

## Sociology Librarians Discussion Group

Jeff Lacy and Rui Wang, Co-Conveners

The Sociology Librarians Discussion Group meeting was held on Saturday June 29, 2013 10:30-11:30. Fifteen people attended this meeting. The discussion group invited Susan Metcalf who is Social Sciences Librarian at Western Carolina University for a presentation. Her presentation was based on her newly published article in *The Reference Librarian* volume 54 2013, "Good Stewards in Trying Times: Benchmarking Peer Collections of Sociology Reference Sources Using LibGuides." Susan began her presentation with her reasoning of this study. She found that more than 3,000 libraries worldwide had used LibGuides to create research guides. These research guides are not a reviewing resource per se, but they provide a valuable tool for creating efficient collections by referencing specific materials and databases chosen by librarians from peer institutions. Susan surveyed 118 her institution's Carnegie peer institutions and included 96 sociology guides as the final sample. Susan presented two tables she summarized. Table 1 shows references listed in at least ten sociology LibGuides. The most popular title was Encyclopedia of Sociology 2<sup>nd</sup> edition published in 2000. The second most popular title was the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences 2<sup>nd</sup> edition published in 2007. Table 2 lists subsidiaries and imprints, as well as online content providers. Sage Publications has the most titles and continues to publish many new reference titles in sociology. Susan's article concludes that "The survey of peer LibGuides provides useful data on core sociology reference resources and databases and demonstrates that librarians continue to promote subject reference works."

Susan's presentation intrigued the group's discussions on the value of using sociology reference works, the trends that students use the reference works, other resources that evaluate sociology reference works, Wikipedia and google vs. commercially published reference works, and the life cycle of reference publications. Some librarians shared their experiences in using reference collections for reference services and instruction. Some librarians pointed out a potential flaw of using LibGuides to collect data. The reference works listed on research guides may not evenly distributed because of the different purposes of reference the research guides. Nevertheless, we appreciated Susan's innovative and valuable research. Her research and presentation were well received by the group.

The group also spent a short time to talk about the Sociology Librarians Toolkit. Sally Wilson Weimer explained the situation of which there was lacking responses to moving forward this project. Rui Wang asked librarians to contact the conveners for new topics and agenda for the next discussion meeting.