

**RUSA President's Annual Report to
ALA Council
June 2023
Cynthia Johnson, RUSA President 2022-2023**

RUSA had a busy and productive year in 2022-2023. Our major focus was on engaging members over the breadth of the association and promoting the important and excellent work that was being generated in our committees, task forces and overall membership. Specific goals for the year included re-establishing RUSA's peer-reviewed journal *RUSQ* and continuing to support the RUSA Virtual Forum. The work of the Division's Professional Resources Committee and the work of our Achievement Awards and Grants Committee also deserve special recognition.

Our Mission

The Reference and User Services Association is a network to educate, empower, and inspire its members to advance the evolution of the profession and better serve users in a continuously changing information society.

Highlights

Highlights included RUSA's second annual stand-alone education program, the RUSA Virtual Forum, an update to the RUSA Guideline "Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers," and the decision to revive *RUSQ* (Reference and User Services Quarterly).

Communication across the Division

RUSA leadership committed to a minimum of once-a-month communications to the RUSA membership, either from the RUSA President, RUSA committees, or RUSA sections, via RUSA Update. The goal was to keep the membership informed and promote transparency with the hope that more RUSA members will become actively engaged with RUSA. These updates described topics discussed at the RUSA Board meetings, RUSA Committee work and accomplishments, and activities in the sections. Success is being measured by opening rates and increases in volunteers to committees during the 2023 appointment process. The RUSA President Update feature has an opening rate of over 50%, the highest opening rate of all our communication, and the Reference Services Section has seen an increase in volunteers for committees after their monthly updates between January and May.

RUSA Virtual Forum

RUSA hosted its 2nd annual Virtual Forum on March 28th and March 30th. Dr. Nicole A. Cooke, Augusta Baker Endowed Chair and Associate Professor, University of South Carolina School of Information Science, gave the Keynote. RUSA sections and committees presented a variety of topics important to user services. 94% of the respondents to the evaluation survey said that the Forum met or exceeded

their expectations. Some of the takeaways mentioned in the survey include, “I have made a lot of connections with this virtual conference that will be extremely helpful to me,” “The keynote session was AMAZING and THE most valuable takeaway,” “I got some ideas for things I could implement at my library. The keynote gave me much to reflect on,” and “I really enjoyed the session about gaming. I’m not what one would call a “gamer” and I found the information presented to be very helpful, practical, and forward thinking.” Multiple respondents commented positively on the Reference Services Section’s session about relating the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy to reference, particularly in terms of training and advocacy for reference services.

Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers

A RUSA Task Force was formed in 2021 to begin reviewing and updating the *Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers*, an important Guideline referenced by ALA’s Committee on Education’s [Core Competences of Librarianship](#). The Taskforce held an interactive session at the 1st Annual RUSA Virtual Forum, incorporated suggestions from that experience, and then held a town hall in the Summer of 2022 to continue to inform our profession about the proposed changes and hear feedback. In addition to these open forums, the updated Guidelines have now been made available for public review through RUSA’s Professional Resources Committee and will be presented to the RUSA Board for final approval in June or July 2023.

Professional Resources Committee

The Professional Resources Committee (PRC) provides oversight of the maintenance and development of all RUSA Standards and Guidelines, which encompasses many specific responsibilities. This year the Committee oversaw several updates to Guidelines, including *Guidelines for Secondary Source Literacy for History, the Business, Guidelines for Business Information Responses*, and *Guidelines for Resource Sharing Operations Management*. Equally important to working with RUSA sections to update our published Guidelines, the PRC tackled the thorny and difficult issue of when to sunset some Guidelines. Working closely with the relevant section, they made the difficult decision to sunset three Guidelines that had not been updated in many years and for which there was no obvious committee to undertake a review: *Health and Medical References Guidelines*, *Guidelines for the Development and Promotion of Multilingual Collections and Services*, and *Guidelines for Library Services to Spanish-Speaking Library Users*.

Achievement Awards and Grants Committee

RUSA’s Achievement Awards and Grants Committee oversees three achievement awards and two grants. This year the Committee successfully promoted the awards and grants through the RUSA Celebration of 2022 Achievement Awards (RUSA’s second year of holding the Awards ceremony virtually), as well as promoting the 2022 Award Winners and Grant Recipients at the RUSA Virtual Forum. At the Forum several recipients provided overviews of what they did to earn the award or what they have accomplished thus far with the grant. The Committee also conducted interviews with all of the 2022 winners, which were then posted to *RUSA Update*. This publicity and promotion have led to very strong and plentiful nominee submissions in 2023 for most of the awards and grants of the Committee, including over 50 applications for the Stephen T. Riedner Grant for Life Enhancing Library Programs for People Living with Dementia.

Progress on pivot strategy for achieving financial sustainability

Now in its third year, RUSA continues to make progress with its pivot strategy to stabilize and improve its finances. RUSA is anticipating ending FY23 on budget and delivering a surplus. FY22 closed with a surplus of approximately \$34,000 and FY24 is currently being budgeted at a surplus as well.

Other Highlights for the Year

Awards

RUSA would like to thank all our award committees for their dedicated and tireless work overseeing the many selections that comprise both the Achievement and Book and Media Awards.

Achievement Awards

Across the division, we recognized numerous division and section Achievement Awards winners ([view the full list of award winners](#)). A Virtual Award Ceremony will be held July 20th.

Book and Media Awards

Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction

The Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction, established in 2012, recognize the best fiction and nonfiction books for adult readers published in the U.S. in the previous year and serve as a guide to help adults select quality reading material. They are the first single-book awards for adult books given by the American Library Association and reflect the expert judgment and insight of library professionals who work closely with adult readers. The winners (one for fiction, one for nonfiction) are announced at an event at LibLearnX; winning authors receive a \$5,000 cash award. The [2023 Award Winners](#) were: Fiction – *The Swimmers* by Julie Otsuka and Nonfiction – *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us* by Ed Yong.

Book and Media Awards Ceremony

The winners of our other Book and Media Awards – Notable Book List, Reading List, Listen List, CODES List, Outstanding Reference Sources selections, the Dartmouth Medal for Excellence in Reference, and the Sophie Brody Medal for Jewish literature, can be found on RUSA Update at <https://www.rusaupdate.org/category/awards/book-and-media/>. The year's best in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, audiobook narration, reference materials and more, are hand-picked by selection committees that work closely with adult readers. Their efforts narrow down hundreds of finalists to curate the highly regarded "Best of" lists used by librarians, publishers and booksellers nationwide.

Publications

The RUSA Board approved the plan to relaunch *RUSQ*. Barry Trott has agreed to edit the journal for three years, re-establish the editorial board, and put out calls for column editors. January 2024 is our planned relaunch date.

RUSA Sections and Interest Groups

RUSA has six sections reflecting a diversity of professional interests: Business Reference and Services Section (BRASS), Collection Development and Evaluation Section (CODES), Emerging Technologies Section (ETS), History Section (HS), Reference Services Section (RSS), and Sharing and Transforming Access to Resources Section (STARS). The sections contribute in their unique ways to making for a vibrant association.

Just a few section highlights include:

BRASS

- BRASS committees put forth an impressive array of engaging, high-quality, well attended virtual programs and discussions throughout the year, including the BRASS Fall and Spring Symposia, Fall and Spring Publisher’s Forums, BRASS Discussions, and New Business Librarians Group Discussions.
- BRASS members launched BISdex Beta, a business information sources index that contains reviews of sources of interest to business information professionals. It's like *Wirecutter* but reviewing business information sources rather than consumer products. It is available to current BRASS members.
- The BRASS Mentoring Program officially launched this year after a successful pilot with 25 active pairs in the mentorship program.
- BRASS sponsored the following program in the RUSA Virtual Reference Forum, “Reimagining business outreach and instruction: Just do it!”

CODES

- The Section’s work this year focused on the Book & Media Awards, including updating their manuals.
- CODES sponsored “Wrangling Institutional Advisory Efforts: How One Public Library System Created a Platform for All Format, All Ages Advisory Services,” in the RUSA Virtual Forum. The session focused on Denver Public Library’s 27 branches reopening and the need for an all-aged EDI-focused advisory services platform to streamline the process of Readers Advisory and minimize the potential of duplication of effort, particularly in light of staff shortages.

ETS

- The ETS Systems and Discovery Committee hosted the RUSA webinar “Ensuring Accessibility in Discovery: EEAAP forms and Alternative Access” in September 2022. The presenters discussed how EEAAPs (Equally Effective Alternate Access Plans) are an effective means of ensuring that

there are alternative procedures in place that will enable library users with physical and visual disabilities to access materials.

- An ETS Subcommittee proposed a student intern program for ETS, which has been endorsed by the RUSA Board and will be discussed by the RUSA Budget and Finance Committee. We look forward to implementing the student intern program in 2023/2024.
- ETS sponsored a program in the RUSA Virtual Forum entitled “Achievement Unlocked!: Video Game Collection Development and Reference for Libraries” which engendered an enthusiastic discussion around collecting video games.

History

- The History Section sponsored the session “One for the History Books: Drafting Guidelines for Secondary Source Literacy for History,” as part of the RUSA Virtual Reference Forum. The session was based on the Section’s Academic Librarians Committee’s *Guidelines for Secondary Source Literacy for History*. Presenters described their process of adapting the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education for use by history librarians.
- The History Section has also programmed a Preconference for ALA Annual in Chicago: “Research in the Heart of America: Chicago Area Resources for Genealogy and Local History.”

RSS

- RSS has expended time and energy on communicating to inform RSS members and RUSA at large about the Section’s activities. The goal has been to increase the number of volunteers on the Section’s committees and its efforts have netted at least 11 new volunteers between January and May 2023.
- The Section’s Research Help in Academic Libraries (RHAL) committee presented a roundtable discussion at the 2023 ACRL Conference and also presented a training session on threshold concepts in reference interviews at the 2023 RUSA Virtual Forum (“Framing Our Work: Mapping Threshold Concepts to the Reference Interview”).
- The Section has put energy into revising Guidelines as well as making important decisions about which guidelines should be archived. The revised *Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers* was sent to RUSA for public review and will be presented to the RUSA Board in June or July 2023. The *Guidelines for Library Services with 60+ Audience: Best Practices* will be sent to the RUSA Professional Resources Committee (PRC) for review and *Measuring and Assessing Reference Services and Resources: A Guide* has been sent to the RUSA Professional Resources Committee (PRC) for review.

STARS

- STARS sponsored a session, titled “STARS Access to Resources – Course Reserves & Streaming Media,” on streaming media as it relates to Course Reserves, which is an emerging trend in user services.

Interest Groups (IG)

RUSA has five highly active Interest Groups: Federal and Armed Forces Libraries (FAFLIG), Financial Literacy (FLIG), First Year Experience (FYE), Physical Deliver Interest Group and Shared Collections Interest Group. Each interest group is active in providing education and enhanced member experiences for their members. The Shared Collections Interest Group held a fall 2022 online forum focused on shared collections from a specialized library point of view, which drew 40 attendees. FAFLIG awarded its Federal Achievement Award, which recognizes an individual for achievement in the promotion of library and information service and the information profession in the Federal community. FAFLIG also hosted a number of online speaker series, including a session with the NOAA Librarian, a session with the FDR Library Director, and a session with the U.S. Copyright Office.

Conference Programs

RUSA will be sponsoring 39 total programs and meetings at the upcoming ALA Annual Conference ([view the complete list of conference programs with dates and times](#)). Some of the programs include:

- The RUSA President’s Program, *Leading for Justice: Surveying the Intersection of Social Justice and User Services*.
- Our 2nd Annual RUSA Coffee and Conversations, which was extremely well attended at the 2022 Conference.
- RUSA ETS Technology Showcase
- New Discoveries in Reference: The 29th Annual Reference Research Forum
- RUSA will again co-host, with the Gaming Roundtable and NMRT, the ALA Trivia Championship.

Online Courses and Webinars

RUSA Online Learning continues to be a very popular resource. Completed webinars and courses are the following:

Courses	Date	Participants
<i>Marketing the 21st Century Library</i>	9/12	9
<i>Reference Interview 101</i>	10/3	18
<i>Inside Interlibrary Loan: Basics for a new Millennium</i>	3/20	40
<i>Reference Interview 101</i>	4/4	28

<i>Who Manages Who Leads Part One: Developing Your Career Plan</i>	5/1	27
<i>Business Reference 101</i>	5/22	60

Webinars	Date	Participants
<i>Ensuring Accessibility in Discovery: EEAAP forms and Alternative Access</i>	9/21	16
<i>Canva and Design for Libraries: Page Layout and Social Media Design</i>	11/16	127
<i>Quiet Leadership: Foster your identity as an introverted or quiet leader to inspire beyond words</i>	12/7	96
<i>Supporting an Informed Citizenry with State Legislative Research Strategies and Tools</i>	2/15	12
<i>Making the Most Out of Free Historical Resources</i>	3/1	38
<i>Developing Collections on Gender Relations and Feminism in the Twenty-First Century: Part One</i>	4/26	10

<i>Developing Collections on Gender Relations and Feminism in the Twenty-First Century: Part Two</i>	5/3	8
<i>Taking Charge of Your Career: Creating and Assessing Your Development Plan</i>	5/17	16

It has been my honor to serve as RUSA President this year.

Cynthia Johnson, 2022-2023