Director, Research Insight
OCLC
Dublin, Ohio

THE SEARCH

For more than four decades, OCLC has conducted rigorous independent research, provided shared technology services, and community programs for its over 17,900 member institutions in 123 countries as well as the library community at large. As a nonprofit, member-driven library community, OCLC is a global leader in making information more accessible and more useful. It invests in original community-facing research and programs like the OCLC Research Library Partnership (RLP) and WebJunction which have a record of thought leadership, fostering collaborative problem-solving, and supporting professional development in key areas, equipping libraries to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing environment.

OCLC is hiring a Director of Research Insights to lead its externally focused research initiatives and shape thought leadership on the future of libraries and librarianship. Reporting to the Executive Director of Research and Programming, this leader will oversee a team of seven, including research scientists, and engineers—and collaborate closely with other leaders and research & programming team and cross-functional partners in Marketing and Global Product Management. The Director will help align research priorities, drive outreach and engagement, and deliver timely insights that reflect the evolving needs of libraries worldwide. The Director should bring a fresh perspective and technology expertise that will directly benefit the communities served by libraries.

OCLC is working with Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, for this recruitment. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

Leadership, OCLC Research & Programming

Constance Malpas, Executive Director, Research and Programming, joined OCLC in 2006, first working with the Research Library Partnership and later as a Research Scientists and Strategic Intelligence Manager. Malpas' expertise is in the intersection of technology, history, and library science, her research (ORCID) focuses on transformative changes within academic library collections and services. Malpas has written and spoken extensively about the impact of mass digitization, cooperative print management, and

the evolving nature of the scholarly record. Malpas holds degrees in the History of Science from Mount Holyoke College and Princeton University.

Andrew Harbison, Director, WebJunction, joined OCLC in 2023 to lead the strategy and team that designs, builds, and maintains the WebJunction online learning network for public library staff. In this role, he also serves on the leadership team for the Membership and Research Division, supports and leads cross-division activities, and ensures WebJunction's alignment with OCLC strategic priorities.

OCLC operates under principles and systems of shared governance across several groups: Leaders Council, the Board of Trustees, and the OCLC Executive Management Team.

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR, RESEARCH INSIGHTS

The Director, Research Insights, should be a bold and ambitious leader. They should be relentless in asking themselves what more OCLC research can offer their current and new audiences, and what are the most innovative ideas for bringing great research to life. Reporting to the Executive Director, Research and Programming, Constance Malpas, the Director, Research Insights will work closely with senior leadership to provide oversight and strategic direction for the administrative and research operations' overall success.

Overseeing researchers and engineers, with seven direct reports, the Director, Research Insights will work collaboratively across the organization to ensure research priorities align with OCLC's mission to offer premier services and innovative research to its members and the library community at large.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DIRECTOR, RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Key opportunities and challenges for the Director, Research Insights include:

Strategically lead the expansion of the research agenda

To address community needs and enhance OCLC's value to the diverse communities it serves, the organization has recently made a strategic shift in broadening the research agenda to meet a wider range of library needs. This expanded agenda focuses on understanding the key technologies (including AI) transforming library work across four broad areas:

- Investigating library roles in research, teaching, and learning across the higher education ecosystem

- Exploring curation as an exercise in community building, as well as collections stewardship; this includes greater attention to important developments in the public library sector

- Analyzing emerging metadata frameworks and workflows to better understand the future of library "knowledge work"

- Examining the organizational economics of libraries, with an eye toward optimizing resources and workflows within and across institutional networks

The Director will lead in managing this strategic shift, increasing more independent research production on shorter timelines and empower their talented team to take advantage of the opportunity of more latitude to build their portfolios and brand within the OCLC mission—helping to reinforce their strengths in computational analysis and data-driven research. The Director should help strategically guide their staff to be more responsive in delivering insights into the ways modern libraries envision strategic priorities. The Director will oversee the OCLC research agenda, including annual program planning and prioritization, in consultation with Research and Programming leadership and other OCLC divisions.

Manage research portfolio to support enhanced program alignment

With significant shifts within the library ecosystem, OCLC is also unifying its approach to community programming, leveraging engagement and learning platforms to share expertise across the RLP and WebJunction teams. OCLC is developing new ways to deliver value by:

- Connecting research outputs to a broader range of audiences, moving beyond (but not replacing) long-form narrative formats to reach readers who prefer data visualizations, infographics, or audio summaries

- Facilitating new opportunities for collaborative learning through workshops and cohort-based programs

While the Director, Research Insights will not lead these initiatives, they will work in consultation with Research and Programming leadership, to agree on key member priorities/concerns to be addressed in external research and public programs/events so that there is alignment. They will serve as an expert resource for OCLC colleagues on issues pertaining to library trends (including emerging technologies), and research design and methods (including computation and AI-driven approaches) so that there is clear cohesion and accessibility for their constituents.

Amplify and invigorate the research identity

The Director will collaborate closely with OCLC Communications to maximize the visibility, coherence, and cumulative impact of OCLC research 0utputs. The Director will promote research that builds on the existing strengths as well as aligns with the new strategic shifts that aim to inspire their community to actively engage with their findings. The Director will be nimble and responsive to learnings from measures of research output and impact. Guiding researchers to be responsive to the shifting needs and priorities of OCLC's constituents. The Director will not only be responsible for taking into consideration standard metrics of research output but more so the metrics of response from leading libraries to engage with OCLC on consultative projects. The Director will facilitate collaboration between the Research team and other OCLC division colleagues to inform the OCLC Research agenda and ensure timely sharing of research findings aligned with enterprise goals.

Lead and manage a dynamic, dedicated team with a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives

Keeping the mission of OCLC at the fore, the Director, Research Insights will manage a team of research scientists and engineers, ensuring individual research portfolios are aligned with enterprise needs and emerging library priorities. They will equip and enable teams to collaborate within Research and Programming and across OCLC divisions including Global Product Management, Global Technologies, and Marketing. They will develop team members through coaching and mentorship and cultivate a diverse, collaborative work environment. The Director will be comfortable making decisions, communicating clearly with emotional intelligence, and ensure that processes and efficiencies support the strategic goals of OCLC.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one person may embody all, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- Ed.D or Ph.D. (or equivalent experience).

- 10 years or more of research and research management experience.

- Record of effective management of research teams, including engineers/technologists.

- Expertise in metadata standards and frameworks, including linked data, and related systems and technologies.

- Strong background in conducting primary and secondary research in an information-science related field, as evidenced by a publication record or other highly visible thought leadership.

- Advanced knowledge of research methods, including computational analysis and emerging AI-driven models and approaches.

- Expertise in data collection and analysis, with extensive experience using qualitative and quantitative data analysis software programs. Advanced knowledge of statistical analysis and data science is preferred.

- Demonstrated ability to communicate complex technical material, both orally and in writing.

- Represent OCLC in professional and academic research networks, and through conference presentations and public speaking.

- Travel domestically and internationally as required.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

Total compensation package is very strong – annual salary, plus manager incentive plan, and benefits package. Will need to locate to Dublin, Ohio.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/oclc-research/director-research-insights. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Dan Rodas, Partner
Steph Simon, Senior Associate
Seema Khan, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Working Conditions: Normal office environment.
ADA/EAA: The above statements cover what are generally believed to be principal and essential functions of this job. Specific circumstances may allow or require some people assigned to the job to perform a somewhat different combination of duties.

APPENDIX

ABOUT OCLC

Founded in 1967, OCLC serves nearly 30,000 members and delivers services in library management, discovery, cataloging, digital libraries, virtual reference, and resource sharing. Its mission is to provide technology that is purposeful whether supporting advancements on the leading edge of science or helping children build strong learning foundations, shared knowledge is the common thread. OCLC serves state and national libraries, groups, and consortia that include research, academic, public, school, medical, law, corporate, government, special, state, and national institutions. It has office locations around the globe and is dedicated to offering premier services and software to help libraries and communities around the world. There are three key components to OCLC's mission:

Advance understanding and drive innovation.

OCLC conducts research that helps institutions stay ahead of their most pressing challenges. It ensures that the promise of new technologies makes a difference in the lives of librarians, researchers, and learners. They provide shared services that help libraries operate more efficiently, enabling them to focus more time and resources on their goals. They deliver tools and data that member libraries need to fulfill their commitments to the communities and campuses.

Connect people to the information they need.

OCLC libraries collectively steward a vast quantity of knowledge. Working together, OCLC makes this information more visible and accessible to end users through shared WorldCat data, syndication programs, and partnerships. This sharing of ideas creates connections both inside and outside the library community. It unites thinkers and doers around common purposes. And it helps researchers and learners achieve their goals by putting the world's knowledge within reach.

Move forward with purpose.

OCLC works to build a unified network that addresses shared challenges at scale. OCLC understands the needs of researchers, students, librarians, and innovators and the importance of learning from each other, leaning on each other, and assists in charting a clearer course across the ever-changing information landscape.

OCLC works with its members to champion libraries and increase their visibility. It has a long history of creating, testing, and scaling programs that promote libraries and librarianship; like the Supercharged Storytimes for All, Small Libraries Create Smart Spaces, the Digital Collections Stewardship program, and WebJunction, an online learning hub for library staff.