

COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM, MIT LIBRARIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2000-2001

INTRODUCTION

Increasing the visibility of the Libraries through a program of user-centered, two-way communication is the goal of the MIT Libraries Communications Program. The Communications Coordinator facilitates the efforts of all library staff in developing an active and positive public relations program whose audience is the MIT community, donors and friends, the professional information and library community, and the general public.

WORKING WITH LIBRARY STAFF

The Communications Coordinator worked with library staff to develop plans for publicizing many activities. Some of these were the rollout of new products and services, such as the digital reference initiative "Ask Us! – Live". Others involved upgrades such as the new online library system Third Barton and the newly designed library web site. Publicity was also used to provide information for the convenience of library patrons, for example, on the summer construction of compact shelving in the basement of Building 14.

Significant effort has been directed toward Resource Development. The newly established position of Director of Development for the Libraries was filled in the fall, and the Communications Coordinator has worked closely with her on communications strategies, publications, and events.

The Communications Program issued a document entitled *MIT Libraries: Rollout Guidelines and Information* for use by staff members who are introducing new products and services. The guide includes information on campus media and suggestions for planning and implementing publicity efforts, as well as a Communications Plan Outline and an Events Plan Outline.

In furtherance of the goal of fostering two-way communications with Libraries' constituencies, the Communications Coordinator gathered information from staff on all the ways that customer feedback has been and is being obtained throughout the Libraries. This will now be an ongoing activity and ways will be developed for sharing methods of obtaining feedback and for discerning trends and commonalities in the content of feedback received.

At the June quarterly all-staff meeting, the Communications Coordinator gave a presentation on the activities of the Communications Program. At that time the new Communications site on the staff web was announced. This site describes the program and includes useful resources such as the rollout plan as well as a style manual and other guides developed by the Director's Office Administrative Assistant.

PUBLICATIONS

Nine press releases were issued this year. All went to the program's list of campus media, and some of more general interest also were sent to the list of library and information media. Topics included the Mellon Foundation grant to the Libraries for the study of dynamic electronic journals and the selection of Ex Libris Aleph 500 for the new online system.

A number of changes took place based on the Libraries' publications review that was completed this year.

MIT Libraries' News was re-designed and renamed *BiblioTech: News from the MIT Libraries*. It continues to be published twice a year, for the same audience, faculty and library supporters. The Communications Coordinator and the Director of Development, through Publishing Services Bureau, worked with a design firm to create an eye-catching look and appealing content. Production has changed from a consultant doing the editing and layout to the layout being done on an ongoing basis by a design firm and the editorship in the hands of the Communications Coordinator. The first newly designed issue was Spring/Summer 2001.

The *MIT Libraries Map and Guide* developed two years ago will continue to serve as the keystone library brochure and a new system is being developed to replace the older series. A flexible system of templates is being developed by a design firm to create a consistent and attractive look for the MIT Libraries. Staff groups, working with the

Communications Coordinator and the Director's Office Staff Assistant, will be able to create content and produce needed quantities of guides to divisional and branch libraries, service guides, bookmarks and guides to using specific online databases. Design elements and color will differentiate the publications. Implementation is scheduled for Fall 2001.

Other publications projects included the annual holiday card and a resource development brochure to accompany the spring mailing for the Director's Fund for Library Excellence.

Close cooperation and consultation with the Libraries' web manager continues, particularly during this year in which new approaches are being developed for both print and electronic communications. Duplication of effort is avoided whenever possible, and ways are found for the two services to work together. The Communications Coordinator has taken on responsibility for sending content for both the "News Spotlight" (significant news items) and "News Briefs" (other news items) to the Web Manager for timely news coverage on the Libraries' new web site.

MEDIA COVERAGE

On the campus, eight articles about the Libraries appeared in *Tech Talk*, as well as a number of briefer items announcing library hours and exhibits. Three "From the Libraries" columns appeared in *The MIT Faculty Newsletter* during the course of the year. There were two articles related to the Libraries in *i/s: News about information systems throughout MIT*. The MIT campus web Spotlight featured the Libraries four times. Four articles and one advertisement about the Libraries were featured in the *Graduate Student Newsletter*, which now, thanks to the Libraries' Graduate Student User Group, is carrying a regular library column. *The Tech* also ran several stories about the Libraries, as well as three advertisements the Libraries had placed.

The February issue of the new publication (*CR*)2: *The Newsletter of the Campaign for MIT* had a full page article, "Campaign Priorities: The MIT Libraries" and in June *Technology Review* did a story, "MIT Libraries Enter the Digital Age".

A number of stories about the MIT Libraries appeared in library and information sources. Print sources included *Advanced Technology Libraries*, *Computers in Libraries*, *Information Today*, *SLA Information Outlook* and *American Libraries*. Online publications carrying MIT Libraries' stories included *Library Journal Academic News Wire*, *Library Hotline*, and *SPARC e-news*. Internationally, a Norwegian library journal *Bok og bibliotek* published an article about the MIT Libraries' digital reference service.

EVENTS AND DISPLAYS

MIT Libraries participated in orientation, Registration Day both fall and spring, Parents' Weekend, Independent Activities Period, and Tech Reunions. The Communications Program arranged for a newly designed contemporary vinyl banner with the Libraries' logo to replace the old felt banner. This is now available for use as a backdrop for library booths at events.

Rotch Library was the site in January and February for the Working Group on Support Staff Issues MIT Artists Behind the Desk art exhibit, "Artists by Night... Administrators by Day". Four members of the library staff were among the artists. A reception, announced the previous week in the *Boston Globe* Calendar section, opened the exhibit.

The Institute Archives, the Lewis Music Library, and Rotch Library regularly mount attractive displays. This year a display showing themes of the Capital Campaign was installed outside the Director's Office.

At the Corporation Visiting Committee meeting in April, library staff members presented a number of demonstrations of new online library projects and services. For this event, the Communications Coordinator created a tabletop display, "MIT Libraries in the News", accompanied by a loose leaf notebook of clippings, to show articles that had appeared on campus and beyond over the previous two years about the Libraries.

The notebook is being maintained as an ongoing project. The display was also set up for the quarterly staff meeting in June to familiarize library staff with the Communications Program.

GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR

1. Finalize publications templates for library guide series and introduce into usage.
2. Renew campaign from FY00 to promote electronic resources.
3. Expand contacts with representatives of library constituencies.

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