

Profile

Regina Romano Reynolds



Cindy Hepfer, who works in electronic periodicals management and continuing resources cataloging at the University at Buffalo (SUNY) in the USA, seemed the ideal member of our editorial board to interview Regina Romano Reynolds for this issue, and we bring you her lively profile of Regina below.

You would not ordinarily expect to find a tamer of beasts in a library. But then the Library of Congress is not just any library; Regina Romano Reynolds, director of the US ISSN Center, is not a typical librarian; and those who deal with serials in any way know how beastly some of them can be. 'Taming the serials beast' is a phrase Regina has often used in articles and presentations to describe the challenges of working with serials. So, whether you are involved in serials from a publishing, library, or standards perspective, read on and learn more about this very smart and intense information professional whose career is marked by international impact and creativity, enlivened with a very notable splash of humor. Her primary passion is working with publishers and others in the serials information chain to ensure that users can readily access the content of published serials.

Regina's story begins in the Philadelphia suburbs, where she grew up as part of a large, close-knit Italian-American family and community. Interestingly, the family name on *both* sides is Romano, which she explains is a very common Italian name. (Regina is very insistent that her full name – including Romano – be used in formal situations such as presentations, publications, and... interviews!) From a tender age, she loved books, reading and libraries. Since she attended religious schools, the town librarian was one of the few career women Regina was acquainted with. But she never dreamed of having a career at the Library of Congress, much less one that involves significant international connections and travel. Fortunately, she studied French throughout high school and college. She

keeps those language skills fresh through occasional visits to the ISSN International Centre in Paris and in daily e-mail communications with colleagues there, although she admits that the majority of that communication happens in English.

Regina graduated from the University of Dayton with a degree in English. At one point, she thought she wanted a career in communications, specifically either in radio or magazine journalism. As it turns out, she interacts with magazines (and other serials!) daily, and frequently finds herself behind a microphone. So perhaps in a strange way, she realized those ambitions. Her first job post-graduation was as a technical librarian for an electronic research and development company where she met her (now ex-) husband and the father of her amazing daughter, Elizabeth. Regina put her ex through college at Penn State University (PSU) by working in Patee Library; and it was at PSU that Regina and serials cataloging 'clicked'. She had a great role model in Suzanne Striedieck (later Pitmann), an inspiring librarian who taught her to: think beyond the letter of the cataloging rules and seek clarity and simplicity in them, always consider user needs, and relish the challenges of serials work. In short, Patee was where Regina first became intrigued with the notion of 'taming the serials beast'.

After leaving Penn State, Regina entered library school at the University of Michigan. It was there that she first learned about the ISSN and serials standards when she undertook a research project to ascertain whether the serials in the library school library conformed to what was then ANSI Z39.1, a now withdrawn standard that was the US

counterpart to ISO 8, the international standard on the presentation of periodicals. Both the ANSI Z39.1 and ISO 8 standards are ancestors of the current NISO PIE-J best practices for the presentation and identification of e-journals effort. Even though most of the library's periodicals did not conform to Z39.1, Regina was not daunted. Right out of library school, Regina was hired by another mentor, Linda Bartley Button, who was then head of the National Serials Data Program, the former name of the US ISSN Center at the Library of Congress. This position put her at the intersection of the publishing world, the US serials community, and the international library world of the ISSN Network. She thrived in an environment that served as a bridge between publishers and librarians in dealing with the always puzzling aspects of serials cataloging. As an employee in and now head of the US ISSN Center, Regina has worked tirelessly on such activities as promotion and development of the ISSN standard, including participation in the working group that, from 2004–2006, completely revised the standard; cataloging simplification via a lead role in developing the CONSER standard record; and an international effort known as cataloging 'harmonization'. Regina said that harmonization thankfully does not require musical talent, since her sister got all of those genes, but rather requires work on aligning the rules for the main serials cataloging standards: ISSN, ISBD and AACR. Regina is the only person to have served on all three harmonization groups in the early 2000s, and she will be involved again as an ISSN representative in a 'tripartite meeting' of the same three standards groups to re-align ISSN and ISBD rules with the new RDA code. Their discussions will be held in conjunction with the meeting of the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA in Glasgow in November 2011.

As if taming print serials wasn't challenging enough (one of the more interesting serials she has handled was published on a T-shirt!), in the late 1980s, Regina faced a brand new species of beast: serials in the online environment. NSDP was challenged by creatures from the new menagerie early on, at a time when the serials cataloging community had hardly begun to grapple with how – and even whether – to catalog e-versions of serials. NSDP stepped into the ring at that point because publishers had begun to request ISSN for e-versions. There were no rules or procedures related to e-serials in either CONSER or ISSN docu-

mentation, so Regina and her colleagues had to more or less 'make it up' as they went because they knew that they could not and should not refuse to assign ISSNs to these emerging serials species. Staff in NSDP and at the ISSN International Centre e-mailed back and forth, and – as the saying goes – they 'just did it!' They started to assign ISSNs to electronic serials in 1988, well before the web even existed. (Back then, e-serials were published by e-mail and via early networks such as Bitnet.)

The e-serials beasts have continued to evolve, and there are new challenges almost daily, such as the proliferating versions for mobile devices. Regina and her colleagues continually ask themselves and each other: "Which of these species are eligible for ISSN? If so, how many ISSNs should be assigned when there are print, online, mobile, etc. versions?" 'Granularity' is an ongoing challenge for the US ISSN Center and for the ISSN Network as they determine which versions should be assigned separate ISSNs. One of the successes Regina was involved in that helped challenge the e-serials beast was the development of the 'Linking ISSN (ISSN-L)' as part of the working group charged with revising the ISSN standard, ISO 3297. The need for 'ISSN-L' – the ISSN that groups the individual ISSNs assigned to different formats or versions (most commonly print and online) together – grew out of the granularity challenge because ISSN is used as both a product identifier (the counterpart of ISBN) and also a content identifier for linking and identification in uses such as OpenURLs. The Linking ISSN was the solution that the working group devised to allow the ISSN to retain both functions.

Regina delights in being on the cutting edge of ISSN work. She finds living her life at the intersection of the multiple communities (publishing, libraries, subscription and database vendors, platform providers, etc.) served by ISSNs endlessly challenging, interesting and satisfying. She loves being able to help solve a serial publisher's ISSN problems and also explaining to a publisher or database manager how the ISSN can help them. Although most people in the information community have heard of the ISSN, not everyone knows the policies concerning separate ISSNs for different versions, display of ISSNs, overlap between ISSNs and ISBNs, best sources for ISSNs, and when to obtain a new ISSN. By the end of a conversation with Regina, one more person or organization is aware of how to use and benefit from the ISSN. In fact, the US ISSN Center prides

itself on having a human being available during standard office hours to explain the merits and uses of ISSNs and the process for obtaining them via a one-page application form. Regina indicates, "It's very satisfying to receive praise for what must be one of the shortest government forms, one which can even be substituted with a spreadsheet for multiple requests. And we're working on further simplifying the application process."

Regina is a fixture at the microphone at ALA conferences, NASIG, CONSER and ISSN meetings, and at a variety of other organizations, including publisher organizations, where she speaks on ISSN and standards/cataloging/metadata issues. A frequent contributor to the library literature, she is also well known for presentations that are anything but simple bullet-point-laden PowerPoints. Her presentations include intriguing, entertaining, or amusing images, some of which she has created herself, which serve to educate and please the eye. For example, in the past few months she has taken to illustrating the concept of 'title change' with a picture of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on their wedding day. She has also begun using the web site XtraNormal to produce short cartoon videos to introduce or reinforce key points. One example is a cartoon entitled: 'ISSN: SuperNumber' in which 'Mr. Title' and 'ISSN SuperNumber' have a MAC vs. PC-type dialog. Of course, ISSN SuperNumber wins!

Regina's personal life is as full as her professional one. She and her husband, Brooke Bortner, live on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, in a townhouse once owned by a Civil War general. A great fan of walking, Regina delights in strolling to the nearby Eastern Market, shops, restaurants, museums and – best of all – to work each day. Her greatest pride and joy, however, is her daughter, Elizabeth Reynolds Losin, who is a cognitive neuroscientist in the final year of PhD studies in the

Giving a recent presentation



Regina Romano Reynolds and her daughter, Elizabeth Reynolds Losin

UCLA Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program where she is using brain imaging to study how the human brain acquires culture through imitation.

The Library of Congress's membership in Flickr led Regina to her newest passion: photography. After joining Flickr to explore social networking and user tagging, she became hooked, and the many talented and friendly members of the Flickr community she encountered online inspired her to improve her craft and form some long-distance friendships. After my brief visit to UKSG in Edinburgh in 2010 for the *Serials* editorial board meeting, my husband and I headed south by train, spending time in York before moving on to London. Regina's set of pictures from York, taken several months later in the fall of 2010, are among my favorites on her Flickr site, as is her set of flower images. You might also enjoy Capitol Hill images taken on her walks to work and photos of the many other places around the globe that Regina's international meetings and speaking engagements have taken her. In fact, wherever there are serials beasts that need taming – whether by metadata, new standards, or simply by the correct number of ISSNs – that is where you are likely to find Regina, with a supply of ISSNs in one hand and her camera in the other.

To see some of Regina's cartoon videos and photographs, follow the links below:

ISSN SuperNumber video:

<http://www.xtranormal.com/watch/11997066/issn-supernumber-presentation-version>

Other videos by Regina are at:

<http://www.xtranormal.com/profile/6141420/>

Regina's Flickr site:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ginaromano/>