

**We are all experts now: The academic library and "information users"** Tami Oliphant (University of Alberta)

In this session, I interrogate the challenges of post-truth, anti-science, and rising hostility towards experts as it relates to academic librarianship by examining two contrasting philosophies of academic libraries and librarianship, the sociotechnical power of automation, and the social psychology of disciplinary knowledge and expertise. In his book *Indexing It All*, Ronald Day outlines the transformation of people to "information users" by presenting two conceptualizations of documents, and in particular, books, from Paul Otlet and Martin Heidegger. Day argues that for Otlet, books are information containers that one consults in order to fulfill psychological information needs. For Heidegger, people and texts are bound to each other in an intimate relationship with the possibility of being understood. The prominence of Otlet's vision has been enacted in academic librarianship and in the development of citation indexes, databases, and other forms of automation for at least the last 75 years. Since the end of World War II, attempts have been made to capture, organize, store, and provide access to the world's knowledge through the development of citation indexes and databases. Furthermore, the realization and proliferation of the Internet, search engines, algorithms, and computer networks have extended the capabilities of containing the world's knowledge beyond merely capturing, storing, organizing, and providing access to information, to shaping information needs, knowledge, and even our sense of reality. Day argues that these processes ultimately transform people's experiences into "information" and people into "information users."

The consequences of these shifts are felt by people in general and in the public's perception of experts. In addition, conflicting approaches to knowledge production, research, and meaning of language among experts can serve to undermine the public's perception of the authority and relevancy of expert contributions and post-secondary education more broadly as well as shifting student perceptions of the academic library. By examining the prominence of Otlet's vision and understanding of the relationship between people and documents, the power of automation, and disciplinary knowledge production, we can then consider the current challenges to expertise, authority, science, research, and public discourse as it pertains to academic librarianship and the purpose of academic libraries and to consider potential strategies and approaches to counter these challenges.