websites with patrons, and we assess students when we provide information literacy training. But we don’t talk to them about their ideas for how the library could serve them better. This kind of research can take place on a small scale or a much larger one, depending on the resources available at your institution and the amount of buy-in there is for social software in the first place. A roving librarian can ask students in the library what tools they think would be useful and how the library could better meet their needs online. A focus group could be convened to introduce various tools and interfaces to find out what students think of them and whether they could be improved or should be forgotten all together. A simple survey could go out asking students what tools they’d like to use.

But I think it would be really interesting to see a library form a student committee dedicated to exploring the role of social software in libraries. Many students are engaged and active on campus, and it might not be as hard as we sometimes think to get them interested in contributing. A group like this could play with new tools, talk about what works and doesn’t work for them and get additional input from their friends and classmates. They could beta test any new social media tools the library is planning to implement to determine whether they’re worth fully developing. They could provide the information libraries need about how and where they should be on the web. A group like this would provide valuable input for the library and good extra-curricular fodder for students’ resumes.

The point, no matter how it’s undertaken, is to engage students in conversations. If we are going to continue to call our students technology experts, we should take advantage of their xpertise and rely on our students as our technology leaders. Maybe then we can stop asking ourselves what they want us to do.

Selected Abstracts from JASIST

Authors who choose to do so prepare and submit these summaries to the editor of the Bulletin.

From JASIST v. 59 (12)

Study and Results. This study tested whether readers can detect tiny changes made to text in order to improve its clarity. Over 200 information scientists and authors of academic articles rated electronically an original and a revised version of a structured abstract. The results showed that the revised aims, results and conclusion sections, and the abstract as a whole, were all rated significantly clearer than were the original texts.

What’s New? Few studies address the effectiveness of revising texts despite the fact that authors spend a good deal of time doing it. Here the reasons for making the revisions are discussed in detail and tested. The findings – that changes are detectable and are thus worth doing – have clear relevance for information science and the scientific community.

Limitations. This research is a close study of work with one abstract. Further research is needed with different kinds of text, participants and texts from different cultures. Such quantitative studies also need to be complemented by qualitative ones.