

Editorial Preface

Special Issue on Managing Unexpected Risk Events in the Digital World of Libraries

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INTRODUCTION

In this issue for the *International Journal of Risk and Contingency Management (IJRCM)* we explore the likelihood of, and management of, disaster risks in the digital world of libraries. The reader will become enlightened with what is at risk in libraries: The amount at stake may be quite large when the in-process transactions and services are considered along with the electronic collections. The manuscripts consist of single or multiple case studies focused on identifying, planning, and mitigation risks those librarians and their stakeholders face from natural disasters and other risk-related events. The literature review below is a brief summary of each manuscript.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Disaster Management in Digital Libraries: Issues and Strategies in Developing Countries

Ifijeh, Idiegbeyan-ose, Segun-Adeniran and Ilogho present a literature review of best practices for identifying and militating against risk events, mainly flooding and fire, faced by organizations that store large amounts of data. They used a digital library as a model to discuss the issues and strategies for risk management in a developing country where the resource infrastructure is often less robust as compared with countries with advanced information communication technology. Their manuscript provided many of the necessary digital library terminology definitions to set the baseline for the remainder of this special issue. Their literature review discussed the causes, effects, prevention and control of disasters faced by digital libraries in developing countries particularly thus located in the continent of Africa. They found that the fundamental principles of risk management prevail: Identification, planning, execution/control and mitigation were the key components of their proposed disaster strategies for digital libraries. Several of the key success factors that they identified from the literature were: Employment of qualified personnel and the appointment of visionary leaders. We propose that other researchers ought to consider big data as a topic to study for risk management of digital information because we assert one of the future challenges with information will be to avoid corruption or loss of key elements in the data when it becomes too large and complex to store or reproduce. Big data is known by its four attributes of large volume, high velocity, relationship complexity, and critical value. For example, what would be the social impact of Facebook data becoming corrupt? Would this not somehow slow the processes in most countries merely due to

people not being able to freely communicate and collaborate online as they now do? We encourage more research into risk management of social network big data.

Assessing Risk and Safeguarding Rare Library Materials during Exhibition Loans

Gibbons describes an applied case study of applying risk management for rare materials borrowed from other libraries. She quickly pointed out why this is such an important issue for digital libraries. Safe-guarding the physical or digital holdings are always important but even more so during the time when borrowed collections are being displayed to the public. Imagine what could happen? Some creative collections are fragile and they are worth millions of dollars. Insurance policies may be unavailable or insufficient to replace rare collections; how could a rare piece of art be reproduced if it were damaged from flooding or fire, or even worse, if it was stolen? Her approach covers risk identification as well as mitigation and contingency planning. Thus, Gibbons' study generalizes to leaders with decision making responsible to manage high value digital or physical data. This was a useful category of risk planning since it could generalize to the risk management of any materials or services in a supply chain network. We encourage more studies related to risk management in supply chain operations because we feel there are numerous unknowns in that discipline.

Disaster Management and Continuity Planning in Libraries: A Literature Review

Hamilton and Brown take the work of Gibbons even further to discuss a broader application of contingency planning for libraries because they examine many potential risk events.

Managing the Commonplace: Small Water Emergencies in Libraries

Chaudron presents two contrasting case studies focused on managing floods in public libraries. He reveals how different issues and approaches are needed due to the unique nature of small libraries that have fewer resources to work with, especially during disasters when other community emergency services personnel often are allocated to other life-saving tasks. As he noted, by the time that libraries undertake emergency planning, it is likely that the risk events have already begun to occur. He found that most of the literature focused on 100-year floods or hurricanes rather than the more common risk events such as burst pipes or leaky roofs. His two case studies demonstrate that risk identification and contingency planning for flooding differs dramatically due to the factors of source, size, impact, recovery time, and frequency. His most insightful recommendation was that libraries ought to plan for the more frequent small emergencies first, as a learning curve, and then scale up to address larger less frequent events. The reason for this methodology is that library personnel are more likely to be persuaded to perform risk planning if they are preparing for a probable scenario rather than one where the occurrence may be a remote possibility.

Libraries to the Rescue

Mabe uses a single case study of a small library to explore the human aspects of risk planning and mitigation during natural disasters. His study is a qualitative interpretative complement to the empirical ideology of the previous manuscript authors from this special issue. His work may be valuable to smaller non-profit libraries that use a large percentage of volunteer resources in their operations, meaning humans as well as materials. Priorities certainly are different when high quality personnel and valuable collections are contained in libraries with strained resources. We encourage other researchers to document case studies that bring out the humanistic factors and best-practices associated with risk management and contingency planning.

CONCLUSION

Thanks goes out to our Editorial Review Board (ERB) members including the Associate Editors and International Advisors. We also wish to offer a special thank you to IGI Global Journal Development Editor Mr. Sean Eckman for his help in communicating with, and coordinating the work of, the

contributors to this special issue. We could not have completed this special issue on time without his help.

We are issuing a special call for teaching case studies across all disciplines that cover any remote aspect of estimation, quantitative data or qualitative process analysis (as those techniques are related to contingency planning as well as risk quantification and evaluation). We would particularly like to see articles focused on teaching operations research including project management and insurance principles.

As always, we encourage risk management practitioners to contribute in any way possible to the risk and contingency management body of knowledge through *IJRCM*. In addition to more teaching case studies as we invited you to consider above, we would like to see more research risk, uncertainty, and contingency management studies across the disciplines and using multiple methods. We also advise researchers to triangulate their data and method to increase the reliability of the results as well as to gain a more robust interpretation of the findings. Using multiple methods on the same data, collecting additional data, and replicating studies to new samples, are all recommended approaches to improve the reliability of studies. Please see our keywords and author tools at our online site (<http://ijrcm.multinations.org/>).

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