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Marketing BrowZine in Michigan Universities

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JK: What is one thing you're excited about when it comes to media in the academy?

JH: I always look forward to the **National Media Market**, where I can review all the new content that is available. It is so exciting to be able to view firsthand new titles and talk with distributors and filmmakers about what's around the next corner.

Media is certainly taking its place in the academy alongside text, and faculty are realizing the importance of media in today's learning. We are leveraging technology to bring video content any where, any place. Libraries are starting to pay more attention to media and putting streaming media into their budgets. Along with the evolution of eBooks, library administrators realize that these new models do work and video streaming is becoming more mainstream.

JK: And one thing you're concerned about?

JH: I am concerned about the demise of the media librarian and the lack of courses found in library school. So much emphasis is on information literacy and systems, and these are certainly essential. The place of media in the academy, however, is being neglected. Media librarians are becoming a dying breed. deg and I recently conducted a survey, the results of which indicated that media selection is almost always handled by someone other than a media librarian. In many cases, responsibility for media selection is being absorbed by subject librarians, and while that is positive in certain respects, often media is deemed "less important." Subject librarians don't have the time to become knowledgeable about a new format and don't have the experience of locating and selecting appropriate titles for their libraries.

I am also concerned about the demise of small independent media distributors. They seek out alternative viewpoints and bring important perspectives to the academy. It is harder to make a living producing and distributing independent films. Larger distributors are growing, and hopefully they will purchase independently produced content that is vital to our academy and keep independent filmmakers in business.

JK: Five years from now, what will streaming media's role in the library be?

JH: I believe that streaming media will take over the physical collection and that it will become more readily available to faculty and students. In my institution, use of streaming media now outnumbers the physical collection, and this has happened just in the past two years.

JK: Anything I didn't ask that you'd like to share with Against the Grain readers?

JH: From the survey that deg and I conducted, we're finding that there is still a disconnect between the librarian and IT. They are starting to communicate with each other, but there continues to be silos between the two on campus. Through reorganization sometimes this marriage is forced. It is a challenge for the librarian to communicate and to coordinate efforts. 🌳

# Marketing BrowZine in Michigan Universities

by **Matthew Ismail** (Director of Collection Development, Central Michigan University Libraries) <ismai1md@cmich.edu>

Beginning in the Fall Semester of 2013-14, **Central Michigan University Libraries** — among eight other Michigan and Indiana academic libraries — will be working on a project with the **Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS)**[1] and **Third Iron**, the creator of the tablet-based journal browsing app, *BrowZine*. We hope that the project will provide insights into an area to which **CMU Libraries** have not traditionally directed much attention: marketing of library services.

According to **David Votta**, Community Engagement Librarian at **MCLS**, the origin of this marketing project lies at a meeting at the **Third Iron** booth at **ALA Midwinter** between **MCLS** Executive Director, **Randy Dykhuis** and **Third Iron** CEO, **Kendall Bartsch**.[2] **Dykhuis** was immediately intrigued by the potential of **Third Iron's** *BrowZine* app for use in academic libraries, and since **MCLS** is interested in understanding how academic libraries market themselves and their services, **Dykhuis** and **Bartsch** agreed to collaborate on a pilot project that would allow both organizations to benefit.

The agreed project involves **MCLS** subsidizing the first year costs of *BrowZine* for academic libraries on the condition that they market *BrowZine* to the best of their abilities and report their marketing activities back to **MCLS**. When **Third Iron** receives the marketing data from **MLCS**, they will be able to see if there is any correlation between the dates on which various libraries pushed out messages about *BrowZine* to their users, and usage of the app. These statistics would thus provide decent evidence that our attempts to promote the app had reached our users and resulted in action on their part — or not.

At **CMU**, we've taken this *BrowZine* project to the Libraries' Marketing Committee and tried various approaches. Our graphic designer created an image which was loaded on the libraries' homepage and on the libraries' digital message boards:
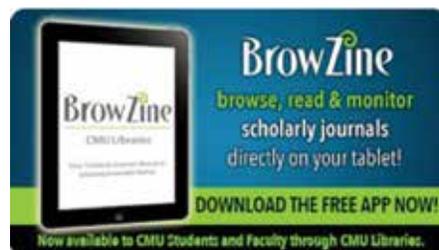
The graphic designer also created a landing page for those who clicked on the image on the library homepage:

These images will also be posted to the Libraries' Facebook and Twitter accounts and we are considering creating a *BrowZine* video to be shown on the message boards. The subject librarians have also been active in promoting *BrowZine* by word of mouth to the faculty in their departments.

Of course, since this all went live (October 1st) we have yet to learn what the result will be, but the process has already been very useful in a variety of ways. Not only did we think quite a bit about marketing the library's services, but the project also forced us to ask ourselves what our strategy for dealing with mobile devices is — not to mention asking how many of us even know how to use iPads and Android tablets! As a result of this process, plans are underway to introduce tablet technology to Libraries employees to further the *BrowZine* initiative and to discover other applications as well.

When I asked **Votta** if **MCLS** plans to undertake more such marketing projects, he said, "Quite possibly. This is a first step. Our goals are to discover what tools academic libraries are actually using, what works, and if our assistance enhances the process. A significant part of this project is simply to find out what works." For **CMU Libraries**, at any rate, this project has already been quite helpful. 🌳

Endnotes

1. **MCLS** is a "non-profit membership organization comprised of all types of libraries in Indiana and Michigan. **MCLS** provides libraries a convenient, single point of contact for training, group purchasing, and technical support for electronic resources." *http://www.mlcnet.org/cms/sitem.cfm*

2. Some may recall **Bartsch** from his years at **CSA** and **ProQuest**.