

Access Services Interest Group 2023 Spring Virtual Forum

Title: Ideologies in the Servicescape: The Retail Industry, Customer Service, and the Academic Library

Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 1:00-2:00pm Central Time

A presentation by Eleanor Cleveland, Access Services Coordinator, James Waters, Scholar Support Specialist for the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities Department, and Jeff Hipsher, Access Services Librarian and Head of Access Services & Delivery for Florida State University.

About this presentation

Borrowing strategies for customer service training, staffing models, and point-of-sale design from the retail service industry is a common theme in the scholarship and research concerning Access Services in academic libraries. However, very seldom do these texts interrogate the specific cultural context inhabited by the American Retail Store. This uncritical cooption of retail methodologies potentially leaves Access Services departments vulnerable to the neoliberal ideologies in which they were formed, changing library spaces and experiences into a highly engineered system of display used to impose institutional values, drive down wages, and instill customer loyalty. Through its engagement with critical theory, our presentation hopes to highlight these contradictions and offer a counter-rhetoric for the intellectual craft of Access Services librarianship and reframe this crucial work as a first line of defense against the neoliberal ideologies of the servicescape.

About the presenters



Eleanor Cleveland is the Access Services Coordinator for Robert Manning Strozier Library at Florida State University. She has worked at FSU Libraries since 2015 and earned her Masters of Science in Information from FSU's iSchool in 2022.

James Waters is the Scholar Support Specialist for the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities Department at Strozier Library. He earned his Masters of Science in Information from FSU's iSchool in 2019.



Jeff Hipsher is the Access Services Librarian and Head of Access Services & Delivery for FSU Libraries. He has an MFA in Creative Writing from FSU's English Department and a Master of Science of Information from FSU's iSchool.