

## **Ode to user services librarians in a time of COVID [28 May 2020]**

If it were foretold, we may have laughed,  
But right there in the midst of March,  
We turned keys in locks and walked away  
From the Campus Libraries at the UWI STA.

As the WHO declared a global pandemic,  
“Work from home,” was the government’s edict  
All places of learning closed with a sigh,  
We uploaded work drives and clouds and bid a transient goodbye.

Librarians worked from home, and this tested our biblio-mettle,  
Overnight, we mastered Zoom, BBC, Webex, and tried to settle  
Into a routine of online reference, until further notice,  
We engaged our users daily, on a never-ending virtual basis.

We supervised staff virtually, developed projects and new reporting tools,  
And yet maintained policies, procedures, ethics and rules.  
WhatsApp calls and WhatsApp groups, Google Hangouts and Microsoft Teams,  
Librarians were just about connected with everyone it seems.

We handled theses, new courses and delivered stats of various sorts  
And submitted what felt like hundreds of reports.  
They Asked a Librarian and we answered every query  
Blurring the lines of the actual office and our domestic sanctuaries.

Document delivery service was all the lockdown rage,  
As more users realized they did not ALWAYS need THE printed page.  
Remote access e-resources stats surely may have doubled or tripled,  
Let no one say that during lockdown, library services were crippled.

Academic research support was altruistic in this time of Covid,  
With free resources from many publishers like EBSCO, Jove, OUP and Ovid.  
And profusions of libraries and Covid-19 webinars, we’d duly observe  
As we balanced work, #stayhome #staysafe and #flattenthecurve.

So, with life as we know it, metamorphosing to never be the same,  
User Services Librarians stayed ahead of the game,  
Meetings and committees, dossiers of action plans dedicated to duty,  
The scorecard was balanced for our clients at the university.