Happy Fall, ANSSers! As I write this, forest fires have been smoking out my town and the rest of the Pacific Northwest. I hope that as we read this issue of Currents, a refreshing rain has arrived with cool fall air. No such refreshing is needed in ANSS however—I’m following some excellent past chairs, and have some big shoes to fill. I hope I can live up to the excellent example provided by immediate past-chair Erin Gratz. Last year as Vice-Chair I was glad to appoint so many enthusiastic volunteers to our many committees, and Helen Clements is already bringing her talents and brains to the table as the new Vice-Chair, so I know I have a lot of support from all of our membership.

ALA Annual in San Francisco was a success we can all be proud to have made happen. ANSS partnered with LES and LPSS for a trip to Alcatraz from which we all escaped unscathed. Our social was delicious and well-attended. And as you’ll read about in the reports in this issue, there were many other highlights, including a fantastic program, engaging discussion groups, and fruitful committee meetings.

Nonetheless we also have some pilot projects planned as a bit of a refresh for ANSS this year to continue this successful track record. For instance, the Liaison Committee is working on creating a new liaison position to the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS). On a section-wide level, we’re experimenting with going almost completely virtual for the ALA Midwinter meeting in January 2016. Every committee meeting and discussion group will be held virtually in January instead of in person. However, the ANSS Social will be in-person and I plan to attend, so I hope to enjoy the company of everyone who attends Midwinter to enjoy Boston as well as the presentations and other meetings put
on by the rest of ACRL and ALA. (Protip: If you’re looking to warm up, Chinatown has some amazing dumpling restaurants.)

Membership is up, as is participation in our committees, which bodes well for our future. A big thank you to all of our membership and other participants, and if you’re not yet thoroughly engaged in ANSS, consider volunteering with our committees! See you at Midwinter!

-Miriam

**PRELIMINARY MIDWINTER MEETING SCHEDULE**

*2016 Boston*

**Friday, January 8**

ANSS Social 7:00-9:00pm

**Virtual**

All committee meetings and discussion groups will convene virtually during the month of January (but not during Midwinter-proper). As those dates are established, we’ll publish them over ANSS-L, on ANSSWeb, and on our social media sites.

**ANSS MEMBERSHIP MAP BY ZIPCODE (2015)**

Created by Kathy Stroud. Map shows U.S. and Canadian members only (excludes 64 overseas zip codes).
UPCOMING ANSS OFFICER ELECTION INFORMATION

The ANSS Nominating Committee is excited to present the slate for the upcoming 2016 elections. We have an excellent selection of candidates for the Vice Chair/Chair Elect and Member-at-Large positions. As you can read from their statements below, these candidates have been very active in our section and, if elected, will bring valuable experience to the positions. Please note that the current Secretary and the second Member-at-Large positions are filled through 2017. The committee wishes to thank the candidates for their continued service to the Anthropology and Sociology Section!

ANSS elections are conducted by ALA, and will appear on the ballot that includes open positions on ALA, ACRL, and ACRL Sections. Electronic ballots will open March 24, 2016, and close April 29, 2016. Don’t forget to vote!

VICE CHAIR/CHAIR ELECT

Anne Larrivee
Social Science Subject Librarian, Binghamton University

In 2011, when I became an anthropology librarian, the Anthropology and Sociology Section (ANSS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) seemed like a logical section to join. Since joining, I’ve realized that this section supplies more than just a logical membership to my CV. Through ANSS I have found a network of colleagues who have helped with presentations, publications, and knowledge about the discipline. Members of ANSS provide the strength of the section; I’ve been fortunate to work with a solid team of members on each of my committee appointments.

Since 2012, I have served on a range of committees that have allowed for both professional and personal growth. As co-chair of the 2013 Conference Planning Committee, I was exposed to the range of valuable program topics that ANSS offers at ALA conferences. I’ve also had the privilege to serve on and learn from the Liaison Committee, the Nominations Committee, and as a Member-at-Large. I could try to list off my ANSS accomplishments, but I believe that no member can take full ownership of group achievements.

As an involved and active member of ANSS, I’m confident that I can fulfill the responsibilities of the Vice Chair/Chair Elect. I feel comfortable appointing committees and representing the ANSS section during ACRL meetings. I’ve enjoyed my ANSS service in all my various positions; I look forward to serving at a greater capacity in the future.

Katie Elson Anderson
Reference and Instruction Librarian, Rutgers University

Thank you to the Nominating Committee for considering me for the position of Vice Chair/Chair Elect of ANSS. I have been a member of this welcoming and inspiring group since 2010, calling ANSS my ALA home. When I first answered the call to co-chair a Conference Planning Committee, I had no idea what to expect, as I was new to librarianship and new to ALA. I immediately found a supportive and engaging group of professionals who mentored and encouraged me. ANSS has given me the opportunity to network, share ideas, gain insight, and promote librarianship within our represented disciplinary fields.

I am excited for the opportunity of a leadership role as Vice Chair/Chair Elect, having served on the Executive Board this past term as Secretary. I look forward to working on continuing projects as well as taking on new challenges. As we look to increase outreach to our membership and provide more virtual meetings, especially for Midwinter, I see ANSS expanding its already strong presence within ACRL. As a member and co-chair of the Liaison Committee, I have seen the impact that ANSS has had both within ACRL and beyond as our liaisons represent librarianship within the discipline-specific organizations.

Academic librarianship is evolving and our represented discipline areas are responding to changes within the academy. These changes present both challenges and opportunities for ANSS to embrace through our activities. Our professional
development opportunities, discussion groups, and programs provide opportunities for impact in the profession and beyond. There are so many opportunities for our members to embrace and enhance the changes. I am particularly interested in mentoring and support of new professionals who may be looking for their ALA home. As Vice Chair/Chair Elect I will advocate for ANSS while exploring innovative ways to increase participation, provide support for current members, and recruit new members into our community.

MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Rui Wang
Social Sciences Librarian/Associate Professor, Central Michigan University

I joined ANSS in 2004. My over ten years of membership have given me an opportunity for professional development of my social sciences librarianship. I have served on several ANSS committees (Resource Review and Bibliography Committee, Ad hoc Assessment of Library Collections and Services Committee, and the Sociology Discussion Group). Working with other dedicated ANSS committee members, we developed the Rapid Assessment Tool for Sociology Collection and Services in 2010. With Jeff Lacy, I organized four Sociology Discussion Group meetings in 2013 and 2014. We invited eight librarians to present their new research findings and practices. These presentations covered a wide range of topics, including a programmatic approach to information literacy instruction, providing data services and instruction for social sciences, benchmarking sociology reference collections, and assessments for library instruction. These topics generated a lot of professional interest because they were highly relevant to ANSS members’ professional practice.

My most productive year has been 2014-2015. I served as Co-Chair, with Jill Conte, on the ACRL/ANSS Conference Program Planning Committee for San Francisco 2015. We worked with committee members to develop the program, “Libraries Behind Bars: Education and Outreach to Prisoners.” This program was jointly organized with ACRL’s Literatures in English Section (LES) and Law and Political Science Section (LPSS) and was sponsored (in name only) by ALA’s Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA). The program proposal was approved by the ACRL Professional Development Committee on a competitive basis (only half of the proposal submissions were selected). The program drew an audience of over a hundred attendees at ALA Annual conference, and received positive evaluations.

I am also serving as Co-Chair, with Priscilla Seaman, on the Instruction and Information Literacy (IL) Committee. We have led a series of initiatives aimed at moving in the new direction of the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. The IL Committee revised its charge, aligning it more closely with the Framework. The ANSS Executive Committee approved the new charge with the addition of criminal justice/criminology. The IL Committee expanded the discussion of the Framework by collaborating with the Sociology Librarians Discussion Group (SLDG). The SLDG devoted their meeting at Annual to discussions of the Framework.

The IL Committee also collaborated with the ANSS Liaison Committee to explore the possibility of reaching out to the American Sociological Association (ASA) and the American Anthropological Association (AAA). The goal is to communicate with these associations about the Framework and to open a discussion on a revision of the Information Literacy Standards for Anthropology and Sociology Students. The disciplinary Standards were developed in 2008. The IL Committee worked closely with a representative of the ACRL Information Literacy Frameworks and Standards Committee for further development.

Meanwhile, the IL Committee had a discussion on assessment for library instruction at the ALA Midwinter meeting. The potential for this idea is to open a general discussion to share and exchange information among ANSS members on how different institutions conduct assessment for disciplinary instruction, what common challenges we have, and how librarians in different institutions deal with the challenges. Based on the
general discussion, the committee can draw recommendations for assessment of discipline-specific (sociology/anthropology/criminal justice) library instruction. Overall, the IL Committee’s initiatives this year not only paved a foundation for moving forward with the Framework but also aligned with ACRL’s Plan for Excellence.

Moreover, Pauline Manaka and I have been working on the ANSS Award project. The project has been supported by the ANSS Executive Committee since 2013. The purpose of the award is to honor (with a plaque and a $1,000 cash award) a distinguished academic librarian who has made an outstanding contribution as an anthropology, sociology, and/or criminal justice librarian through accomplishments and service to the profession. We have worked with ACRL and completed the proposal for the new award. We have contacted a number of potential sponsors. However, we have made little progress because of challenges gaining financial support. This year, Pauline and I have shifted our strategies. With ACRL’s approval, we have begun to reach out to several large publishing companies. Although this project is facing a great challenge because many companies are withdrawing their sponsorships of existing award programs, Pauline and I have not given up our efforts because of its significance for ANSS members.

In sum, I have been inspired by the dedicated ANSS members I have worked with. My aspirations are to bring all IL Committee members together to continue the ANSS legacy by implementing new ideas and taking meaningful actions. Again, I am so grateful for having had the opportunity to serve ANSS and its members and hope to continue as Member-at-Large.

**Mary-Michelle Moore**  
*Instruction & Reference Librarian, California State University San Marcos*

When I first started getting involved ANSS in 2013, I was just finishing my MLIS, still working as a paraprofessional, and looking for a professional development home within ACRL. I was drawn to ANSS in part because my undergraduate degree is in Anthropology, and because some of the librarians I have worked and interacted with in the past were active in this section. In the past two years, I have served as a member on the Subject and Bibliographic Access Committee and the Membership Committee and have benefited from the opportunities to grow as a librarian by collaborating with my colleagues in these forums.

As an early career librarian interested in, but not yet working as an Anthropology and Sociology librarian, I believe I offer a particular insight into how much our section has to offer members who are new to the profession and new members who may not have considered joining ANSS while trying to decide which sections to participate in. If given the opportunity to serve as Member-at-Large my experiences to date would complement the wealth of skills and talent currently at work on the Membership Committee and the rest of ANSS.

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**ACRL 2017**

**AT THE HELM: LEADING TRANSFORMATION**

March 22-25, 2017  
Baltimore, Maryland

The ACRL 2017 Call for Participation will be available December 2016. Watch [www.acrl.org](http://www.acrl.org) for details!
CONFERENCE PROGRAM PLANNING COMMITTEE – 2016, ORLANDO
Deborah Margolis, Chair

The committee was excited to submit our program proposal “Magical Digital Encounters of the Social Science Kind,” which aims to inform attendees about emerging trends in digital social sciences and the collaborative work that librarians are doing in this area. Our program is sponsored “in name only” by the Digital Humanities Interest Group and the Women & Gender Studies Section. We will hear in early October whether it was accepted!

INSTRUCTION AND INFORMATION LITERACY COMMITTEE
Rui Wang and Priscilla Seaman, Co-Chairs

The Instruction and Information Literacy (IL) Committee met at ALA Annual San Francisco 2015. While we were small in physical numbers, we were large in ideas and energy for working on projects and engaging with disciplinary experts. Among our accomplishments, the IL Committee revised its charge aligning it more closely with the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. The ANSS Executive Committee approved the new charge with the addition of criminal justice/criminology.

The IL Committee was very pleased that Nancy Fawley from the Information Literacy Frameworks and Standards Committee (ILFSC) was able to attend our annual meeting. She fielded many questions from Adam Beauchamp, Rui Wang, and Priscilla Seaman about how the ILFSC is approaching the former Standards and the new Framework. Nancy informed us that her committee is working specifically with two ACRL sections (Women and Gender Studies and Journalism) in developing disciplinary standards, involving teaching faculty in the development of standards, and/or incorporating the Framework into their programs. She added that for the next year, ILFSC is allowing other sections to either update their standards or keep them as is. ILFSC will spend this year working on new guidelines and documenting the process of other sections’ experiences in using the Framework and developing standards.

Prior to ALA Annual 2015, the IL Committee contacted the Sociology Librarians Discussion Group (SLDG) and asked whether a discussion of the Framework could be included in their annual discussion. The SLDG liked the idea and devoted their hour-long meeting to discussions of information literacy, standards, and the new Framework. Priscilla attended the SLDG’s annual meeting and Rui transcribed the recording of the discussion for the IL Committee.

A fourth highlight of the ANSS IL Committee’s annual meeting was the rich and ongoing discussion of how to involve and more closely align our Committee’s ideas and goals with our respective disciplinary associations, the American Sociology Association (ASA) and the American Anthropological Association (AAA). To that end, the IL Committee was also very pleased that Juliann Couture, liaison to AAA, joined our meeting at ALA Annual. Juliann touched off a discussion about her experiences in attending AAA’s annual conference. Juliann encountered a barrier in that AAA has historically not devoted philosophical or physical time and space at their annual meeting for the discussion of information literacy, teaching, or related topics. In contrast, Rui’s experience with the ASA is that the organization has been receptive and engaged in developing disciplinary standards. The IL Committee
discussed strategies for overcoming some of the difficulties that Juliann described. One strategy suggested that we information literacy librarians work closely with teaching faculty at our local institutions, and seek avenues to partner with faculty who have connections with disciplinary organizations.

The IL Committee will continue to work on these signature projects in the coming year, and we are energized by the new perspective of the Framework and possibilities that will come of including disciplinary experts in our work as instruction and information literacy librarians in anthropology and sociology.

LIAISON COMMITTEE
Katie Elson Anderson and Jenny Bowers, Co-Chairs

The Liaison Committee met on Sunday, June 28 in San Francisco. Although we were a small group, we had a full agenda. We began by acknowledging Maud Mundava as our new American Sociological Association (ASA) Liaison and congratulating Juliann Couture on her appointment for another term as our American Anthropological Association (AAA) Liaison for 2015 to 2018.

Juliann reported on the Instruction Committee meeting that she had attended and described the challenges to getting participation from AAA, in particular, not having a place for an organization-wide conversation about teaching and the new Framework. She plans to begin the process by talking with faculty at her institution and by having conversations with individuals in AAA. Once the Instruction Committee decides what it wants to do going forward with the Standards and the Framework, that will help clarify the next steps for the liaisons.

Next we brainstormed names for the new liaison blog. Juliann proposed that we integrate the posts from each liaison (AAA, ASA, and ACJS) into one stream, either as three separate blogs with one stream or one blog with three different authors. We will need to develop general guidelines for the blog and set up goals and a schedule for the first year. Liaisons could also collaborate on posts. In general, the goal of the blog(s) will be to engage our membership with liaison activities.

Since the committee hadn’t yet posted the call for the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) Liaison, we decided to establish a new timeline for announcing the position. The ACJS annual meeting falls in late March/early April, so we would like to have the liaison approved by the ALA Midwinter meeting. We proposed posting the call in October with a December deadline, whereupon the committee could appoint the liaison in early January. The committee encourages interested members to apply for the ACJS position once the call is announced and to contact the committee chair, Katie Elson Anderson, with questions.

Finally, Jenny Bowers is rotating off the committee after Annual 2015, so we asked for volunteers to co-chair with Katie Elson Anderson.

ACRL-AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION LIAISON REPORT
Juliann Couture, University of Colorado Boulder

I’m excited to embark on my second three-year term as ACRL Liaison to the American Anthropological Association (AAA). The focus of my liaison role continues to be on building connections between the professional associations and demonstrating the value of academic libraries in the areas of student learning and research and scholarly environment. At the ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco, I had the opportunity to discuss my liaison activities and the ACRL Liaison program with three other liaisons at the panel session How Others View Us: Insights from Librarian Engagement in Higher Education Associations. This session provided a great forum for discussing our approaches to engaging with our higher education associations and what we’ve learned of how libraries and librarians are perceived.

Come November, I will attend the AAA Annual Meeting in my adopted hometown of Denver, CO where, in addition to attending committee meetings and panel sessions, I will engage AAA members in conversations about topics related to student learning
and scholarly publishing changes. As a member of the Committee on the Future of Print and Electronic Publishing (CFPEP), I am engaged in work examining the current status of the AAA publishing portfolio and trends in scholarly publishing to frame the next call for proposals for AAA’s publishing partner.

To continue the conversation with ANSS membership regarding scholarly publishing in anthropology, I am collaborating with the new managing editor for *Cultural Anthropology*, Marcel LeFlame, and the Anthropology Librarians Discussion Group co-conveners to organize a virtual discussion group for midwinter. We aim to have a larger discussion with anthropology librarians about the future of scholarly publishing both as it relates to the AAA publishing portfolio, AnthroSource, *Cultural Anthropology*, and anthropology resources in general. Be on the lookout for details and we look forward to hearing your thoughts.

I would love to hear from all of you as I continue to build the relationship between ACRL and AAA. What would ANSS members like to know about AAA? Do you want to know about the major themes of the meeting presentations? Or are you interested to know what publishers were in attendance? If any ANSS members or other academic librarians are attending the AAA Meeting, I would love to meet up to discuss outreach to and engagement with disciplinary organizations. Please contact me at juliann.couture@colorado.edu or on twitter @julezig.

**ACRL-AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION LIAISON REPORT**

**Maud Mundava, Atlanta University Center**

I am so excited about my role as the ACRL-American Sociological Association (ASA) Liaison and the opportunity to continue cultivating relationships that bring awareness of the role of academic libraries beyond ALA/ACRL walls. In my first few months in this role I have set initial goals for Fiscal Year 2015-2016, networking, and finding ways to establish joint initiatives with ASA. My initial goal is to learn more about the ASA organization, its governance/leadership, membership, and their interests. I am grateful to Sally Willson Weimer and Lyn King who reached out to get me started. Due to International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) conference traveling commitments, I missed the ASA annual conference in Chicago. This would have been a great opportunity to network and determine possible projects with the ASA community. However, I plan to attend the Annual Conference in 2016 and submit a proposal for a roundtable discussion on the ACRL information literacy framework.

To better understand the ASA and find ways to be more involved, I plan to join ASA, and establish areas of mutual interest with appropriate sections. In particular, I am interested in the Teaching and Learning Sociology section and the Disability and Society section. I am hoping these sections will enable me promote the incorporation of the new ACRL Information Literacy Framework to relevant ASA sections. I want to have discussions on how the ASA membership is collaborating with librarians at their institutions to incorporate the new Framework into instruction and continue to market the idea and share best practices for implementation. I am also hoping to do a survey to determine the needs of the ASA community, to help come up with initiatives that are of mutual interest. Since I am new to ANSS, I am also reaching out to the ANSS community for possible collaborations that serve the interests of ASA members.

**Funding:** To support my initial goals for the coming year, I applied for the ACRL-ANSS/ASA liaison grant. In particular, I need financial support to attend the 2016 ASA conference, August 20-23, in Seattle, WA.

**Assessment:** There is much that needs to be done, starting with joining ASA and establishing some ways of active participation in ASA sections.

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

**Jill Conte and Wade Kotter, Co-Chairs**

**Report by Anne Larrivee**

The ANSS Membership Committee is happy to report that as of May 2015 membership numbers totaled 468. This number is 57 members higher than in May 2014. There has also been an uptick in social media activity on the ANSS sites.
engagement; Facebook has 361 Likes and Twitter has 185 Followers. Aside from promoting ANSS activities through social media the ANSS Membership Committee would like to see active members promote the ANSS section; they can do this by distributing ANSS brochures at regional ACRL conferences (brochures can now be found on ANSSWeb). We would also like to encourage anthropology, sociology and criminology librarians who are local to an ALA Conference to join us for our ANSS Socials. At our 2015 ALA Annual ANSS San Francisco Social at Jasper’s Corner Tap & Kitchen, 22 people attended. Although most of the ALA midwinter committee meetings will be held virtually we would like to continue to hold Midwinter and Annual Socials.

A big thank you to all of our members who dedicate so much of their time to ANSS, and we appreciate all of your efforts. For any questions about how to become more involved, network with other librarians, or learn more about ANSS, please contact Wade Kotter (wkotter@weber.edu) or incoming membership co-chair, Jill Conte (jill.conte@nyu.edu).

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE
Erin Pappas and Beth Sheehan, Co-Chairs
Report by Beth Sheehan

The ANSS Publications Committee met on Sunday, June 28 from 8:30-9:30am in San Francisco, convened by co-chair Beth Sheehan (and co-chair Erin Pappas via phone). The Committee would like to welcome new members Jaimie Beth Colvin and Tara Das, as well as all returning members.

There are several notable upcoming changes to ANSS Publications Committee leadership and editorship, and calls for volunteers to assist with editing of ANSS Currents and the ANSS Web site. Erin Pappas is taking the Publications Committee co-chair role effective in 2015, and will be stepping down from ANSS Currents editing duties after Fall 2015. Hailey Mooney and Louisa McMurray are continuing as newsletter editors, and Jaimie Beth Colvin has joined the editorial team. Beth Sheehan is seeking one or two new web editors, to start training and begin assisting with web editing this Fall/Spring, assuming full web editing responsibilities by July 2016. The current web editors will be transitioning out of these roles within the next year (Erin Gratz by December 2015; Beth Sheehan by June 2016).

The ANSS Web site and social media accounts continue to see steady increases in number of site visits, Facebook “Likes” (+100 since January 2015) and Twitter “Followers” (+30 since January 2015).

The Committee discussed contents for the Fall 2015 issue of Currents. Potential new content includes a recurring column about mapping and statistical software/tools. This is under discussion with the Resource Review and Bibliography Committee, to start in Fall 2015 or Spring 2016.

Beth Sheehan has drafted a proposal for policies and procedures regarding archiving ANSS digital content in the ALA Institutional Repository, to be discussed by the Review and Planning Committee.

Additional discussions included the Publication Committee’s contribution to the Plan for Excellence Implementation Report; streamlining collaboration and communication between Publications and Resource Review and Bibliography Committees; and future investigation of an internal online space where ANSS members can post and contribute to ratings and reviews of relevant subject resources and software tools.

RESOURCE REVIEW AND BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE
Karen Evans, Chair
Report by Helen Clements

Our committee is geographically diverse, with committee members located in libraries everywhere from Maine to Oklahoma. Committee members Celia Emmelhainz, Deborah Margolis, Nancy Skipper and Helen Clements attended our virtual meeting on June 24. Erin Pappas of the Publications Committee also joined us. We also plan to meet virtually in January.

RR&B is responsible for examining new information sources in anthropology, sociology, criminal justice/criminology, and related fields. We turn our
evaluations into articles for the ANSS newsletter, *Currents*. We also can provide you with the experience of doing constructive peer reviews of our articles. We encourage you to write an article yourself—or collaborate with another committee member (or another ANSS-er). You’ll find our articles in just about every issue, back as far as 1990. We’re always looking for new sources, but we may also return to some of the “classics” for an update. Several of us have also done interviews for *Currents*. In the this issue, watch for Celia Emmelhainz’ interview with Juliann Couture, our liaison to the American Anthropological Association. We work very closely with the Publications Committee (and some of us belong to both committees).

For the Fall 2015 issue, we’re planning an article on the teaching of graduate research methods in the social sciences (which probably will have content on SPSS), authored by Spencer Acadia. Nancy Skipper and Karen Evans are planning an article on criminal justice sources.

We’re also interested in gathering information or comments from ANSS members about newer kinds of research tools: mapping tools such as *PolicyMap* and *Social Explorer* or tools available from the Census Bureau. We are also interested in statistical sources such as *Data-Planet* or article sources like *ProQuest Statistical Insight* (Helen Clements will write a short overview of *PolicyMap*). We would very much like to hear from you—whether it’s something about your experience using one of these sources, or how you have implemented these or other tools in your library. For further information about the committee, feel free to contact Helen Clements, helen.clements@okstate.edu.

We welcome your input, and we will welcome you to our virtual meeting—get in touch with us!

**REVIEW AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
*Pauline Manaka, Chair*

The committee was approached to address the role of unique teaching collections and tools designed by ANSS members, for instance Joyce Ogbum’s Anthropology teaching archive. As a committee we were able to meet once, at Annual in San Francisco. All the items were addressed, including via dialogue.

In collaboration with other ANSS committees, the tasks were handled in context. Review & Planning should promote leadership on key ACRL liaison committees in order to nurture membership retention within ANSS. We held an involved and interesting discussion concerning liaisons to the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and the American Sociological Association (ASA). ANSS members who serve in these functions tend to have unique training and interests, and often have funding to attend the disciplines’ conferences. The ability to renew one’s membership in these disciplinary organizations and ALA, and some consistency in attending the association's programs and reporting back to ANSS, is very important.

We addressed matters of using the ANSS website to facilitate unique collections and designs of value by ANSS membership, past and current; for example, the ANSS membership map. See also our report to ACRL CoPA Plan for Excellence.

The final questions were about the revised manual’s sections on the charge and calendar for the Review & Planning Committee. Additionally, the Review & Planning Committee wondered if they should be a part of Executive Board Committee and be on the Board meeting agenda to address any issues; this is still an open question for Erin Gratz to address as the next chair.

Thanks to all who actively engaged as members of the committee. Thanks to Katie Anderson, Erin Gratz, Wade Kotter, Miriam Rigby, and Chris Smith.

**SUBJECT AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC ACCESS COMMITTEE**  
*Carolyn McCallum, Chair*

The Subject and Bibliographic Access Committee (SBAC) met in San Francisco on Saturday, June 27 at 10:30 am. Future topics for Cataloging Q&As were
identified and approved for the remainder of 2015. LC subject headings for the following topics will be investigated and reported on: indigenous textile materials; Native American Treaty Rights; hate crimes and trials; crimes and trials associated with terrorism; and Cherokee Indians. The application of uniform titles using RDA (Resource Description and Access) cataloging rules will be examined as well in an upcoming Q&A. Additionally, Committee member Wayne Sanders will continue in 2015 the compilation of new LC subject headings in the social sciences.

Carolyn McCallum shared some email comments submitted to her from committee member Isabel del Carmen Quintana regarding how the SBAC’s activities/programs/initiatives completed from July 2014 through June 2015 fit into the ACRL Plan for Excellence. SBAC members in attendance agreed that Isabel’s comments should be submitted to Erin Gratz for inclusion in the final report that Erin would be submitting to ACRL on behalf of ANSS.

A future contribution to the greater ANSS community from SBAC members was also discussed: writing an article for inclusion in the Spring 2016 issue of ANSS Currents on the need for and value of library subject headings/controlled vocabulary for today’s researchers. Further discussion by email is needed and will occur this fall.

ANTHROPOLOGY LIBRARIANS DISCUSSION GROUP

The Anthropology Discussion Group met on Sunday, June 28, 2015 from 4:30-5:30pm at the San Francisco Hilton. Miriam Rigby was the meeting recorder and welcomed 16 attendees to a conversation on social justice librarianship, with a particular (and timely) focus on Ferguson, Missouri and Black Lives Matter. Our speakers were Makiba Foster (Washington University in St. Louis) and Niamh Wallace (University of Arizona), both academic librarians in the social sciences.

Makiba Foster presented on the Documenting Ferguson project at Washington University, which is a community-sourced digital repository. It was created to capture regional responses to the killing of Michael Brown, Jr. and the protests surrounding his death. The project began as a Facebook page unaffiliated with the university, but has grown substantially, and collects community content including cell phone pictures and videos, artifacts from the communities, and an in-depth oral history project in the community. Substantial outreach to the Ferguson community and the Wash U community has occurred, as well as partnerships with faculty, students, and staff at Wash U. Foster shared a few examples of interview clips from the oral history project.

Next steps include continuing the oral histories project and trying to get more voices from all sides of the story, creating better mechanisms to preserve social media materials, planning a regional meeting to discuss further collecting efforts, and reassessing their marketing strategy to increase participation and contributions to the collection. Documenting
Ferguson has been supported by a number of grants, and continues to find strong support within the Wash U Libraries and in the broader community, so they are optimistic about their ability to continue this major undertaking.

Niamh Wallace then spoke about her Black Lives Matter LibGuide. With her colleague Nicole Pagowsky, she helped to compile content for a library subject guide on last year’s protests against police violence in Ferguson. She spoke about the creation and reception of the guide as well as the need for academic library commitment to social justice. This LibGuide had to be reviewed before going public, but has been positively received by the library and the broader university community. Their goal was instructional, and they made an enhanced bibliography as their initial guide content. From there, they explored ways to market the guide, and shared it as a tool to connect with faculty teaching on related topics. Via this outreach, many faculty became interested, sharing it with their students as well as suggesting further items to add. In January 2015, a Women & Gender Studies professor organized a conference “Black Life Matters” building off their guide and her own research, and using their guide as a public platform for the conference materials. University of Arizona Libraries enthusiastically co-sponsored this conference.

This LibGuide has become the second most viewed LibGuide at U of Arizona Libraries, second only to a guide for an introductory English course taken by 8,000 students. Going forward, Wallace stated that their main consideration is balancing and identifying core/foundational content and current/ongoing content.

A Q&A session followed the presentations.

Sociology Librarians Discussion Group
Jill Conte and Susan Silver, Co-Conveners

The ANSS Sociology Discussion Group convened at ALA Annual on Saturday, June 27, 2015, in the Hilton San Francisco Union Square. The discussion focused on integrating the new Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education into sociology instruction. The group identified a number of challenges around the implementation and deployment of the Framework in a classroom setting, particularly in contrast to the preexisting Standards. Yet members also singled out opportunities, such as using the concept “authority is constructed and contextual” to frame sociology instruction. The group discussed other issues, including the “one-shot dilemma,” communicating the Framework to teaching faculty, controversies surrounding the Framework, and the impact of declining research assignments on library instruction more generally. Suggested discussion topics for Midwinter 2016 were innovative teaching techniques, for example, flipped classrooms.

DID YOU KNOW?
ACRL members can view full contact information for all ACRL section committee rosters (http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/sections) by logging into the ACRL Web site.
ANSS AT ALA ANNUAL 2015

ANSS PROGRAM REPORT
Report by Jill Conte and Rui Wang

ANSS presented its annual program, “Libraries Behind Bars: Education and Outreach to Prisoners,” at the Moscone Conference Center in San Francisco on Saturday, June 27, 2015, at 1:00pm. This year’s program was jointly organized with ACRL’s Literatures in English Section (LES) and Law and Political Science Section (LPSS) and was sponsored (in name only) by ALA's Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA). It brought together a multidisciplinary panel of scholars, moderated by a prison librarian, to raise awareness of the importance of prisoner education in reducing recidivism and improving rehabilitation outcomes while highlighting the potential role academic libraries play in research on the incarcerated and incarceration institutions as well as in outreach to incarcerated populations.

The panelists were: Amy Lerman, Michelle Schwartz, Associate Professor of Public Policy at UC Berkeley; Leah Jacobs, Doctoral Candidate, UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare; and Tobi Jacobi, Associate Professor of English at Colorado State University. Elizabeth Marshak, a prison librarian with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and leader of the ASCLA interest group on Library Services to the Incarcerated and Detained, moderated the panel.

Dr. Lerman kicked off the program by providing the audience with background information on the rise of mass incarceration, its social and legal causes, and its consequences. She devoted particular attention to its ramifications for young Black men without high school diplomas. Dr. Lerman also presented data on inmate literacy levels and the decrease in access to educational/vocational programs in prison over time. Ms. Jacobs segued to discuss the educational needs of incarcerated individuals and the positive impact of prison education programs on recidivism, post-prison employment, and prison costs. She introduced the Prison University Project as a case study of a successful prison education program that not only impacts the aforementioned measures but also helps affirmatively transform prison atmospheres and prisoners’ relationships with their families. Dr. Jacobi closed the program with a discussion of prison writing programs as opportunities for literary activism. By providing incarcerated women with spaces to express themselves creatively and to explore their individual voices, writing programs have the potential to produce powerful personal counternarratives to media representations and stereotypes of women in prison. She shared with the audience poems and songs written by women who have participated in her creative writing workshops.

The program drew an audience of over a hundred attendees. The ANSS Program Planning Committee Co-Chairs would like to extend a warm thank you to Co-Chairs Sarah Hogan (LPSS) and Laura Braunstein (LES) for all their hard work and collegiality in organizing this event.

Photo credit: Erin Gratz
PHOTOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS FROM ANSS AT ALA ANNUAL

The ANSS Annual 2015 Social was held at Jaspers Corner Tap & Kitchen in San Francisco on Friday, June 26.

In keeping with the theme of the Annual program, “Libraries Behind Bars: Education and Outreach to Prisoners,” ANSSers toured Alcatraz Island.

The San Francisco Pride Parade corresponded with ALA Annual, adding to the conference experience!

Photo credits: Anne Larrivee
MEMBER NEWS

SETH KERSHNER is co-author (with Scott Harding) of a new book, *Counter-recruitment and the Campaign to Demilitarize Public Schools* (Palgrave Macmillan). Drawing on dozens of interviews with activists conducted between 2012 and 2014, their book describes the various tactics used to demilitarize public schools in the United States. They also discuss case studies of successful organizing and advocacy to challenge the presence of military programs in educational settings.


HAILEY MOONEY will join the University of Michigan Library in December 2015 as social sciences librarian for psychology and sociology.

ANSS PUBLICATIONS

Did you know that ANSS has a number of helpful publications available on ANSSWeb? Among others, find these section publications:

- Complete archive of *ANSS Currents*
- Assessment Tool for Sociology Collections and Services in Academic Libraries
- New Subject Headings in the Social Sciences
- Bibliographies of Resources
- Guides to Subject Literature

JOIN THE ANSS RECOMMENDED READS ZOTERO GROUP

As part of an effort to support the reference and instruction work of ANSS librarians, the Instruction & Information Literacy Committee will maintain a select bibliography drawing from the scholarship of teaching and learning in librarianship, education, and social sciences disciplines. Browse the open access Zotero group for teaching inspiration, or join and contribute your own scholarly finds to the collection. View the Zotero group library at [https://www.zotero.org/groups/acrl_anss_recommended_reads/](https://www.zotero.org/groups/acrl_anss_recommended_reads/)

Current subgroups include: LibGuides best practices; Data literacy; Content analysis pedagogy; Threshold concepts.
MEMORIES OF ANSS SOCIAL EVENTS

This marks the first installment in the new History Corner series, “Memories of ANSS Social Events.” Each installment will feature descriptions, written by an ANSS member, of their first or most memorable ANSS Social from a past ALA Annual or Midwinter conference. As you read, we hope you will enjoy reminiscing and comparing to your own memories of the event (if you were there!), and that it will inspire you to attend a future ANSS Social to experience all of the fun and camaraderie first-hand.

In the description below, Janet Steins shares her memory of a precursor to ANSS Socials as we know them today, an event organized to celebrate the 25th anniversary of ANSS.

“The weather forecast for Monday, July 8, 1996 was for hazy sun and isolated thunderstorms. Because I was responsible for delivering most of the refreshments we planned to serve at the late afternoon celebration marking the 25th anniversary of the founding of ANSS in 1971, I certainly hoped those thunderstorms stayed far away (like over New Jersey) and left Manhattan alone. And not just because of the logistics of getting the drinks and nibbles from my car and into the library at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice on 10th Avenue and West 58th Street, but because the main Annual Conference venue at the Javits Center was over a mile away, downtown on West 34th Street, and I wanted good weather so more ANSS members and friends would be willing to venture out to our uptown location and attend the celebration.

A group of ANSSers, including our very gracious host Bonnie Nelson at the John Jay College Library, helped me set up and we watched through the windows of the library’s lobby as the sky got darker and darker. And just as the reception was about to get underway the sky opened up and there was an absolutely horrendous thunderstorm. But it didn’t last very long, a somewhat modest number of intrepid ANSS members found their way to the celebration, and a grand time was had by all.”

Janet Steins
Associate Librarian for Collections and Research Librarian
Tozzer Library, Harvard University

Join us for our next installment in the Spring 2016 issue, in which Chris Smith shares her memory of the first “official” ANSS Social!
So how did you get started in librarianship?

I decided I didn’t want to do a PhD! (Laughs) That’s the short answer. I did my undergrad in English with minors in Anthropology and Women & Gender Studies. And a professor asked, have you considered librarianship? They said that it would be a good fit: to pursue working in academia, while understanding that my interests aren’t narrow. And I haven’t regretted that decision.

And how did you get here from there?

I got my MLS at the University of Arizona, while I was working part-time at a public library. I interned with instruction/outreach at Arizona State, and they had a job available: a social science librarian job working in areas I had experience in—anthropology, women’s studies, and communications.

Then, I had been at Arizona State for about five years and I noticed so many positions at CU. I thought I might as well throw my hat in the ring…I could see the growth that was happening, and that it was a great time to take the opportunity. So I’ve been here at CU for 2 years now.

What got you involved with ANSS?

When I first started at ASU as social sciences librarian, my colleague Mimmo said, “you should get involved with ANSS, they’re fantastic, they’re a great group!”

And I showed up at Anaheim, at ALA, and they were having a social. They were doing this buddy program where we’ll put you together with someone who’s been involved in ANSS for a long time. And that’s how I met JoAnn Jacoby, who’s at Illinois, [and then] Liz Cooper, who’s now at UNM, and I wound up getting on the Instruction and Information Literacy Committee.

I met some amazing people. When I first started out I would send out questions to the listserv and I always got great responses, and through that I built up a professional community.

So how did you get to be ANSS’s liaison to the American Anthropological Association (AAA)?
The first liaison to AAA was Annie Paprocki, but she got a job as a librarian at the UN. I remember talking to her about it, and she said she’d loved doing that work. So that’s what made me decide to go ahead and apply. It would let me get more of the perspective of faculty and graduate students as well as understand their challenges with research and scholarly publishing.

So what conversations are happening at the AAA?

It’s a lot about scholarly publishing, and issues with data management and data ethics. In hearing researchers discuss data management and curation, I’ve found a lot of opportunity to make connections. We can't assume that because they aren't talking to us about it, they know what they are doing.

Now, I’m asking: how can I engage with anthropology librarians and the ANSS membership, with people who cross all these lines? Matt Thompson is a great example of that, someone with an anthropology background who went to library school, and now has a foot in both worlds. Rather than just talking to the anthropology librarians or just anthropologists, how do we connect on both a local and national level, and through social media?

Where would you hope to see ANSS have an impact in the future?

So I know the Instruction and Information Literacy Committee is trying to figure out the next steps, to see how [professional] organizations are engaged in student learning. What I’m noticing is that AAA is where people are discussing research and not really focused on student learning. So that’s one of the things I’m challenged by: are there other places to have those conversations?

Any last tips for young librarians?

Make connections! We talk about building relationships with faculty, but I’ve found my professional relationships with librarians so rewarding. Being involved in ANSS has been rewarding both to learn from other people as well as...to be a resource for other people when they contact you to ask questions.

Being involved with the association has helped me learn so much about the profession. Often people are hesitant to take on roles, because they hear you’re supposed to attend both conferences...but one of the best things I did was step in to co-chair the Instruction Committee. It allowed me to meet new ANSS members, to think about where the committee should be going and learn about how ACRL handles its Standards and now the new Framework. To me it’s very interesting and taking on those leadership roles taught me a lot!

Are there things I would do differently? Of course! But any learning experience wouldn’t be a learning experience without that. Just to be able to talk about our strategies, what works the same and what’s different, is, in my opinion, invaluable.

Juliann has shared even more thoughts on scholarly communications and qualitative data support for librarians in the second part of this interview, shared at http://databrarians.org/.
EXPERIENCES OF A LIBRARIAN TEACHING SPSS

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Several semesters ago, I was professor of record in a graduate-level research methods course in the social sciences. My primary job was as a librarian at my university, but I taught as an adjunct on the side. As per the official course description from the university catalog, I was required to teach students the basics of IBM® SPSS®, or the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. For many, the mere mention of anything having to do with statistics is petrifying—we hate statistics, are afraid of statistics, and want nothing to do with statistics. My graduate students were no different.

In the classroom, I used version 20 of the software with my students; however, the latest version at the time of this writing is version 23. Individual students and faculty can purchase online discounted 12-month licenses for SPSS for around $100, though universities can secure institutional licenses. Also to keep in mind is that within any given version of SPSS, several upgraded packages and add-ons are available at extra costs. SPSS, made by IBM, is one of the most popular statistical programs used in the social and behavioral sciences and any institution of higher education with strong programs in those areas would benefit from providing their students access to the program.

With SPSS, users can create and analyze their own datasets, as well as import datasets from other sources such as government websites, research centers, and other sources that make their data compatible with SPSS. SPSS can perform simple executions such as frequency analyses, including graphs and tables, as well as more complex analyses such as ANOVA and statistical regression. For the level of my class, I covered topics such as creating variables; how to deal with missing data; how to filter cases; running descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVAs, correlations, and chi-squares; and writing summaries in APA style.

I split the SPSS component into four separate assignments that I wrote myself, but used several books as a guide (see SPSS Bibliography). The first assignment was the longest and most detailed because I taught students how to make their own dataset by creating variables and cases.

Subsequent assignments were composed of detailed instructions on what to do in SPSS using window-driven menus to execute statistical commands. Each exercise was followed by a list of questions for students to answer based on the resulting SPSS output. I set aside four entire classroom sessions so we could do the assignments together as a class. I went through each demonstration as a follow-along lecture. Students completed the assignments on desk top computers while following along with me.

Students reacted to the exercises in various ways. Most students moaned, grunted, and sighed because, of course, statistics are hard and evil. A few students, however, enjoyed the assignments and were thankful to have been exposed to SPSS because they understood that they might be using it for their master’s thesis. As with any course assignment or test, student performance varied—some did very well and received nearly all points, others struggled. However,
struggling is common when learning how to use SPSS because it’s not an intuitive program—it takes time, instruction, practice, and repetition to learn.

I wrote this essay because I wanted to impart upon other academic librarians the importance of learning how to use SPSS—and, indeed, learning to teach it to others. Learning SPSS is a valuable skill that you can use in your workplace to perform a wide range of statistical calculations and analyses of library and library-related data (e.g., collection development, information literacy, survey responses, etc.) More commonly, MS Excel is used by librarians to record and analyze data—and that’s great! But the more familiar you become with SPSS, the better you will become at being able to teach SPSS to others, and this is perhaps the real benefit especially for teaching librarians. Knowing SPSS is a skill you can market to your faculty who may use the program themselves and want their students to use it, too. You can market your knowledge of SPSS to students by being able to offer advanced assistance in a tool that no one else in your library may know much about. Finally, you can market your SPSS skills to your university’s Office of Institutional Research (or equivalent) as a way to help the library become even more involved with analyses of grant and research data.

As with any new software, there is a learning curve with SPSS—you can’t just sit down and figure out how it works on your own. Librarians interested in learning SPSS might consider taking a class or workshop if offered at your university; this is the best way to get hands-on experience. Another way to learn, with additional self-discipline, is to dive in to the books I’ve listed at the end of this essay—I have used these books personally and found them to be useful. Of course, many other SPSS books exist, but the ones I’ve listed are those that I have found to be the most helpful. Certainly, it helps to have at least an undergraduate background in basic statistics and research methods because while SPSS does provide statistical output it does not interpret data results.

Have I convinced you to learn SPSS yet? Maybe. Maybe not. But, if you’re interested in learning the basics, here are a few tips that have helped me and others:

- Make sure you have easy access to the SPSS program. Check to see if your institution has a site license. If so, get it installed on your work computer. If not, consider purchasing a discounted license online for your personal computer.
- Check to see if your library has any books on SPSS in its collection. If so, you might check them out and keep them handy. Even better, purchase the latest versions of the books I’ve listed in the SPSS Bibliography. They work!
- Pace yourself. Don’t expect to become an SPSS expert overnight. Some universities offer entire semester-long courses on SPSS. It takes time and patience to become familiar with SPSS and learn all of the things it can—and can’t—do.
- You must practice. Think of SPSS as learning a second language. You need to be exposed to it and practice it a lot. It sounds daunting, but if you’re committed to the task, you can succeed.
- Consult your social sciences and/or behavioral sciences department(s) to see if SPSS courses or workshops might be offered through them. Also, faculty and/or graduate students already knowledgeable in SPSS might be willing to provide basic instruction, tutoring, or lessons.
- If you need to, refresh yourself on introductory research methods and statistics. For this, you can take a course, do workshops, and/or read a few textbooks. The best textbooks to use for this purpose will be those written for sociology and psychology students. Mathematics texts tend to be too mired down with equations and jargon that you don’t need to use in SPSS.
References


ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE: TWIN TITLES FROM WILEY AND SPRINGER

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Those of you who select reference materials in crime and criminology might have thought you were seeing double in 2014! Somehow, Wiley and Springer each published a major new encyclopedia, available in print and online, with the exact same title: *Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*.

Edited by Jay Albanese, a widely respected academic and former head of the International Center at the National Institute of Justice, Wiley’s *Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice* provides over 500 entries, spanning 15 major themes, including criminal law, restorative justice, law enforcement and policing, and history of crime and victimization. Subject experts provide signed articles with references and suggestions for further reading. As Matt Treadwell (2015) points out in his very helpful review, although some coverage of international and transnational crime is provided, global coverage is lacking in spite of the publisher’s claim to provide a strong international perspective. However, a strength of this title, especially for undergraduates, is an overall style of writing that is geared toward being accessible to the non-expert. Given its overall scope and quality, and considering the reasonable price of five print volumes for $1,025, Wiley’s encyclopedia, which is also available online for $1,830 with multiple-user access, would be a good choice for academic libraries. This title is the first in a planned series of encyclopedias on criminology. Future
sets will provide in-depth coverage of more specific topical areas such as juvenile justice, crime and punishment, and criminology theory.

In contrast, Springer’s *Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice* provides over 600 entries that fill ten print volumes priced at $4,350. The online version is offered at the same price with multiple-user access. Scott Millard (2014) mentions in his excellent review that Springer’s encyclopedia is geared more toward the needs of advanced students or researchers with a background in crime or criminal justice studies. The scope of the encyclopedia is intended to be comprehensive, international in coverage, with historical scope as well as the identification of emerging trends and issues. Although Springer’s online interface provides many powerful search features, in general, it poses more of a challenge than Wiley’s with its goal of pulling researchers, often unwittingly, into searching the entirety of the SpringerLink collections. Downloading a single article of interest can also be similarly challenging. However, the quality, depth, and breadth of the scholarship represented in Springer’s encyclopedia merit a recommendation for in-depth research collections and for libraries which serve the needs of crime and criminology academic programs.

### References


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**REVIEW OF POLICYP MAP DATABASE**

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*Reviewed September 2015*  
*Publisher: The Reinvestment Fund (TRF)*  
*URL: http://www.policymap.com/*  
*Cost: $200 - $5,000*

As the information revolution continues, today’s adults will be required to demonstrate their ability not only to use maps and driving directions on their handheld devices, but also to create information sources that serve their needs in their careers or their communities. Information tools that gather social and economic datasets in one unified interface and make them relatively easy to use should be considered for purchase by any college or university library.

One fairly new resource is *PolicyMap*, a software database package provided by The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), a Philadelphia-based redevelopment corporation. Since 1985 TRF has financed “housing, community facilities, supermarkets, commercial real estate, and energy efficiency projects. [TRF] also provides public policy expertise by helping clients create actionable solutions and by sharing data and analysis via policymap.com.”

As an outgrowth of its mission to promote “results-oriented, socially responsible community investment,” this nonprofit organization with a “strong research and policy analysis capacity,” makes available the wealth of public statistical data
it gathers, as well as licensed data created both in-house and by other providers whose data it licenses. PolicyMap also offers free access to public data as a service. Its customers include agencies and institutions in the government, academic, commercial, finance, and nonprofit sectors. According to the website, over 50 academic institutions currently have site licenses. Close to 50 nonprofit organizations are also subscribers.

**Sources and Coverage of PolicyMap Data**

PolicyMap’s data include over 35,000 indicators in the areas of demographics, real estate, city crime rates, health, schools, housing affordability, employment, energy, and public investments. Coverage is limited to the United States. A majority of the datasets come from public sources, including U.S. Federal agencies such as the Census Bureau, the Department of Labor Statistics, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Centers for Disease Control, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Internal Revenue Service. Migration data as well as income data are included. In addition, PolicyMap features data which TRF obtains on contract with other public sources and vendors. For example, performance data for public and charter schools are derived from testing results compiled by the nonprofit organization Great Schools. Other data sources range from a mapping of the national health care system in the *Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care* to the Glenmary Research Center and Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB) studies, as reported to the *Association of Religion Data Archives* (ARDA). Each category of variables is in the data menu: Demographics, Incomes & Spending, Housing, Lending, Quality of Life, Economy, Education, and Health. The sections on Federal Guidelines and Analytics provide many additional choices. The PolicyMap group also give assistance in building maps, and they use proprietary data from sources such as groups that track housing details.

The Data Sources section is an alphabetical directory, by producing agency, of the kinds of data available for map building. It includes information about each data source, such as the name of the producing agency, a short description, the geographical/political boundaries, dates of data available, and a link to the source’s website. This information is accessible from a brief annotation linked to the title of each set of data being chosen for a map. There is also a spreadsheet providing detailed information about each PolicyMap dataset.

PolicyMap offers extensive documentation and assistance, whether in printed tutorials or numerous short demonstration videos. In addition, longer videos from previous webinars are available, as well as a blog with FAQs.

The richness of these sources recommends PolicyMap as a first-stop and possibly one-stop source for many students or faculty members shopping for reliable data. Though PolicyMap is not the only mapping tool available, it can certainly go a long way in filling the need for teaching materials in the social sciences. It can also provide valuable data for groups working with community development, transportation, food availability, and other public needs.

**Pricing**

PolicyMap includes a free registration that allows users to construct maps and tables using public data. Registrants must agree to terms and conditions which limit the reuse and redistribution of data or maps. Careful reading of the terms and conditions is advisable, since some of the available data are under license to PolicyMap. Students who wish to extend their free basic subscription can create a paid semester-long account. Subscriptions or site licenses are necessary for access to the full range of data. Pricing varies from $200 for one user for one month, to a premium subscription of $5000 per year for up to 10 users. Paid subscriptions allow users to upload address files to add point data to their maps, and to embed the maps on their websites. A site license allows an institution (college or university) an unlimited number of users via IP address. More information, including the licensing agreement, can be found on their website (Love 2015, email communication).
Using *PolicyMap*

Students, faculty, and others who use *PolicyMap* will gain access to information often spread across numerous government and other sources. It allows them to generate simple maps and tables for reports and presentations by address, zip code, census tract, county, state, legislative district, or other geographic location. Whether making a simple or a multi-layered map, the user starts by choosing the location, such as county, state, zip code, or census block. Users can create topical data reports (textual reports) on various populations for counties, cities, census groups, or zip codes. Subscribers can also create and download files in Excel.

Another highly useful feature is the ability to create a three-layer map showing the interaction of up to three variables within the same geographic area. For example, a student or community development agency may want to map several zones in a city to where there are concentrations of people who are working poor, with a range of household sizes, and their access to hospitals. An added value is that community reports include data from other sources besides standard government statistical publications. Institutional site licensing also allows community members to create and store their own maps, as well as to share them with users within the institution.

The process of creating maps with *PolicyMap* is complicated by the sheer amount of data available. Newer users may experience difficulty in following the process as they are learning. Some problems may be averted by making use of extensive support features. These include well-illustrated Acrobat documents such as the *PolicyMap Primer* and other documents about specific *PolicyMap* features and how to use them. The blog is useful for its coverage of new topics and comments from users, and *PolicyMap* also offers help via email.

**Pros and Cons**

This tool is recommended for use in teaching geography, anthropology, history, sociology, social work, political science, educational policy, business, biological, health, and environmental sciences. Journalists and university planners, as well as nonprofits seeking to do community work, can certainly use it to their advantage. A project in literature or art that involves geographic information is also conceivable.

*PolicyMap* should be relatively easy for students in many disciplines to learn. At the same time, it is not just another article database. Students will need some coaching to work through the process of building tables, reports, or maps step by step. It may take several tries to produce a map and to understand how the underlying datasets and the mapping layers work together. Learning to use *PolicyMap* with some fluency will require an investment of time from librarians doing instruction, if they are not already adept at using other mapping tools. It may be a good idea to designate a few librarians or other staff members to be the primary trainers for the tool. After an introductory session, *PolicyMap* instruction would be best suited to individual or small group sessions. I suggest that subject librarians prepare by creating their own maps and reports, and by taking advantage of the weekly basic training webinars offered by *PolicyMap* through their support service.

**Reviews and Comparisons with Other Tools**

*PolicyMap* has been reviewed favorably in both *Library Journal* (LaGuardia, 2015) and *Choice* (Nicholson, 2013). In addition, librarians from at least two universities have prepared LibGuides which discuss *PolicyMap* in comparison to other available mapping resources. Olson and Bishov (2015) compare *PolicyMap* with *Social Explorer* and *SimplyMap*. Parsons (2015) gives information about geospatial data resources like *SimplyMap*, *Social Explorer*, and a number of other tools, including some that are open source.
In short, reference librarians need to gain experience with mapping tools. One tool that is fairly reasonably priced and comprehensive, at least for the United States, is The Reinvestment Fund’s PolicyMap.

References


Love, T. (2015, September 21). *PolicyMap* pricing for newsletter review article (Email communication to Helen Clements)
