
| PORTAL | portal: Libraries and the Academy |
| RL | Reference Librarian |
| RSR | Reference Services Review |
| RUSQ | Reference and User Services Quarterly (paused 2021–2023) |
| SL | Serials Librarian |
| SR | Serials Review |
| STL | Science & Technology Libraries |
| TSQ | Technical Services Quarterly |