Kurt Sanford Profile
the dramatic disruptions to higher education. MOOCs, distance learning, pressure on affordability… these are trends that will impact purchasing and consumption across the university and certainly within the library. Librarians need to be freed of the mundane so they can monitor the big picture and respond to opportunities.

Another challenge we see specifically in Higher Education is the explosive growth of scholarly content being generated in places like Brazil, the Middle East, India and of course, China. China now produces more dissertations each year than any other country. That’s a huge shift in scholarly output. We see opportunity in several ways — we’re adding sales and marketing teams where we see universities growing, but we’re also tuning up acquisition of important content coming from these areas. Researchers are working globally, so not only are we building access to content, but we’re also providing tools like RefWorks Flow, which enables collaboration no matter where the collaborators are located.

One more important market change is the growth of the Open Access movement, which is quickly gaining more high-quality, peer-reviewed content. A good example is the University of California’s decision to make all its research open access. We have explicit plans to integrate open access content in our solutions. While the world is actively embracing the growing open access movement, open access content is scattered, and providing a central discovery point that brings it together with proprietary content is essential for research efficiency.

On the flip side, ProQuest is also helping to support the development of open access institutional repositories (IR). When we ingest dissertations through our Digital Archiving and Access Program, with the author’s permission, we share digital copies with the university. So, it’s available in our dissertations database for broad discovery but is also openly accessible within the university’s IR.

**ATG:** Are you planning new products to tap into the explosive growth and shift of research content to places like China and Brazil? Will you focus on dissertations? 

**KS:** Dissertations are, of course, an important source of emerging research. As areas such as China, Brazil, and India increase their graduate output it becomes more essential to capture it for global access. The way ProQuest is making that content easy to search and discover is by teaming with university consortia. For example, last year, we teamed with the China Academic Library and Information System (CALIS) to abstract and index dissertations from 80 Chinese universities and make them accessible through ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. But that’s not the only content front we’re working on. We just launched ProQuest Indian Journals, which aggregates about 200 premier scholarly journals published in India. It’s a resource that scholars in India specifically asked for. We’re also digitizing Chinese newspaper archives, opening a path to tremendous historical resources. Our goal is to meet the needs of researchers and librarians, no matter the type of content. With ProQuest’s expertise in aggregation, eBooks, A&I, dissertations, and digitization, we’re uniquely suited to create scholarly research resources that allow access to all kinds of information.

As for open access, we’re already including some in our databases and expect to accelerate our offerings. At this time, I don’t anticipate sources with only OA content. The value for researcher would be integrating it with proprietary data for a truly comprehensive search.

**ATG:** And of course there is always competition for market share. Who do you see as your main competitors? What does ProQuest offer libraries that the others don’t?

**KS:** There are many providers serving our customers, and I’ll leave it to you to decide who the main competitors are. Our key measurement for how we’re doing comes from our customers. We’re working hard to provide a better overall experience for them and for their users. That means improving the interoperability of our various solutions that users and librarians employ while doing their research or managing the institution’s holdings, whether that is in discovery and management solutions, aggregated databases, eBooks, workflow tools, or identifying funding sources. ProQuest has the broadest breadth of offerings, and we aim to provide the most comprehensive and valuable end-to-end solutions to our customers.

**ATG:** Is the feedback that you get from customers anecdotal or do you have formal structures like user groups and forums that you turn to for feedback? 

**KS:** We very much value the face-to-face sessions we have with our customers, but we also have a variety of formal structures in place to get feedback — user groups, discussion groups, forums, etcetera. Our products and services are developed in conjunction with library partners. For example, Intota has six development partners that span all types of libraries. They play an essential role in helping us get our products honed before they’re released broadly. Another good example is...