

# Substance Abuse Library and Information Studies (SALIS) eProceedings: An Introduction

Judit Ward

*Center of Alcohol Studies  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

William Bejarano

*Center of Alcohol Studies  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

*It is our great honor and pleasure to welcome readers to browse the eProceedings of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Substance Abuse Librarians and Information Specialists (SALIS) hosted by the Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies (CAS) in New Brunswick, NJ, April 29 – May 2, 2014. The conference theme was “Looking forward, looking back: Reflections on the past and planning for the future.” This is the first time conference proceedings share the vast knowledge of SALIS members presented and accumulated over the years at the Annual Conference. SALIS conference hosts have always wished to see more participants at the events. As an alternative to traditional journal publications, showcasing papers and posters is our new and experimental way to also involve those who could not travel to the Rutgers conference. If successful, this publication can be the first of a series of conference proceedings called Substance Abuse Library and Information Studies, which shares and preserves our contributions in a traditional way, but in a more current format, as eProceedings.*

## **What exactly is SALIS?**

In 2014 SALIS is the only professional group of its kind in the entire world serving the substance abuse field for decades. SALIS membership and target audience include

librarians, information specialists, researchers, practitioners, government and non-governmental organizations, and the public at large. As we often cite, SALIS is a small but influential non-profit organization in a specialized field with members all over

the United States, Canada, Israel, Australia, and most recently, throughout Europe. But what does this all mean to librarians and to the profession? SALIS is known as an organization without borders. Members have learned to enjoy and benefit from a mostly online and virtual SALIS community. SALIS traditions ensure that newly hired member librarians are welcome to the field by the peers, and they receive help from colleagues all over the world from day one on the job. The support from like-minded individuals in the same situation, many of them also working in solitude, can bring a sense of belonging and some comfort, while it also assists in shaping the job in the new position. For a more comprehensive history of SALIS, please see Andrea Mitchell's paper on the topic, which serves as a fitting conclusion to this initial volume of the eProceedings.

### **What is the SALIS Annual Conference about?**

Everyone acknowledges that our major event, the annual conference, adds tremendous value to the group both professionally and personally. It is challenging to maintain meaningful professional relationships in a world where much of the work is performed online. Putting a face to a name has never been more important than in our fast-paced and ever-changing work environment. A rare occasion to see each other face to face, such as at the conference, is a great opportunity to meet in person, establish new connections, and strengthen old friendships, but also to recap events that happened in the previous year.

The conference, hosted by one of the SALIS member institutions each year, has been a major event on the calendar of long-term SALIS members. Many of them have been involved in molding the organization to what it is now: a reliable professional network of librarians, and by extension, their host institutions. Although the individual librarian may change jobs, the library, the department, the prevention center, or the company still needs the knowledge, the

experience, and the resources only SALIS can provide. The same applies to us: the institutional memory of a professional organization is as good as its documentation. The conference proceedings wish to add to that too.

### **What happens at the conference stays at the conference? Not anymore!**

The conference program includes organizational activities, such as the board meetings, general membership meetings, and special interest group meetings, as well as a scholarly agenda. The SALIS annual conference is the major event for many librarians to present on their research or to share what is currently happening in their libraries. In the past, we enjoyed numerous wonderful presentations, discussed important problems, and often found solutions to problems in our own libraries inspired by both the formal and informal talks. Sharing previous experience and offering new ideas go hand-in-hand in these conferences. Some of the conference materials became available after the event on the SALIS website, which continues to serve as an excellent resource for members only.

It takes a great deal of work to present at a conference. It takes even more to host one. After listening to the successful presentations year after year, the organizers at Rutgers feel that the topic of this year will be of interest for colleagues outside our field too, and an easy access to the eProceedings may draw the attention of broader audiences to SALIS and the profession.

### **What are you talking about when you are talking about eProceedings?**

Traditionally, depending somewhat on the field, publishing one's work in conference proceedings is not necessarily considered equal to a publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Papers in conference proceedings usually greatly vary in style, length, and

formatting. Some authors may choose to write up their ideas in a full-length paper before the presentation and simply read it aloud at the conference, with or without slides, then publish it in the proceedings. Others, who prefer to ad-lib the presentation, driven by some slides and the audience, will produce a written version for the proceedings that might include a few thoughts missed during the talk.

Although an option from the beginning, submitting a written contribution was not mandatory for the presenters, and not everyone took the opportunity to send in a paper to be considered for the eProceedings. Even though nothing can replace the atmosphere of the conference room, the proceedings wish to serve as an extension to the program agenda, including the rich selection of topics, styles, and presenters. Experimenting with the genre for the first time, the editors of the SALIS eProceedings decided to grant as much freedom to the presenters as possible to write up their paper, as long as the final version reflects the paper presented at the SALIS conference. As a result, texts in this collection represent a great variety of styles, from fairly colloquial presentations of ideas and reflections to some more scholarly texts with a formal section of works cited. As formats and tones are largely prompted by the topic discussed and mirror the paper presented at the conference, the emphasis remains on diversity, just like in our field.

## **Conference Theme**

The Conference theme of “Looking forward, looking back: Reflections on the past and planning for the future” has largely influenced the organization of the Proceedings’ contents. History played a prominent role in this year’s Conference, and the contents have subsequently been organized into the following sub-themes: Creating History, Discovering History, Advancing History, Preserving History, and Displaying History. The eProceedings are, as mentioned, concluded with a SALIS History.

## **Creating History**

The opening talk of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual SALIS Conference was delivered by Dr. Robert Pandina, the Director of the Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies, the oldest institution in the field. In his engaging recollection Dr. Pandina reviewed how the first American journal in substance use, the *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, shaped the field from the very beginning. His paper highlights some milestones of the evolution of this field from a unique and sometimes subjective perspective of a distinguished researcher, who has been involved in the field in a variety of ways that have served to shape alcohol studies as a discipline.

Related to this historical presentation, next, Dr. Gail Milgram, the former Director of the Rutgers Summer School of Alcohol Studies, walks us through the beginning of alcohol education, as it started in 1943 at the First Summer School of Alcohol Studies at Yale. The exceptional value of this paper derives from the fact well known to the conference hosts that directing the School has been her life’s work. As such, her “dedication and love for the School comes through on occasion”, as she admits in her text. To that we add that we are glad to preserve it for the benefit of alcohol historians.

## **Discovering History**

An entire section is dedicated to mysteries and speculations on the unknown parts of the life of a remarkable founding father of the field, E.M. Jellinek. Led by Center of Alcohol Studies (CAS) librarian Dr. Judit Hajnal Ward, and information specialist William Bejarano, a group of former graduate assistants, now librarians (Christine Bariahtaris, Scott Goldstein, Karen Thomas, and Molly Stewart) take turns in presenting their unforgettable journey in discovering pieces of the puzzle. E.M. Jellinek is well known as a founder of alcohol studies, including our library field, as he was instrumental in organizing and publishing alcohol-related information. The six papers, presented in a fast-paced panel at the

conference “*Mystery and speculations: Piecing together E.M. Jellinek’s redemption,*” depict the early, pre-alcohol era life of Jellinek, which to this point has remained mostly undocumented. In lieu of a continuous flow of slides as presented at the conference, these papers tie the new and undocumented information in this section expanding on details as necessary.

Their quest is complemented by Dr. Ron Roizen, sociologist, the ultimate Jellinek-expert. The seven papers present a virtual expedition in the past, focusing on the search and sharing failures and dead ends.

### **Advancing History**

In our time, when libraries and prevention/treatment centers feel threatened by the tight economy, it is increasingly valuable to look into our strengths to keep moving forward. The next two papers, although from different perspectives, prove how traditional methods and established values advance history in the long run. Barbara Weiner walks us through the merger of two essential components of the addiction field, the Betty Ford Foundation and the Hazelden Foundation, with a detailed chronology and plenty of pictures. The combined efforts of these two reputable organizations will reach broader audiences than either of them alone, supporting each other in many ways for the benefit of the field.

The next paper, based on the talk given by Dr. Barbara Seitz de Martinez from the Indiana Prevention Resource Center, serves as an outstanding example of how creative use of library services may secure the library’s existence. With its charts and tables potentially hard to grasp during a presentation, the written version helps the reader understand the importance of matching library services with the organization’s mission. Using examples such as e-resources, GIS, and prevention outreach services, the paper presents ideas and practical examples of how to match these services to broader audiences related to the core goals of the organization. Tailored to a

special population, the Latino community, the library’s new service model, drawn upon their own outreach and assessment, should serve as inspiration to other librarians.

### **Preserving History**

Witnesses to big and small events, librarians preserve history in their daily work. This section starts with the introduction of the International Alcohol Information Database, the brand new initiative at the International Center for Alcohol Politics. Bryony Addis-Jones has been working on the project for several years now. With its over 50,000 records, the new database is a promising source to both librarians and researchers. The paper, related from the perspective of the practitioner-developer librarian, offers plenty of examples on the use of International Alcohol Information Database – Research, a work in progress with a potential of meeting the needs of the evidence gap between the past and the future, as suggested by the title.

Next is a personal account, hence the informal tone, on a fairly common situation and how it was handled. Sheila LaCroix of the CAMH Library describes a solution to their challenge of having to downsize a physical collection using a host repository, a possibility that others in a similar situation might not have considered. Co-authored by Olivia Dale Long, the paper features a list of potential repositories, a valuable resource for others who wish explore the option.

A hot topic such as the controversies around recreational marijuana cannot be missing at the SALIS conference, especially after the presentations in Berkeley, CA last year on the topic. Meg Brunner’s undertaking of documenting the role and efforts of librarians in two states, Washington and Colorado will surely preserve this part of addiction librarianship history. Chronicling the events and responses to new rules and regulations from a variety of organizations, ranging from the media to her own, the ADAI, the author provides an outstanding snapshot, while suggesting a more active role to SALIS members, who are “uniquely qualified to be

engaged at the highest levels of education and policy-making when it comes to marijuana legislation.”

Another outstanding initiative is discussed in the next paper, written by Christine Goodair, from the International Centre for Drug Policy, St George’s, University of London. She discusses the digitization of over 190,000 records of the Addicts Index files (1968-1994) for research communities. With its balance between background and historical information, as well as the detailed account of the preservation initiative, this paper will resonate with our readers, since many libraries are now faced with physical downsizing and are left wondering what to do with their print collections (paraphrasing the reviewer). SALIS members involved in preservation and digitization projects benefit from the planning and systematic review of the process, as well as some tips to make similar projects viable and successful.

## **Displaying History**

It might be odd to see posters in conference proceedings, but in keeping with our mission of encapsulating the diverse nature of the conference, we decided to include them as well. Another feature that made our conference special this year was that poster presenters were given an opportunity to present their posters to the audience in the form of a so-called “ignite session”. This innovative format is in fact a 3-5 minute presentation with the poster projected on a single slide in the background. Providing a short window to give a general overview of their posters, this format saved plenty of time and cut back on potential redundant questions during the actual poster

session, which followed the talks. To the newcomer to SALIS, all events are held in the same room during the conference, and poster presenters had the chance to answer more detailed questions during the individual poster time. Short communications in this eProceedings relate to both occasions, as chosen by the presenter.

Another novelty of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual SALIS Conference should be noted here. There were several MLIS students among the poster presenters, mostly related to the Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies Library. The last poster is also unique in the sense that it was created as part of a class project at the Rutgers School of Communication and Information. For the eProceedings, the two presenters decided to share their experiences, i.e., what it meant for them to be part of this event, which reads as an inspiration and prompt to involve more local students at future conferences.

## **Acknowledgements**

The editors wish to express their gratitude to all who took this opportunity, and helped us reach our goal to share the SALIS conference experience. We are also ever grateful for the patience and flexibility of all authors of this volume as well as for all the suggestions the reviewers made. The composition of the proceedings was an additional task this year, and it took some experimentation to streamline the process from peer-reviewing to creating the final typeface. Many thanks to all for understanding the challenges and accepting the changes the editors had to make in order to create a coherent and high-quality publication.