**RUSA Blog Guidelines**

Mission:

The RUSA Blog is a virtual forum for the reference and user services community. It is an opportunity to not only raise awareness and explore of practices, technology, and issues in reference and user services but also to voice and share a diverse set of perspectives that represents the diverse community of RUSA.

Scope:

The RUSA Blog will cover topics of relevance to reference services in all types of libraries. Specific thematic series will be established to focus on specific, pervasive issues in current reference services, as well as successful projects and individuals. Blog authors will be solicited with sets of topics of current interest, and topics will be assigned to interested respondents.

Contributors:

There are specific expectations of contributing authors, namely that submitted posts will conform to accepted norms of scholarly communication with adherence to APA 6th formatting and style, and that posts will be written in an engaging and readable style. While there is an expectation that submissions will be scholarly in nature, they must also be clear and concise, and must avoid overly complex prose and obfuscation.

Submissions should be 500 – 1500 words, but alternate lengths will be considered. The nature of the posts is exploratory and should engage the reader to read further into the topic. Therefore, they should not be an exhaustive treatment of the topic. Rather, they should present the basics of a topic with suggestions for additional materials of interest.

Not all submissions will be accepted and posted to the blog, but all will be subject to an editorial review process to determine fit with the topic and overall merit of the submission. Contributors will be notified of acceptance and alerted as to when the post will appear on the RUSA Blog.

 Editor:

The editor of the RUSA Blog will solicit contributions by posting to listservs with a focus on reference and user services. Additionally, there will be calls for contributions on other RUSA social media and the RUSA website. While RUSA is specific to ALA, there is a wide range of additional venues to promote both RUSA and the RUSA Blog, and calls for contributions will be posted to these additional venues.

Contributors will work closely with the editor on refining topics and editing of submissions. The editor will review and edit submissions for both style and content, and submit the revisions back to the author for acceptance or further revision. The main role of the editor in this capacity is to ensure a consistent look and feel for the blog, as well as maintain a clear focus on the topic being presented. As with the contributors, the editor will work within the style and formatting of the APA 6th.

The editor will also decide on general topics, evaluate current topic series, and help guide the content to keep it fresh and relevant. When there are questions about these issues, the editor will consult with the publications committee for clarification and suggestions. The expectation is that there will be a fair amount of communication on a regular basis during the establishment of the blog, and that there will be regular communication in the succeeding years to keep the committee updated on the publication process, as well as to solicit new topic suggestions.

If necessary, the editor will develop a style guide for the blog in consultation with the publications committee.

Series:

Blogs need specific thematic series to provide a steady flow of content and provide a regular foundation for the continuity of information exchange. To that end, the RUSA Blog will have at least two specific series. One will be a Technology Series that focuses on the impact of changing and new technologies on reference and user services. Changing technology is a pervasive issue in libraries, and it is fitting that the RUSA Blog has that as a core series. The other will be a Successes Series that will focus on successful projects or successful librarians. The intent with this series is to show others how they can implement or modify successful programs in their own institutions. By focusing on both projects and individuals, readers will see the impact on both the institutional and individual levels.

Additional regular series topics may be developed and implemented as they are suggested and evaluated. It should be noted that the success of any series is tied to the ability to generate successful articles for posting, so there must be a discussion of content feasibility in any discussion of a new series for the blog.

As with all content, submissions to these series will be subject to editing and approval by the editor of the blog.

Topics:

Topics will be determined by the editor in consultation with both contributors and the publications committee. The inclusion of all parties ensures that contributors will have a voice about the direction of the blog and the publications committee can provide a perspective of oversight in the process. Bringing more minds and perspectives to the generation of topics for the blog will serve to provide a more holistic approach to the generation and dissemination of information. While there will be suggested topics, contributors are also welcome to generate their own and submit content that is outside of the suggested list of topics. Again, this will keep the blog dynamic and timely.

As with all content, submissions to these series will be subject to editing and approval by the editor of the blog.

News items from ALA, RUSA, and other professional associations will form a portion of the content for the blog. While these pieces will be pre-packaged in terms of content, the goal is to provide at least a few sentences of prefatory material to inform the reader as to the importance of the post. This provides a sense of intent and personalization as opposed to a sense of spam if the piece is simply reposted. Blogs are generative by nature and adding a few lines of introduction is in keeping with that nature. As this will be a regular part of the blog, but not necessarily a series, it is desirable to find and appoint a news editor who can additionally act as support for the blog editor. Ideally the person in this role would go on to assume the role of blog editor at the expiration of the current editor’s term. This will provide both continuity and mentoring for the blog and for individuals new to the RUSA blog.

Categories:

One of the key elements of any blog is the ability to categorize posts around larger themes. To that end, the categories for the blog need to be kept to a minimum lest it become a mere exercise in tagging. The blog has tagging as an option, and the search function allows for a more detailed exploration of posts. Categories should be reviewed periodically by the editor and other members of the publications and communications committee for currency and relevance.