RUTH SZPUNAR

EDUCATION

Master of Library Science | Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN

Bachelor's Degree in English | Bethel University, Mishawaka, IN

WORK EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Associate Professor | UMGC (University of Maryland Global Campus) | Sept 2023 – Present

- Teach PACE 111 - Program and Career Exploration for the Department of First Year Experience.

Co-Owner | Aestiva Solutions | Jan 2019 – Present

- Consulting group focusing on Springshare products, usability, user needs, communication, and collaboration.

Reference, Outreach, and Instruction (RIO) Consultant | PALNI (Private Academic Library Network of Indiana) | May 2014 – August 2025

- Consulted and worked with libraries on projects for Reference, Instruction, and Outreach areas to support local expertise.

Reference, Outreach, and Instruction (RIO) Coordinator | PALNI (Private Academic Library Network of Indiana) | May 2014 – August 2025

- Coordinated collaboration and communication on Reference, Instruction, and Outreach (RIO) activities for 23 academic libraries in Indiana.
- Planned in-person professional development opportunities for RIO librarians, including the biennial Camp RIO.
- Co-led Information Needs Assessment Project Team.
- Performed large-scale usability testing on Discovery layer product.
- Led task forces focused on topics such as information literacy scaffolding, information literacy assessment, and outreach events.
- Created and maintained an instructional peer coaching program.

Part-time Instruction and Reference Librarian with rank of Part-Time Associate Professor | DePauw University Libraries | Oct 2005 – May 2019

- Staffed Research Desk--answered questions from the DePauw community about library usage, research, and technology.
- Taught information literacy sessions for DePauw classes.
- Collected usage statistics for electronic resources and created custom reports.
- Developed online library guides using LibGuides software for classes, events, and research processes.
- Trained students to provide peer to peer research help.
- Curated Reference book collection.
- Designed creative book displays, such as for Valentine's Day (Blind Date with a Book) and Banned Books Week.

Customer Service Manager | PearBudget | May 2011 – August 2017

- Responded to all customer queries in a timely manner, whether submitted via e-mail, blog comment, or social media.
- Tracked customer feature requests and bug reports.

Part-time Assistant Professor of University Studies | DePauw University | August 2010 – December 2010

- Taught credit-bearing First Year Seminar: The World of Social Media.

Graduate Assistant | Indiana University Indianapolis | August 2003 – August 2005

- Assisted in Interlibrary Loan
- Staffed the Reference Desk
- Scanned materials for the Digital Libraries Team
- Designed websites for the Special Collections/Archives

PUBLICATIONS

- Szpunar, R., Bradley, E., Gabrielson, E., & Pellegrino, C. (2025). Irrelevant discovery layers? An evidence-based evaluation of three common library search tools. *Information Technology and Libraries*, 44(2). https://doi.org/10.5860/ital.v44i2.17266
- Szpunar, R., & Bradley, E. (2025). *Information literacy among religious leaders*. https://bit.ly/religious_leaders
- Szpunar, R., Bradley, E., et al. (2017-2025). *PALNI information needs assessment project reports*. https://libguides.palni.edu/inap
- Szpunar, R., & Bradley, E. (2024). Finding the holy grail of library value: Characteristics of academic libraries at universities with high retention rates. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 19(3), 60–86. https://doi.org/10.18438/eblip30495
- Szpunar, R., & Bradley, E. (2022-2023). *Library search tool usability reports*. https://libguides.palni.edu/ux/searchtools
- Szpunar, R., & Bradley, E. (2023). Conducting a user needs assessment through the consortia: Pooling resources to examine student and faculty habits. *College & Research Libraries*, 84(1), 69-84. https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.84.1.69
- Bradley, E., Szpunar, R., & West, M. (2015-2021). *PALNI WorldCat Discovery usability reports*. https://libguides.palni.edu/ux/wcd
- O'Leary, C., & Szpunar, R. (2020). "Revitalizing homeschool programming for public libraries: A case study." In V. Gubnitskaia and C. Smallwood, (Eds.), *Homeschooling and libraries: New solutions and opportunities* (pp. 115-123). McFarland.
- Szpunar, R. (2019). Review of the book Engaging design: Creating libraries for modern users, by E. N. Decker and S. M. Porter. *College & Research Libraries*, 80(5), 739-740. https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.80.5.739
- Szpunar, R. (2018). Review of the book Undergraduate research and the academic librarian: Case studies and best practices, eds. M. K. Hensley and S. Davis-Kahl. *College & Research Libraries*, 79(4), 602-603. https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.79.4.602

- Szpunar, R. (2017). Review of the book Collaborating for impact: Special collections and liaison librarian partnerships, eds. K. Totleben and L. Birrell. *College & Research Libraries*, 78(5), 729-731. https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.78.5.729
- Bradley, E., Szpunar, R., & West, M. (2015). "Collaborative UX testing: Cardigans included." *ACRL TechConnect Blog*.

PRESENTATIONS

- Szpunar R. (2025). "Redefining Failure." *PALNI Camp RIO Institute*, Morgantown, IN.
- Szpunar R. (2023). "Marketing Your Ideas." *PALNI Camp RIO*, Morgantown, IN.
- Szpunar R., & Bradley, E. (2023). "Marketing the Library." PALNI Camp RIO, Morgantown, IN.
- Szpunar, R. (2021). "Findings From UX testing." *OCLC Roundtable*, Virtual.
- Bradley, E., & Szpunar, R. (2021). "More Than Just a Diary: Reflective Practice for Academic Librarians." *Academic Library Association of Ohio (ALAO) Annual Conference*, Virtual.
- Szpunar R. (2021). "Work Won't Love You Back." *PALNI Camp RIO*, Lake Placid, IN.
- Szpunar, R., & Bradley, E. (2020). "Leveraging the Library Consortium to Conduct Local Ethnographic User Needs Assessment." Poster, *Library Assessment Conference*, Virtual.
- Gray, A., Szpunar, R., & Bradley, E. (2020). "Can Information Literacy Encourage Critical Thinking? Can it be Assessed?" *OPAL-PALNI Conference*, Virtual.
- Mahoney, J., Szpunar, R. (2020). "Intentional Teaching: Designing and Assessing an Information Literacy Program Using Backward Design." *OPAL-PALNI Conference*, Virtual.
- Brodman, K., Haney, T., Szpunar, R., & Thelin, S. (2019). "User-Centered Design in Context." *ACRL 2019*, Cleveland, OH.
- Szpunar, R. (2018). "More Action Please." *PALNI Camp RIO*, Morgantown, IN.
- Bradley, E., Szpunar, R., & West M. (2016). "Collaborative UX Testing: Cardigans Included." *Designing for Digital*, Austin, TX.
- Szpunar, R. (2013). "Save Your Library from Unused Databases: Become a Usage Statistics Hero!" *Indiana Library Federation (ILF) Annual Conference*, Indianapolis, IN.
- Lambert, L., & Szpunar R. (2012). "'We Didn't Start The Fire': How Billy Joel's Song Can Motivate Student Learning and Deeper Engagement." *Indiana University Libraries Information Literacy Colloquium*, New Albany, IN.
- Szpunar, R. (2010). "Engaging Students with Library Instruction." *ILF Annual Conference*, Indianapolis, IN.
- Wilson, W., Szpunar R., Hebb, T., Provine, R., & Millis, K. (2009). "Showcasing Faculty Scholarship and Artistic Work." Poster, *ALA Annual Conference*, Washington, D.C.
- Parker, S., & Szpunar R. (2009). "Using CONTENTdm as a Digital Repository." *GLITTER (Great Lakes Information Technologists for Education and Research) Annual Conference*, Greencastle, IN.
- Szpunar, R. (2008). "LibGuides - Web 2.0 Meets Library Research." *ILF Annual Conference*, Indianapolis, IN.
- Szpunar, R, Millis, K., & Hebb, T. (2008). "LibGuides: Updating the Old Pathfinder Model for the 2.0 World." *ICI (Independent Colleges of Indiana) Instructional Technology Summit*, Greencastle, IN.
- Szpunar, R & Millis, K. (2008). "Updating Library Guides for the 2.0 World." *All-PALNI Meeting*, Indianapolis, IN.

- Millis, K., Hebb, T., & Szpunar R. (2007). “De-desk Reference: Using Web 2.0 to Provide Services Away From the Reference Desk.” Poster, *ALA Annual Conference*, Washington, D.C.

COURSES TAKEN AND WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

- Immersion (ACRL), 2019
- Everyday Statistics for Librarians (Library Juice Academy), 2019
- Cultural Competence for the Academic Librarian (Library Juice Academy), 2016
- Microcontrollers for Educators: Connecting the STEM Dots: Microprocessors and Electrical and Computer Engineering in the Classroom (SparkFun), 2016
- Planning, Assessing, and Communicating Library Impact: Putting the Standards for Libraries in Higher Education into Action (ACRL), 2016
- Digital UX Workshop: Crafting Exceptional Digital Experiences for the User-Centered Library (Library Journal), 2015
- PALNI Arduino Workshop, (SparkFun), 2015
- DePauw University W (Writing) Workshop, 2012
- DePauw University S (Speech) Workshop, 2010