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Canadian Publications in Library and Information Science A Database of Research by LIS Academics and Practitioners in Canada

Publications canadiennes en bibliothéconomie et sciences de l'information

Une base de données des publications de chercheurs et practiciens en bibliothéconomie et sciences de l'information au Canada

Jean-Sébastien Sauv   , Madelaine Hare , Geoff Krause , Constance Poitras , Poppy Riddle  and Philippe Mongeon 

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Article abstract

The aim of the Canadian publications in Library and Information Science (LIS) database is to help break down the silos in which the two main target audiences – LIS faculty members and academic librarians – conduct their research. As part of a larger project entitled “Breaking down research silos”, we created a database of research contributions by Canadian LIS researchers (academics and practitioners). This was motivated by a desire to make research by Canadian LIS scholars and practitioners more visible and foster collaboration between these two groups. The aim of this paper is to introduce the database, describe the process through which it was created, provide descriptive statistics of the database content, and highlight areas for future development.

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Canadian Publications in Library and Information Science: A Database of Research by LIS Academics and Practitioners in Canada

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The aim of the Canadian publications in Library and Information Science (LIS) database is to help break down the silos in which the two main target audiences – LIS faculty members and academic librarians – conduct their research. As part of a larger project entitled “Breaking down research silos”, we created a database of research contributions by Canadian LIS researchers (academics and practitioners). This was motivated by a desire to make research by Canadian LIS scholars and practitioners more visible and foster collaboration between these two groups. The aim of this paper is to introduce the database, describe the process through which it was created, provide descriptive statistics of the database content, and highlight areas for future development.

Keywords: library and information science, academic librarians, Canadian universities, scholarly communication, scholarly publishing, open data

Introduction

Library and Information Science (LIS) research in Canada has traditionally been the bailiwick of two groups: faculty members teaching in LIS departments and academic librarians. While both groups are concerned with contributing to the development of professional theory and practice, performing research is a key aspect of university faculty members' workload. Academic librarians support research activities occurring at higher education institutions, and many are expected to devote part of their time to research activities as a part of their job descriptions (Ducas et al., 2020; Kandiuk & Sonne de Torrens, 2018). Exceptions to this arrangement exist, such as at Quebec's francophone institutions, where academic librarians are not considered faculty members and do not share the same benefits (e.g., research sabbaticals, academic freedom) and research obligations (Fox, 2007; Zavala Mora et al., 2023). The prioritization of scholarly production in librarians' workload, however, is encouraged by professional associations, such as the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) (Babb, 2017). It follows that considering both LIS practitioners and academic research

activities can help generate a more holistic understanding of these practices and of the contributions members of the LIS community make to the advancement of knowledge.

Several attempts to analyze the LIS research landscape in Canada have been made in the past decade (Paul-Hus et al., 2016; Julien & Fena, 2018; Shu & Mongeon, 2016; Mongeon et al., 2023). Many of these studies, partly because of their reliance on commercial databases with limited coverage (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016), tend to overlook the contributions of librarians and particularly the French-speaking scholarly community.

This paper introduces a dataset of publications authored by LIS academics and university librarians in Canada, which was created in the context of a research project exploring collaborations and interactions between the two groups. The dataset draws from sources like OpenAlex (Priem et al., 2022) and Google Scholar, which are open and more comprehensive than commonly used commercial databases like Web of Science and Scopus. We aim to increase the visibility of LIS research to better understand the diverse research areas and practices of the community and foster greater collaboration and engagement. In this paper, we describe the process through which the dataset was created, provide an overview of its contents, and highlight areas for future development of the dataset and further research.

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Data and Methods

General Approach

The objective of gathering research publications by two groups of people (academics and practitioners) implies a person-centred approach to the construction of our database, in which we gathered all the publications authored by a predetermined list of individuals as opposed to all the publications in a particular research area or a set of journals. The latter, publication-centred, approach would be more appropriate if the goal was to study a body of literature no matter who its contributors are. Accordingly, the process outlined below starts with the gathering of a list of individuals as the first step, and their research output (if any) as the second step.

This person-centred approach is in some regards less ambiguous than delineating the field based on topics. Selecting a set of individuals or organizational units to include in the database may not always be straightforward, but the boundaries between individuals and between organizational units tend to be more clear than disciplinary boundaries, especially in a field like LIS. Furthermore, due the multidisciplinary nature of the field, a topic-based approach to data collection would risk excluding research that sit at the periphery of what we might call the traditional or core LIS research topics. Beyond even the periphery of LIS as a discipline, academic librarians may participate in research pertaining to the subject areas in which they liaise, and LIS researchers in general, whose academic backgrounds can vary widely, may choose to publish on topics or in venues primarily associated with other disciplines. Similarly, our database would fail to capture the essence of a community of LIS researchers and practitioners if we considered all publications on information-related topics regardless of the authors' affiliations.

Data Collection and Processing

List of Academics and Practitioners

In summer 2022, we manually collected from the institutional websites the names of librarians at 93 Canadian universities and all researchers (including doctoral students and postdocs) attached to the eight Canadian organizational units (i.e., Faculty, Department, or School) offering an ALA-accredited program. For academic libraries, we collected a list of 93 Canadian universities and then consulted their websites to gather lists of academic librarians. Overall, 2,630 names (including duplicates, where individuals held multiple roles, or were affiliated with multiple institutions) were collected through this process, along with their institutional affiliation and status (academic or practitioner). Each person was also searched on Google Scholar and orcid.org, and the URLs of their profiles were recorded when found (620 Google Scholar profiles and 820 ORCID profiles).

Google Scholar

We used version 0.2.4 of the scholar package (Yu et al., 2022) in R to query the Google Scholar API and retrieve all the entries in the Google Scholar profiles of the 620 researchers for which a Google Scholar profile was found. In total, 23,176 publications were retrieved, linked to 572 Google Scholar profiles.

ORCID

Similarly, we used the ORCID API to retrieve the list of publications from the ORCID accounts we were able to identify. For the 820 ORCID profiles found for Canadian LIS researchers and practitioners, this stage yielded 4,938 publications linked to 204 distinct ORCID profiles. Note that ORCID profiles are managed by researchers themselves, and that listed publications are often linked via DOIs, ensuring higher data accuracy; this is offset by the ability of researchers to make their profiles and listed publications private, reducing the completeness of the available data.

OpenAlex

The full names of LIS researchers and practitioners were searched against OpenAlex authors, using the openalexR package (Aria & Le, 2022), yielding a list of 154,847 (138,163 unique) potential author ID matches.

Publication records retrieved using ORCID containing DOIs were matched to OpenAlex works records using this as the identifier. Other works retrieved from ORCID profiles, as well as those from Google Scholar profiles, were matched to OpenAlex works by searching against the title field. OpenAlex author IDs linked to the works retrieved from Google Scholar profiles, as well as author IDs containing known ORCIDs were added to the list of potential author ID matches, bringing the total to 163,882 OpenAlex author IDs (139,466 unique). Works linked to these authors were then retrieved for manual disambiguation, alongside those previously retrieved from Google Scholar and ORCID that were not linked to OpenAlex works.

Name Disambiguation and Verification

Lists of practitioner/academic names and attributed works from ORCID, Google Scholar, and OpenAlex were supplied to our team, and were checked manually to determine whether these were the same individuals as our initial list.

This stage produced a list of 9,528 works attributed to 461 named individuals.

Scopus

Following the manual cleaning of publication lists, the list of linked authors was compared to the original list of LIS researchers and practitioners. Those not linked to any publications (2169) were searched for manually in Scopus.

This yielded an additional 865 profiles and 4,247 publications, which were again matched to OpenAlex works using the DOI.

Database Construction and Population

The relational database schema was created on a PostgreSQL server hosted on Microsoft Azure. Manual cleaning was done using spreadsheets in Excel. Data retrieval, processing, and import to the database were done using custom R scripts.

Dataset Overview

The result section provides a short overview of the dataset's content. An entity relationship diagram and a description of each field are available in Appendix A.

Number of Authors by Group

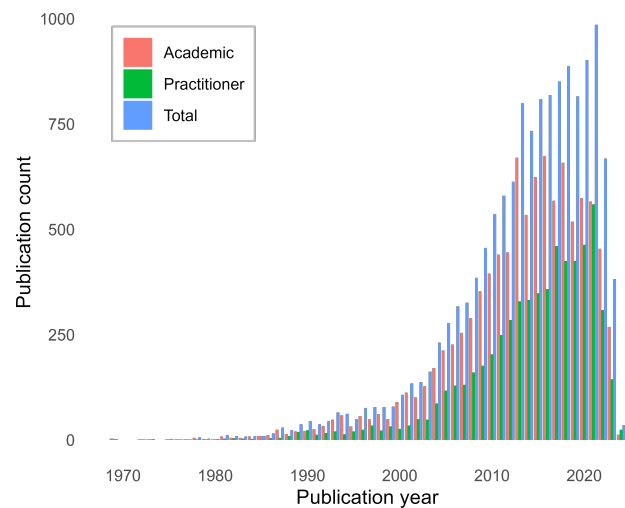
Overall, the dataset contains 1,326 distinct authors, 850 of which were classified as practitioners and 476 as academics. While we acknowledge that individuals can move from one group to the other or have dual roles at some point or for all their career, practitioners and academics are mutually exclusive categories in our dataset. Librarians who also teach in LIS programs, for instance, were classified as practitioners in the dataset. It should also be noted that these statuses can change and that our dataset reflects imperfect information obtained in the summer of 2022.

Number of Records

The dataset contains a total of 13,775 records out of which 8,230 are authored by at least one academic and 5,740 are authored by at least one practitioner. The number of records for each group over time, presented in Figure 1, shows a peak in publications in 2021. This is caused by the fact that we conducted most of the data collection in 2022, and final steps (e.g., authors lookup in Scopus) were conducted in 2023 and 2024. Instead of dropping the 2022, 2023, and 2024 records from the dataset, we chose to include them and indicate in the dataset documentation a disclaimer that data from the 2022-2024 period is incomplete. Depending on the dataset usage, this may not be an issue. Furthermore, future attempts to update the dataset to include a complete publication record for 2022 onwards will be made easier by having some of the records already available.

Figure 1

Yearly publication counts by author status



Document Types

The dataset contains a wide array of document types, shown in Table 1, in part due to heterogeneous schemes used between source databases. Well over half are of type 'article', and over 90% of publications with an assigned type are of type 'article', 'conference paper', 'review', 'book chapter', or 'book review'. Over 14% of publications do not have a known type; in most cases the value is absent, but the number below includes a small amount marked explicitly as 'unknown' or 'other'. While not all document types necessarily represent research outputs, such a determination may be highly subjective, and we have opted not to filter these out to allow users to tailor this to their needs.

Publication Source

Table 2 presents the top 20 most frequent publication sources (limited to journals and conferences) in the dataset as well as their rank and number of records for each group.

Conclusion

Ardanuy & Urbano (2017) commented on the weakening cooperation of LIS faculty and practitioners and cited an urgency to improve it "at a time when the discipline is at a crossroads of digital transformation that will require a commitment to research, development and innovation" (pg. 317). Making LIS publication data open and accessible may promote such cooperation, as it meets several objectives linked to the dissemination, promotion and preservation of LIS knowledge created by both academics and practitioners in Canada. Updating and improving the dataset on a continuing basis may contribute to improving visibility of and access to Canadian

Table 1*Number of records by type*

Document type	Pract. pubs	Acad. pubs	All pubs.
article	2,580	4,934	7,413
conference paper	202	1,221	1,400
review	679	350	1,015
book chapter	122	682	798
book review	202	6	208
editorial	35	128	162
book	31	105	135
report	119	0	119
conference presentation	105	0	105
note	30	64	93
research materials	45	0	45
dissertation/thesis	47	1	48
letter	5	30	35
preprint	31	0	31
monograph	1	24	25
protocol	24	0	24
erratum/correction	6	16	22
presentation	18	0	18
conference poster	17	0	17
meeting abstract	15	0	15
short survey	3	9	12
editorial material	8	3	10
other types (n<10 overall)	53	5	57
type unknown	1,362	652	1,968
all works	5,740	8,230	13,775

scholarly contributions in the information sciences, highlighting the contributions of librarians as researchers, encouraging further adoption of open data sharing practices, promoting inter-university and intersectoral exchanges between librarians and researchers, and advancing knowledge in the field.

Future work

The authors are currently working with this database to contrast and compare research production by LIS scholars and practitioners, as well as to investigate collaboration between the two groups. The availability of identifiers for various entities in the database (works, authors, venues, institutions) allows for the data to be linked to multiple sources, including

both those sources involved in the original data gathering, as well as others making use of well-supported permanent identifiers (e.g., DOIs, ORCIDs). Through this approach, we intend to include a comparison of OpenAlex's topics in the aforementioned analysis to further understand the research areas covered by works in the database.

Canadian LIS researchers and practitioners may request updates to the data using the instructions on the Zenodo website (see Data Availability). Broader updates to the dataset may be undertaken in the future if resources are available.

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Author Contributions

J-S. S. Conceptualization, Data curation, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **G. K.** Data curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **P. R.** Data curation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **M. H.** Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **C. P.** Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **P. M.** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

Data Availability

The data set is available on Zenodo: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14302591>.

Table 2*Number of records by source (top 20 – Journals & Conferences)*

Source	All publications		Practitioners		Academics	
	Rank	N	Rank	N	Rank	N
Proceedings of the Annual Conference of CAIS / Actes du congrès annuel de l'ACSI	1	206	10	38	1	191
Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology	2	184	28	13	2	175
Evidence Based Library and Information Practice	3	170	1	149	29	22
The Deakin Review of Children's Literature	4	132	2	131	> 100	1
Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology	5	124	78	6	3	119
PLoS ONE	6	101	11	33	8	68
BMJ Open	7	88	4	67	24	25
Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology	8	87	> 100	3	4	85
Documentation et bibliothèques	9	82	59	8	6	74
Partnership The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research	10	78	3	72	91	9
Scientometrics	11	77	59	8	7	70
Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology	12	76	> 100	3	5	75
The Journal of Academic Librarianship	12	76	6	59	29	22
Library & Information Science Research	14	75	44	10	8	68
Journal of the Canadian Health Libraries Association / Journal de l'Association de bibliothèques de la santé du Canada	15	65	5	64	> 100	3
College & Research Libraries	16	62	7	45	36	19
Cataloging & Classification Quarterly	16	62	24	14	12	50
Journal of Documentation	16	62	> 100	4	10	61
Education for Information	19	56	> 100	2	11	54
Journal of the Medical Library Association JMLA	20	55	8	41	43	17

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Appendix A. Database documentation

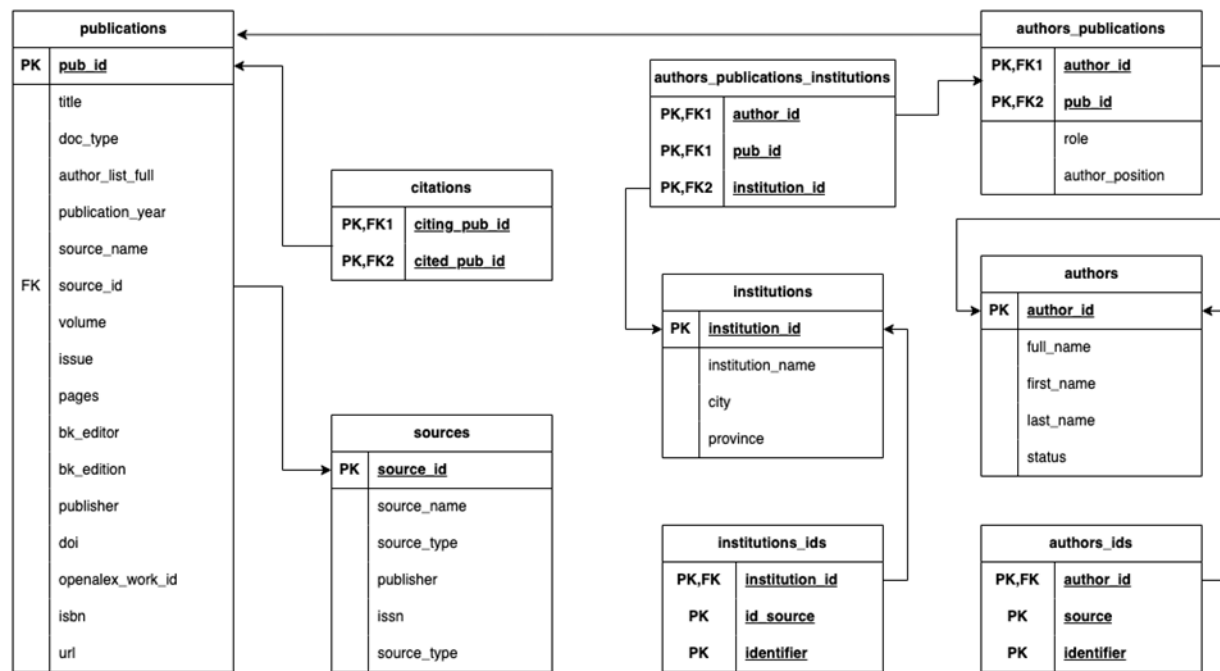


Figure A1. Entity relationship diagram

Table A1. Canadian LIS authors table (authors)

Field	Description
author_id	Unique identifier for the publication in the LIS database
first_name	First name of author
last_name	Last name of author
full_name	Full name of author
status	Academic (Ph.D. student, postdoctoral fellow, or professor (assistant, associate, full, emeritus) in an organizational unit offering an ALA-accredited degree) or practitioner (librarian position in a Canadian university)

Table A2. Works table (publications)

Field	Description
pub_id	Unique identifier for the publication in the LIS database
doi	Digital object identifiers
openalex_work_id	Identifier of the work in the OpenAlex database (URL format)
isbn	International standard book number (ISBN).
doc_type	Document type. Can take one of the following values: article; review; conference paper, book; edited book; book chapter.
publication_year	Year of publication
title	Title of the document
source_name	Title of the source (journal, conference, or book title for book chapters)
author_list_full	Full text listing of author names
volume	Volume number
issue	Issue number
pages	First and last pages separated by a hyphen.
bk_edition	Book edition
bk_editor	Name of book editor (for book chapters)
publisher	Publisher of the book/journal
source_id	Foreign key to the sources table
url	URL for the publication

Table A3. Author publications table (authors_publications)

Field	Description
author_id	Unique identifier for the author in the authors table
pub_id	Unique identifier for the work in the publications table
author_position	Position on the byline.
role	Role of the author on the work (author/editor)

Table A4. Author IDs table (authors_ids)

Field	Description
author_id	Unique identifier for the author in the authors table
source	Source for the identifier (e.g., OpenAlex, Scopus, Google Scholar, ORCID)
identifier	Identifier for the author in the source database

Table A5. Publication source table (sources)

Field	Description
source_id	Unique identifier for the source
source_name	Name of the source
publisher	Publisher name for the source
issn	ISSN for the source
source_type	OpenAlex source type (e.g., journal, conference)

Table A6. Institutions table (institutions)

Field	Description
institution_id	Unique identifier for the institution
institution_name	Name of the Canadian academic institution
city	Name of the city in which the institution is primarily located
province	Two-letter code of the province in which the institution is located

Table A7. Institution IDs table (institutions_ids)

Field	Description
institution_id	Unique identifier for the institution in the institutions table
id_source	Source database for the identifier (e.g., OpenAlex)
identifier	Identifier linked to the institution in the source database

Table A8. Authorship institutional affiliation table (authors_publications_institutions)

Field	Description
author_id	Author component of the authorship information in the <i>authors_publications</i> table
pub_id	Publication component of the authorship information in the <i>authors_publications</i> table
institution_id	Unique identifier for the affiliated institution in the institutions table

Table A9. Citations table (citations)

Field	Description
citing_pub_id	Unique identifier for the citing work in the publications table
cited_pub_id	Unique identifier for the cited work in the publications table