Erica Lenton, Gerstein Science Information Centre, on Creating a service through community & collaboration (Knowledge Synthesis Service)

Liaison Update Forum March 1 2016

a. Could you describe the specific role of the librarian on a KS team?

A: The primary roles of a librarian on a KS team are to conduct the search, translate the search in various databases and grey literature resources, and write up the search methods. The librarian is a full member of the team and must be a co-author in any resulting publication. The full deliverables of the service are outlined below:

1. Reference interview to discuss research questions, fine-tune inclusion/exclusion criteria, and determine limits
2. Search Strategies and appropriate translations to other databases
3. Database Selection
4. Validation and peer-review of search strategies
5. Write literature search methods to include in the general methods for the study
6. Manuscript review
7. Documentation of search strategies for manuscript appendix
8. Consultations on reference management/full-text screening software solutions
9. Letters of collaboration for grant applications (as well as other information as needed; e.g. CCV, PIN, significant contributions)

b. Is one goal to make this exportable to other libraries and disciplines?

A. Yes! Both the model we’re using to develop our service, and the service we are developing to support Knowledge Syntheses.

While Knowledge Syntheses are primarily a product of the health sciences, we are seeing more and more KS publications in other disciplines, such as Engineering, Education, and Social Work. As this trend continues to grow, teams of librarians in these disciplines might find themselves asking similar questions that we did around how to support this work effectively and equitably. We invite UTL librarians involved in KS work to join the COP at Gerstein.

There were a number of complex decisions that needed to be made before we could launch KSS. What is our role? What will we NOT do? How do we ensure consistency across the service? We found that most of the information gathering and risk assessment could be done in a small, core team. Then, we could bring options to the COP for discussion and consensus. With this model, we’ve been able to move the project forward while ensuring open communication and input from all librarians involved in, and impacted by, this new service.