

# UCLA

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### Title

Editors' Note

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## **Editors' Note**

### *Volume 8 Issue 1*

Hidden behind the structure and economics of our society lie powerful cultural forces shaping a slanted vision of reality that disenfranchises many for the benefit of few. This issue of *InterActions* features four articles that remind us the world we live in, with all of its inequities, is socially constructed, not a naturally occurring phenomenon. The authors cast light on the ways that different forms of power and privilege shape social reality; together, the authors expose the seams of our social worlds through which certain groups fall – or are pushed. Each article helps us to “see” a particular conglomeration of forces for what they are.

Julia Glassman’s “Stop Speaking For Us: Women-of-Color Bloggers, White Appropriation, and What Librarians Can Do About It” offers a glimpse into a segment of the blogosphere, where familiar tensions between white feminists and feminists of color have resurfaced in online communities. Presenting case studies in which the writings and ideas of women of color bloggers were appropriated by their white counterparts, Glassman identifies blogs to be sites of vibrant, heated, and sometimes contentious debate, as well as comprising an important aspect of the cultural record. She relates blogs authored by women of color to other forms of alternative materials such as zines, materials that are often overlooked in library collecting policies and practices. Glassman argues that libraries ought to be collecting and preserving these blogs for the long-term, and ultimately makes the case for libraries’ active engagement in developing relationships with women of color bloggers to develop such collections.

Jing Chong’s “How Much Knowledge Can They Gain? Women's Information Behavior on Government Health Websites in the Context of HIV/AIDS Prevention,” investigates the relationship between the design of an information resource and the factors that might prevent women from finding the information they seek. Chong focuses on the websites of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and [womenshealth.gov](http://womenshealth.gov) and argues that even among the most authoritative and trusted information resources on the topic of HIV/AIDS prevention, gender and sexuality are constructed in manners that may deter or alienate the very demographics that they hope to reach. Chong builds upon Rimal and Real’s Risk Perception Attitude framework to explore the factors that may prevent women from moving beyond information seeking, and gaining knowledge.

Shenila S. Khoja-Moolji’s “The Making of Violent Masculinities: Exploring the Intersections of Cultural, Structural and Direct Violence in Schools” takes a candid look at how the educational system in the U.S. condones

and reinforces social and cultural norms that disadvantage young and adolescent girls. Khoja-Moolji utilizes Johan Galtung's typology of violence to identify direct, structural, and cultural forms of violence against girls in schools. Her analysis identifies the culpability of schools, teachers, and students in the creation of violent masculinities; and more specifically, she implicates school policies, disciplinary structures, curriculum, athletics, and teacher-student relations that promote masculinity as inherently violent. She concludes by offering schools and educators a set of recommendations of practical ways to end their complicity in entrenching hegemonic masculinity in our broader culture and their co-construction of a culture that is violent toward girls and women.

In "An Examination of Institutional Factors Related to the Use of Fees at Public Four-Year Universities," Alaine Arnott conducts a quantitative analysis of tuition and fees at four-year public institutions. Using perspectives of academic capitalism and resource dependency theory, the departure point for Arnott's analysis is that public colleges and universities actively adopting a finance model that treats education as a private good and progressively displacing operating costs on to students in the form of institutional fees. A critical point she makes is that many students are often unaware of the difference between tuition and fees, and as a result, they often pay more in educational costs than what is advertised by the college. Arnott goes on to explore how the tuition and fee structures at various public institutions vary based on a wide range of factors, and she concludes with questions and recommendations for colleges and universities regarding the tuition and fees information and policy gap.

Scholarship is most meaningful and effective when it provides a foundation for practical change. The articles published in this issue help readers to envision new social relations for disenfranchised groups. Implicit in each author's work are the questions: Who are we, as people, within larger social systems? How can we exert responsibility over the larger social systems in which my scholarly problem is situated? It is one thing to be critical and identify problems of power and privilege; it is quite another to be critical and begin to assert authority over these problems to change those power dynamics. One of the first steps in tackling problems that may seem to be intractable is to promote dialogue that intentionally brings marginalized voices and perspectives to the forefront. Greater availability and distribution of information can lead to more honest discourse and dialogue that creates the potential for achievement of a more just and egalitarian social reality. The four articles featured in this issue provide critical perspectives on important issues facing education and information systems; and offer research findings, commentaries, and recommendations that promote the liberatory vision that is central to the work of *InterActions*.