



Rong Tang

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

B.A., People's University of China

M.A., Ohio State University

M.L.S., Wayne State University

Ph.D., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Teaching/Research Areas

Usability testing and evaluation; user studies and needs assessment; mental models of online searching; bibliometrics and citation behavior research, research methods and design

SIMMONS
Graduate School of Library
and Information Science

Rong Tang: Walking to the Wonderful Fireworks

Rong Tang's biggest talent, she says, is her intuition. "Many of my research ideas originate from intuition, and I truly love pursuing those ideas. It's like being a child and walking on a narrow path in a pitch-black night to a destination with only faint light as guidance. But when you reach the destination, there are the most beautiful lights and the most colorful and wonderful fireworks."

Tang has traveled a long way to where she is now in her life, literally and figuratively. "My grandmother was from a peasant family, but she lived with us in the city when I was growing up. She had bound feet and was not able to read. I was very close to her, and as a child, I taught her to read Chinese characters." Tang grew up in the Anhui province, west of Shanghai, during China's Cultural Revolution. "My mother was a doctor and was sent to the countryside for six months. She did farm labor and also worked as a nurse, and my brother and I took turns staying with her. It was tough for my parents — I remember a lot of tears. But my parents are optimistic people, so they managed family life fairly well. I remember as a child wanting to have more books to read. Many books were banned as anti-revolutionary, but I often sneaked away to my neighbor's house to read novels."

Like others in the library field, Tang discovered her career somewhat accidentally. "Initially I was interested in LIS because I loved books and thought a library degree would lead to a good job in an academic library." But she soon discovered the depth of knowledge in the field and the nearly limitless possibilities for research. With the benefit of mentoring and collaboration with her professors, she has since become a passionate researcher with dreams of building her own research program or institute.