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Halliday Journals and Holodecks: Audiences and Information in Sci-Fi Fandoms: Papers from the FanLIS 2023 Symposium

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As we have previously intimated (Price and Robinson, 2022), science-fiction is one of the most important and influential genres within fandom, and sci-fi is where so much of what we think of as modern-day fannish practice was born. As Karen Hellekson has noted: "Fans, fandoms, and the study of fan culture are inextricably bound up with the history of SF" (Hellekson, 2018, p. 295). This history includes fannish forms of documentation and publication. What we think of as zines today began life as the sci-fi 'fanags', 'fanmags' and 'letterzines' of the 1930's onwards; and these amateur and small press publications set the tone for what we see in many contemporary fanzines today. These publications now serve as rich primary resources for fannish discourse around sci-fi franchises, giving particular insight into how fans communicated with one another in a pre-internet age (see, for example, Nowakowska's 2001 history of early *Star Wars* letterzines). Indeed, sci-fi has become the core of several modern day fanzine collections (Blake, 1998; Covington, 1994).

In this year's FanLIS symposium, we highlight the ways in which sci-fi fans have been at the forefront of fandom as audiences, content creators, and information workers. Sci-fi is perhaps a natural place from which to historicise fandom, as it has had such a long and storied history. For example, from the first sci-fi fan magazine, *The Comet*, first published in 1930, we can glean valuable insight into how the nascent world of modern fandom began to be formed – all the way down to today, when so much of fandom takes place in lightning speed TikToks and in open, public spaces, with LARPing and cosplay.

Sci-fi can also act as a mirror, reflecting wider societal concerns about our culture, our world, and where it is headed. More specifically, a recent survey by Duxfield and Liew (2023) shows us the myriad ways in which sci-fi novels have imagined the future of information provision to look, from utopic iterations of futuristic worlds, to post-apocalyptic visions of a dead or dying earth. Likewise, Ue (2022) has looked into representations of the archive and the library in both book and movie iterations of Ernest Cline and Steven Spielberg's *Ready Player One*. These help us to frame questions we may not normally ask about our profession—are librarians needed in the far-flung future? In the post-apocalypse, who will save whatever remains of our cultural heritage? Will information be sacred in the brave new world, or will its provision be taken for granted; so interwoven into the fabric of our everyday lives that we barely 'see' it anymore?

As sci-fi has led the way in imagining technological and far-flung futures, some of which have now come to pass, it is no surprise that fans have embraced that forward-looking ethos by taking on new technologies as they appear. From Xeroxing fanzines to adopting the early internet; from social media fic to roleplaying in the metaverse, fans have pushed through numerous frontiers in order to express their fandoms in new and innovative ways. Our discourse embraces both how fan collections are being used to further work in library and information science, (LIS), and how the future of LIS may be anticipated through the lens of sci-fi. The papers presented in these proceedings capture some of the innovation and fearlessness for which our FanLIS community is known.

Our first paper, by Alayna Vander Veer & Austin Waters, shows us how the fanfiction repository, the *Archive of Our Own* (AO3) can be used in library instruction, and how it has been used to empower students to use and search through the library's resources.

Following this, we enter the worlds of sci-fi and speculative futures, beginning with fan sci-fi podcasts and their citational practices, by Amber Sewell; followed by Nicole Neece on how Twitter users interpreted the Covid pandemic through the X-Files; and finally, Alison

Harding discusses how information sharing within the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) fandom community helps shape the community itself.

The next slate of papers looks at how libraries, archives and information provision are represented and imagined in sci-fi worlds – first Tom Ue and James Munday look at Ernest Cline and Steven Spielberg's *Ready Player One*, in both its book and movie formats; Ashley Lanni discusses archivists within the post-apocalyptic videogame *Horizon Forbidden West*; and lastly, Mackenzie Streissguth considers libraries as places of violence as well as sanctuary in the videogame, *Halo*.

We are also fortunate to have our keynote from Karen Hellekson, which describes the history of fanzine production through the many fanzine archives she has visited.

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