

Episode 6: Brought to You By

Brian Sajecki

Hello. Welcome to the Libraries Out Loud short podcast series called Brought to You By. I'm Brian Sajecki, an Undergraduate Education Librarian at the University of Buffalo, and I'll be your host for this episode. Today, we present to you, Tim McCarthy. All right. So, Hi Tim. Thanks for agreeing to meet with me today. First, I'd like to start with your background. Where are you from and what did you study in college?

Tim McCarthy

Well, I'm a lifelong western New Yorker. I grew up in Snyder, New York, which is in the town of Amherst, and I studied psychology as an undergraduate and then followed that up with my Master's in Library Science. Both of those were from UB

Brian Sajecki

So, how did psychology lead to library science for you? Because everybody's...everybody's track is different, how they find their way into librarianship. So that's interesting with psychology,

Tim McCarthy

Right. Yeah. Well, I you know, when I was about three years into the start getting into my junior year in psych, I kind of realized that I was going to need to look for some, some other career. And I just happened to be doing research for a 300-level psych course at the Health Sciences Library at UB and former HSL Librarian, Sharon Murphy, did a reference interview for me, which I found really helpful. And that experience made me kind of realize what an interesting career that was and how helpful it was to me, and I decided that I would try to pursue that after I graduated. I got a clearer picture of what, a sort of where I might fit in the libraries while I was doing a practicum and volunteering for Nancy Nuzzo in the Music Library. And that really helped me gain confidence. Know what I want...to get a better sense of what I wanted to do, and it sort of gave me a foundation for my career.

Brian Sajecki

That's really awesome. That's, especially hearing from how you kind of received some tutelage from UB Librarians along the way.

Tim McCarthy

Yeah, Sharon was great. I mean, she's, you know, she was very helpful.

Brian Sajecki

That's awesome. So how long have you been at the UB Libraries now?

Tim McCarthy

It'll be 26 years this December. I got my first part time job in '95 December.

Brian Sajecki

It's quite quite a tenure. Yeah. Long term, yeah. Yeah, I've been quite a while.

Brian Sajecki

So currently, what? What is your position?

Tim McCarthy

I'm a Technical Services Systems Librarian and I work in Discovery Services is our unit.

Brian Sajecki

So, what exactly does that mean? What do you do?

Tim McCarthy

Well, I'm a member of the E-resources team and I primarily manage the addition and updating and removal of any large sets of our electronic resources. My primary responsibilities with e-books and our e-book collections but this really includes any kind of troubleshooting, user access issues, any of that kind of stuff with e-books, and I also support the other people in our the E-resources team, you know, help them when problems occur and we maybe need to collaborate on sort of solutions. I also provide some limited technical support for our Discovery Services Staff. And you know, and also, you know, other projects that our unit needs to deal with because I can sort of do large. Like work with large numbers of records at one time.

Brian Sajecki

Wow. That seems really interesting and it's something like very specialized as well.

Tim McCarthy

Yeah, it is. It's yeah, it's I love it. I love what I do.

Brian Sajecki

All right, Tim. So where exactly do you work? Then you said Discovery and Delivery

Tim McCarthy

Yeah, Discovery Services is our unit, and it's located on the first floor of Lockwood Library. Our floor is closed to the public. We're in an area that nobody really sees other than library staff. To me, we're sort of like the librarians behind the curtain who sort of assure that, you know, that there's access to all of our resources, whether it be print, electronic, you know, all the purchasing and all those kind of things of our resources all happen back there.

Brian Sajecki

To me, that seems like there's a lot of different hats you might wear in a given day. So, would you say that you wear many hats for your job?

Tim McCarthy

Yeah. I mean, over my career, I've performed pretty much every Technical Services function that a library has a need for. The exception to that is probably Circulation and ILL which are obviously big parts of it, but whether it's E-resources or acquisitions, any kind of technical troubleshooting, development of, you know, new systems or new methods of doing things and stuff like that to get our resources, make them available. I've done pretty much all of that stuff, and every day is different for what I'm working on from one day to the next. It's never the same, which is great because it keeps it fresh, but I have to be really, fully flexible with my time in case there's any kind of issues that come up that we need to deal with.

Brian Sajecki

That makes that makes a lot of sense. So, it seems that your job is very important to how the UB Libraries function? So can you give us maybe an example of what you do to kind of make the process more efficient or for a patron of the Libraries.

Tim McCarthy

For me, because of the volume of titles that I'm working on at one time. You know, my work in just one day can impact hundreds or thousands, sometimes even tens of thousands of e-resources. You know, we have large packages that we purchase and that need to be kept updated. You know, we may purchase new resources. Those have to be added, maybe canceling certain sets of materials because, you know, there's not enough usage or maybe the collection is kind of old or something like that and isn't really so much needed by our users anymore. I have to do all those kind of things, whether it be journal, electronic journals or e-books, some collections require a lot more attention than others. Every provider sort of has their own way of providing access to the titles and collections. So, there's a lot of work with spreadsheets, you know, large files of record data, all that kind of stuff. You know, the contents of the record data contains all the title information and who publishes the materials. You know what year they're from. All that kind of stuff. So, I have to be really kind of knowledgeable in different ways to approach each collection and keep track of what the best way is to manage those and to sort of keep a record of what's been done, what needs to get done. All those kind of things. So, there's a lot of sort of problem-solving, quote unquote, that I have to do. Not so much that there's necessarily problems, but I just have to figure out, you know, how we're going to deal with these materials.

Brian Sajecki

So it sounds like a lot of moving parts and a lot of things that you kind of have to be multifaceted yourself and being able to problem, solve and think on your feet kind of, if need be.

Tim McCarthy

And it's something that you know, you really learn over time. Sometimes providers change the way they do things. So, you know, you have to adjust according to, you know, what's going to be working best now versus what worked fine. You know, three years ago or something like that. And then technology just changes all the time.

Brian Sajecki

Oh, yeah, for sure. So, you've already spoke about it a little bit. How do you see the library evolving in the future, especially UB libraries?

Tim McCarthy

So, to me, it seems like the remote learning that was sort of forced on higher education because of the pandemic. I don't think that's ever going to completely go away. You know, the on-

demand services that people are receiving now, whether it's in person or remotely or in some sort of a hybrid method, I just think that's going to remain because I think the users want that ease of access and the, you know, the instantaneous or, you know, relatively quick availability of stuff. So, I just think that we're going to be supporting that sort of new normal for, you know, as far as I as far as I can see.

Brian Sajecki

Yeah, I think we've seen a lot of people embrace changes and evolve for the current situation, and a lot of people have embraced it in different ways. So, I totally agree with you on that. I do it in my everyday life, too.

Tim McCarthy

Yeah, it's been challenging, you know? But um, you know, I think that's just what works best for people.

Brian Sajecki

Absolutely. All right. So, do you have any hobbies or interests outside of work that you'd like to share?

Tim McCarthy

Well, for me. You know, science topics and things like that, nature, that that kind of stuff is really appealing. You know, we have a lot of family members who are, you know, interested in nature or in the environment, things like that. So, you know, traveling, visiting different kinds of, you know, natural areas and things like that. Down the road, I'd like to, you know, travel to some of the national parks if possible and do some of that, you know, once I retire and my partner, Sue and I, we both have very large, immediate families and relatively large, especially me. So, we like to find ways that we can spend time together as much as possible.

Brian Sajecki

So, last but not least, what is your favorite part of being a librarian?

Tim McCarthy

I think just finding ways to help our users. You know, if I can do something like, you know, when I'm working with those large sets of records knowing that making that accessible, getting feedback from the Liaisons, the Subject Librarians about how that's helping provide access to stuff that's really rewarding. I also find the creative problem-solving that I have to do because of the technical work that I do. That's, that's really interesting to me. And it's also rewarding. I feel great sense of satisfaction when I figure out a way to do something that maybe I haven't done before. So, coming up with what I would sort of consider innovative solutions to that is really appealing to me, you know, knowing that it's going to benefit the users makes it all worthwhile.

Brian Sajecki

Well, thanks for taking the time to give us a glimpse into what you do and your work. The Libraries really are lucky to have you. Twenty-six years of service. Uh, don't retire (Laughs) Thanks a lot.

Tim McCarthy

Sure, no problem.

Brian Sajecki (and outro music)

Thank you for listening to this brought to you by short presented by the University of Buffalo Libraries Out Loud podcast series. Stay tuned for our next episode coming soon.