

News from the
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Journal



Contents

03

From the
Director

04

Q&A with
Peace Ossom

06

Talking
“Burnout”

08

Sustaining
Public Access
to Public Data

10

By the
Numbers:
The Arts
at MIT

11

Staff News

13

What's New

14

Honor Roll

Bibliotech

News from the MIT Libraries, an official publication of the MIT Libraries, is published twice a year, in the fall and spring.

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Design

Pentagram

From the Director

Being part of the MIT community means committing to solving hard problems. Knowledge generated at the Institute has changed — and will continue to change — the world. As a library, we're dedicated to inspiring, facilitating, and sharing that knowledge; this mission is embedded in everything we do:

- We meet the needs of the MIT research community with services like Research Data Management (p. 4) which is evolving to support increasingly data-intensive and computational research.
- We help ensure a healthy Institute community with supportive staff, spaces that are welcoming to all, and engaging programming like MIT Reads, which recently focused on managing stress (p. 6).
- We work to ensure ongoing access to knowledge, whether it's preserving cultural heritage (p. 13) or sustaining public access to public data from the federal government (p. 8).

In today's higher education landscape, solving hard problems has become even harder, but we're steadfast in our mission. With your continued support, the important work of libraries carries on.

With gratitude,



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Photo
Shawn Henry



Q&A with Peace Ossom

Meet the Libraries' Director of Research Data Services



Image
Peace Ossom (left) with Rebecca Saxe, John W. Jarve (1978) Professor, Brain and Cognitive Sciences and associate dean, School of Science.
Photo
Bryce Vickmark

Peace Ossom joined the MIT Libraries as Director of Research Data Services in August 2024. In this role, she oversees the teams responsible for GIS and Statistical Services, Data Management Services, and Citation Management and Writing Tools. Ossom recently spoke with *Bibliotech* about the ever-increasing data needs of MIT researchers and partnering with the MIT Office of Research Computing and Data (ORCD) to meet them.

What are some of the most common challenges you see among MIT researchers working with data?

The top challenges MIT researchers face involve access, compliance, and computing. Researchers, particularly those using large language models, need access to large datasets, which can be very difficult to find, obtain permissions for, and share for the purpose of reproducibility. They must first navigate a world of disparate searching platforms, undiscoverable data, restrictive licenses and agreements, and inconsistency in data collection methods and formatting. Regarding compliance, researchers must stay abreast of constantly changing guidelines, policies, and infrastructure here at MIT and from funders and publishers. Lastly, as data needs grow exponentially, researchers often need to utilize a wide variety of platforms while also needing access to robust computing power for the storage and processing of ever-growing datasets.

The MIT Libraries aims to streamline processes for data access, and we advise on next steps for planning and sharing, encourage agreements that allow for greater sharing across the Institute, and utilize standards for consistent data collection and description. We also provide training on data management principles and practices, coding languages, and GIS and data platforms. Last academic year, we had more than 1,000 engagements with MIT community members between individual consultations and workshops.

How do the Libraries work together with ORCD?

MIT researchers have stated the need for more centralized research computing and data support, and ORCD is creating solutions that meet the needs of departments, labs, centers, and institutes (DCLIs) across MIT. ORCD is the Libraries' close collaborative partner due to the way our services can work together. ORCD provides advanced research computing resources, while the Libraries provides guidance on data management planning, data documentation, data use, and data sharing. Together, we work to develop a robust model of researcher support.

What are some collaborations you've worked on recently?

A great example is the joint effort to make Globus data transfer services available to the MIT community. Globus is a system for the secure and efficient transfer of large data, making it a quick and user-friendly solution for those without the computing power. The Libraries and ORCD aim to ensure that the Institute provides not just raw storage and data compliance services, but also robust training and end-to-end lifecycle management, including long-term access and archival support.

We also collaborated with ORCD and the Schwarzman College of Computing on Independent Activities Period (IAP) pilot courses on coding languages, introducing a Practical Computational Thinking series working with advisors in CSAIL and other departments. Anyone from any DLCI can develop practical connections between computing and their home fields. This expands upon the Libraries' Carpentries@MIT workshop series which began in 2019 and has reached more than 400 participants. We have seen huge demand for these workshops, waitlisting almost as many people as we registered. ORCD staff have become certified Carpentries instructors, enabling us to develop discipline-oriented workshops, including specialized lessons for Biology and Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences. This collaboration is helping us to deepen our offerings and meet a clear need across MIT.

Talking “Burnout”

MIT Reads explores strategies for minimizing stress, managing emotions, and living joyfully

Image
MIT Libraries' Alexia Hudson-Ward (left) introduces authors Amelia (center) and Emily Nagoski (right).
Photo
Bryce Vickmark

Emily Nagoski and Amelia Nagoski spoke at Hayden Library on April 16 about their *New York Times*-bestselling book, *Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle*. The book was the spring 2025 selection for MIT Reads, the Institute's all-campus reading and discussion program.

Emily Nagoski, a sex educator and researcher, and twin sister Amelia Nagoski, a conductor and music professor, explored the themes of *Burnout* in dialogue with Karen Singleton, Deputy Chief Health Officer of MIT Health, in front of a capacity crowd in the Nexus and an audience online. Written for anyone who has felt overwhelmed and exhausted by everything they have to do, yet still worried they weren't doing enough, *Burnout* has resonance across the MIT community.

The good news? We don't need to deal with the source of stress to feel better. “Stress is not your enemy,” says Amelia, “getting stuck is your enemy.”

In *Burnout*, the Nagoskis explain that our bodies have a biological stress response cycle. Even when the source of stress is no longer present, if we don't complete the cycle, it can lead to exhaustion. The authors present seven evidence-based strategies for helping our bodies complete the stress response cycle, from the expected — physical activity, sleep, crying, and laughter — to the more surprising — engaging one's imagination, creative self-expression, and loving connection.

In a wide ranging conversation that included original songs, Tai Chi exercises, and an audience Q&A, the Nagoskis explored topics including toxic perfectionism, why we need sleep and strategies for getting enough, the research behind gratitude, and the importance of creating meaning in our lives.

“Joy comes from the connection to something larger and your community,” says Emily. “And because your sense of meaning — your something larger — resides within yourself, it can never be taken from you.”

Watch a recording of the event on our YouTube channel at youtube.com/MITLibraries.



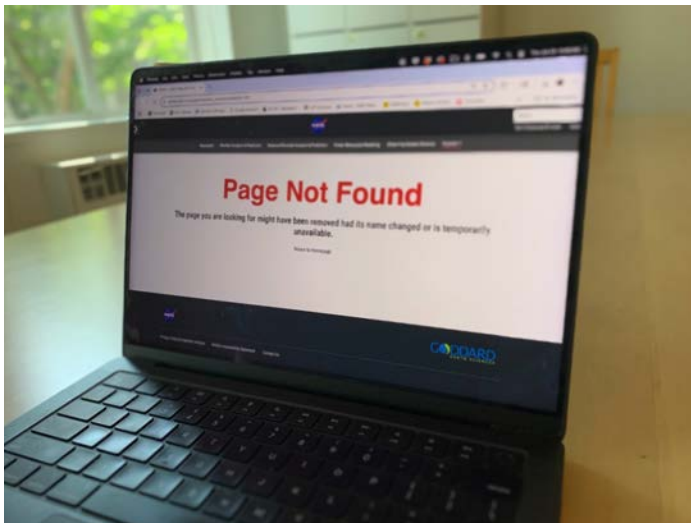
**“Stress is not your enemy.
Getting stuck is your enemy.”
—Amelia Nagoski**

Sustaining Public Access to Public Data

MIT Libraries contribute to collaborative efforts to preserve federal government data

The United States federal government collects, aggregates, and disseminates a large volume of information and data, content used by researchers, policymakers, businesses, even farmers. Protecting access to federal government data between and during presidential administrations is critically important — and not only for MIT’s research community. When data disappears, it erodes the reproducibility of previous research, interrupts work, and deteriorates trust in science and government.

“If the data and tools used to understand complex data are abruptly taken off the internet, the work of scientists, civil society organizations and government officials themselves can grind to a halt,” wrote Energy and Environment Librarian Alejandro Paz in *The Conversation*.



Shortly after the 2024 presidential election, acutely aware of the heightened risk to data resources supported, hosted, and maintained by the federal government, a dedicated team of MIT Libraries experts sprang into action. Staff identified the need for practical tools and, collaborating with researchers, rapidly deployed a checklist to help users identify, document, and safeguard the government data they rely on.

“We wanted to create resources that would be valuable both for our local research community and for the broader research and library community,” says Amy Nurnberger, the Libraries’ program head for Data Management Services. “The checklist provides a starting point for these important conversations and considerations.”

The checklist has been a key resource for the Data Rescue Project, which serves as a clearinghouse for data rescue-related efforts, and is one of several coordinated efforts across the country to sustain public access to data. In addition, library staff held three events at MIT during the spring semester where they trained participants to contribute to the Data Rescue Project and to nominate vulnerable datasets to the End-of-Term Archive, which captures and saves government websites at the end of presidential administrations.

In appreciation for their efforts, Libraries staff including Paz, Nurnberger, Phoebe Ayers, Sabrina Brown, Joe Carrano, Jonaville Cuervo, Sadie Roosa, and Ece Turnator received the 2025 Infinite Mile Award for Innovation, Creativity, and Problem Solving. “This team didn’t just rise to the challenge,” said Director of Libraries Chris Bourg, “they executed solutions at record speed.”

By the Numbers: The Arts at MIT

Data for academic year
2024

The MIT Libraries is a key part of the vibrant arts ecosystem at MIT, a hub for arts scholarship, creative research, and cultural engagement. Through comprehensive collections, specialized services, and innovative programming and digital scholarship initiatives, the Libraries enable discovery, preservation, dissemination, art making, and connection to artistic knowledge and cultural heritage.

80,000+

Arts-related items in our collections

1,300+

Arts-related archival collections

17

Exhibitions across library galleries and spaces

10

Librarians and specialized staff with arts subject expertise

Staff News



2025 Infinite Mile Awards

The Libraries honored the outstanding contributions of its employees on June 11, recognizing achievements in the following categories.

Bringing Out the Best

Lauren Fairman

Development Associate

Collaboration & Inclusion

Jake Zelikovsky

Music Library Assistant

User Service & Support

Derek Hixon

*Program Head for Technology
Support Services*

Unsung Hero

Sarah Kurpiel

Electronic Resources Associate

Community Building & Engagement

Student supervisors team:

Caitlin Canfield, Erica Moore,
Kendall Dawson, and Kassia
Roberts

Innovation, Creativity & Problem Solving

Federal Government Data

Rescue Group: Phoebe Ayers,
Sabrina Brown, Joe Carrano,
Amy Nurnberger, Alejandro
Paz, Sadie Roosa, Jonavelle
Cuerdo, and Ece Turnator

Results, Outcome & Productivity

Collections Strategy Team:

Courtney Crummett, Marcella
Tam, Deborah Lenares, and
Laura Hanscom

Christine Moulen “Good Citizen” Award

Jake Lewis

Access Services Associate



What's New

Letterlocking book named one of *The Wall Street Journal's* best of the season

Letterlocking: The Hidden History of the Letter by Jana Dambrogio, the Libraries' Thomas F. Peterson (1957) Conservator, and Daniel Starza Smith was named to *The Wall Street Journal's* best reading of the season for summer 2025. In the book, Dambrogio and Smith, who have pioneered the field over the last 10 years, tell the fascinating story of this centuries-old document security technology. With more than 300 images and diagrams, *Letterlocking* explores the practice's history through real examples from all over the world and even offers a comprehensive guide to making one's own locked letters.

Image
Plate XLIV from *Alep: Essai sur le développement d'une grande ville syrienne, des origines au milieu du XIXe siècle*, Jean Sauvaget, Institut Français de Damas, 1941. Rotch Library, MIT Libraries.

Ink, Stone, and Silver Light: A Century of Cultural Heritage Preservation in Aleppo

The newest Maihuagen Gallery exhibit draws on archival materials from the Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT to explore a century of cultural heritage preservation in Aleppo, Syria. *Ink, Stone, and Silver Light* explores how Aleppo's urban memory has been recorded and preserved through manuscripts, built form, and photography. At a time when Syria again confronts upheaval and displacement, archival fragments offer models for preserving the past while envisioning futures rooted in dignity, knowledge, and place. The exhibit is on view in the Maihuagen Gallery through December 11.

Honor Roll

Thank you

We are grateful for the generosity of our library friends and supporters. Our donors enable the Libraries to support the MIT community and to advance the Institute's mission by producing, collecting, and sharing knowledge to solve the world's biggest problems. Thank you for your support.

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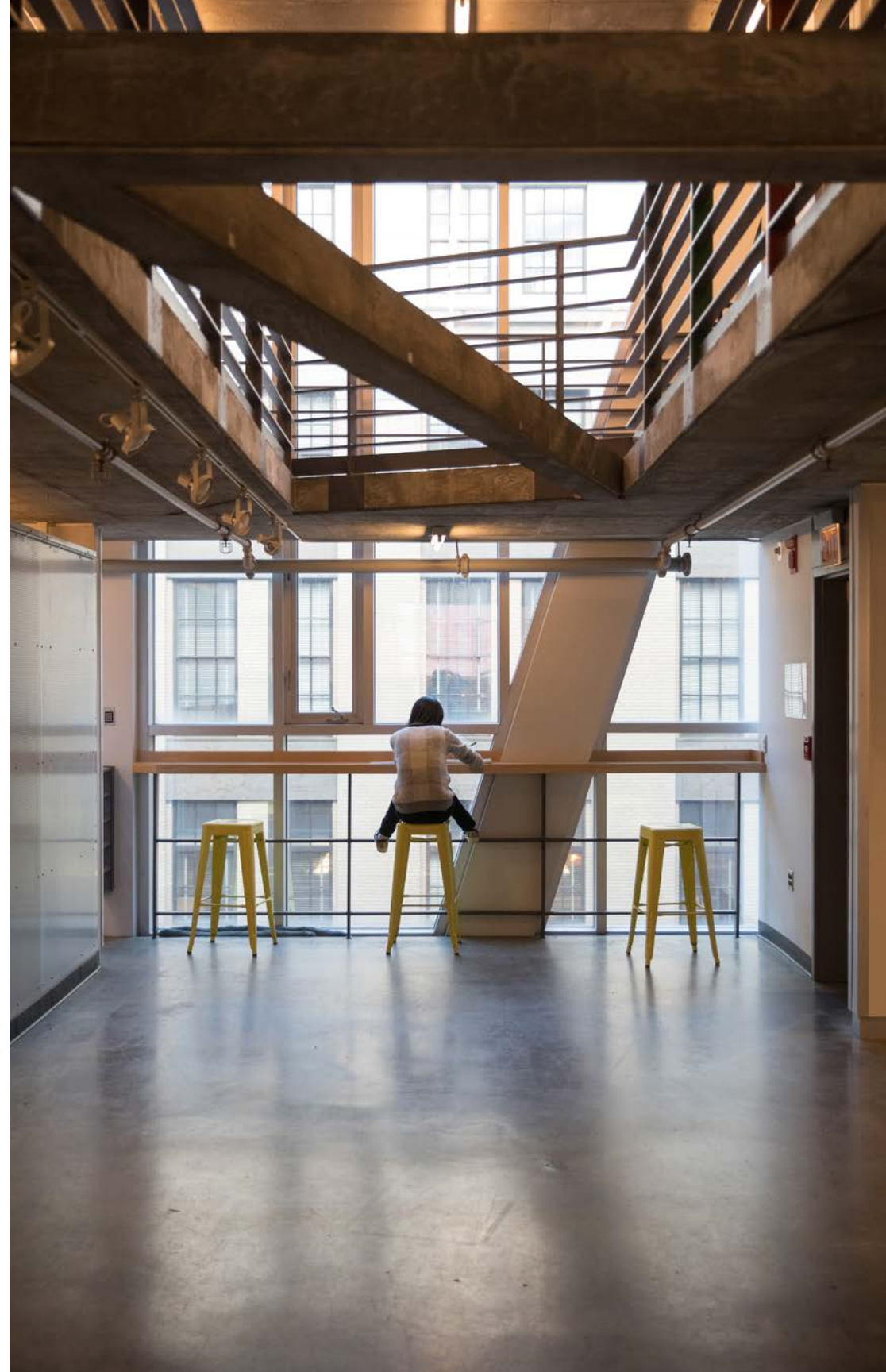
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