

2015

Publisher Profile--Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC)

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we're in a space where libraries buy stuff and then direct blame at the publishers if use falls below expectations. It's actually a two-way street; the content has to have inherent value, and it has to be positioned in ways that users can find it. So, libraries need to do their part to actually promote what they buy, and publishers can and would help with that. A journal publisher can see a lot about who is using their content, and how they are accessing it. When analyzed in the context of hundreds of other libraries, they can start to see patterns related to the more or less effective ways that libraries position content.

As to who is actually doing this, I know that **Springer** has a group dedicated to this kind of analysis, and **Gale** has — or at least used to have — a “post-sales” group that could help with issues like content promotion. I'm sure other publishers also have programs, or provide ad hoc assistance, if asked, but I think the point I'd make is that librarians seldom ask (note: some interesting exceptions might include **John McDonald** at **USC**, **Michael Levine-Clark** at the **University of Denver**, **Jason Price** from **SCELC**, and **Doug Way** from Wisconsin). Most libraries and librarians seem to resist the notion that publishers have a role in leading users to content: “that's what librarians do.” The fact that we might be doing it poorly, or, if you prefer, “not optimally,” seems easier for them to accept than the thought of bringing vendors in to advise on building user relations, or organizing content in ways that optimizes its visibility.

ATG: *What other strategies can libraries employ to gain a competitive edge in attracting and retaining users?*

MS: That's easy. They can hire and retain staff members who are irresistible to library constituents. They can marshal persuasive data that they have and will deliver tangible benefits to users. They can create relationships with potential users — social media, luncheons, events — that build trust, before trying to preach the library's message. And, like with any other successful business, they can deliver the services that people want, at the time and place of need.

I know — this sounds like a lot to ask. But libraries have a lot of strategic advantages that could help to secure their future:

- Most people are positively disposed to libraries.
- Their goods and services are largely free.
- They have substantial infrastructure — space, inventory, personnel — to share.
- They are part and parcel of the communities they serve.

That's a pretty good basis for entering a competition. As they say in the sports world, “it's their game to lose.”

ATG: *Mark, you seem to be incredibly busy with your work at the CIC. How do you*

against the grain publisher profile

Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC)

Champaign, IL
www.cic.net

OFFICERS: **Barbara McFadden Allen** is the Executive Director of the **CIC**, and the fifteen **CIC** University Provosts serve as our Board.

PARENT/AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS: The **CIC** enjoys a positive working relationship with the **Big Ten Athletic Conference** (headquartered in Chicago), in which fourteen of our fifteen **CIC** members participate.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 24

CORE MISSION: Create the most responsive and effective framework for academic collaboration in higher education.

KEY PROJECT(S): **CIC** collaborative initiatives cover a wide range of campus interests and activities, including — but definitely not limited to — coordinating course sharing; managing significant research grants on traumatic brain injury, health disparities, tracing the economic impact of **CIC** university research, and post-doctoral fellowships in the humanities; coordinating study abroad opportunities; managing a high-speed fiber network for data transmission among our universities; providing secure access to our university computing systems; procurement; and much more.

As part of this larger set of cooperative activities, the Center for Library Initiatives supports the collaborative ambitions of our member campus research libraries. Our key projects include cooperative mass digitization (including government documents), collective digital storage (**HathiTrust**), content licensing, collective investments in large-scale acquisitions, resource sharing, shared print storage of journal backfiles; developing a unified portal for geospatial data, an annual conference for **CIC** librarians, and several initiatives in the broad domain of “scholarly communication.” To keep the ship afloat, we're lucky to have our Deputy Director **Kim Armstrong** overseeing all aspects of these programs, **Rebecca Crist** managing the Shared Print Repository initiative, and **Susanne Garrison** serving as our Office Administrator.

MAIN CONSTITUENCIES: The **CIC** is Provost funded and Provost led, but other key stakeholder groups choose to make significant investments in collaboration each year. These key stakeholder groups include the University Librarians, the Chief Information Officers, Deans of Arts and Sciences, Graduate School Deans, and Senior International Officers, all of whom contribute funding to support **CIC** staff members.

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR ORGANIZATION: The **CIC** was founded in 1958, and is probably the oldest, largest, and we think most successful, voluntary academic consortium.

ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO OUR READERS? No, I'm pretty sure I've exceeded their level of interest by now. 🍷

maintain such a high energy level? Are there some specific fun activities that you enjoy that help re-energize you? Do you have any hobbies that help you relax?

MS: Well, truth be known, I work from home so am more sedentary than the majority of the working world. One of my few daily goals is to make sure that I shower before my wife gets home from work. I do run regularly, and I really enjoy the 6:30 a.m. fun run at the **Charleston Conference** (thanks **Mitchell Davis**, et al. for organizing that). As for sources of energy, I'd venture that consortia leaders interact with more colleagues than most librarians working in a single library, or even vendors with a targeted customer base. There are 1,800 librarians in the **CIC** libraries, and while that might sound like a nightmare, it's actually very energizing to have all these

touch-points with all of those smart people — librarians and vendors alike.

ATG: *It's been great talking to you. We've really enjoyed getting your perspective on these key issues.*

MS: I don't read a lot of print media anymore — I just promiscuously flit from blog post to blog post — but I do read and appreciate *Against the Grain*. I think you guys do a great job, I think **Katina** has built something amazing and impactful in Charleston, and, as a shout-out to one of our **CIC** members, I really appreciate the efforts of the **Purdue University Press** to promote and archive the proceedings and publications coming out of Charleston. I'm glad for the opportunity to give credit where it's due. Thanks for reaching out to me. 🍷