

COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM, MIT LIBRARIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2001-2002

INTRODUCTION: INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF THE MIT LIBRARIES

The continuing mission of the Communications Program is to ensure that positive, forward-looking information about the MIT Libraries is presented regularly to the MIT community, donors, friends, the information and library community, and the general public. To this end, the Communications Coordinator administers the MIT Libraries publication program, and provides guidance and coordination for public relations work by all library staff, placing special emphasis on support for the Resource Development program.

Positive feedback has been gratifying. As two examples among many that could be given, an article in the Libraries' newsletter *BiblioTech* about the new Geographical Information Systems (GIS) laboratory brought a number of requests for information to the Geographic Information Specialist and the column in the February *MIT Faculty Newsletter* about the services of the Institute Archives resulted in three faculty inquiries to the Communications Coordinator in addition to other inquiries received directly by the Archives. Independent Activities Period and other events this year were well attended.

GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNICATIONS WORK BY LIBRARY STAFF

The Communications Program supports library staff in developing communications strategies for rolling out new products and services, organizing projects and events, and creating brochures, electronic communications, and other publicity materials. The coordinator meets with new staff to inform them about the program and maintains an internal web site with tools such as rollout guidelines, communications and events planning outlines, and an updated description of the Libraries for use in publications

A significant activity this year was assistance to the DSpace Transition Team in developing plans for making this digital repository of MIT research, developed over the past two years, into an operational element of the Libraries. The coordinator assisted in developing the DSpace pre-launch communications plan and the launch communications plan, prepared a press release and other materials announcing the early adopters, and worked with other staff on issues of identity and branding.

Consultation on strategy as well as on specific public relations activities was provided for the following: the new online catalog Third Barton, the summer 2001 Hayden basement construction of compact shelving and the summer 2002 Hayden renovation projects, a national grant administered through the Institute Archives, the authors@mit lecture series, wireless availability in the libraries, the Archives renovation project and the Archives processing project, Independent Activities Period programs, the new GIS laboratory, orientation activities, the new Libraries' web site, the Faculty Committee on the Library System recommendation for new library construction, and the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Ad Hoc Committee report on the Humanities Library.

In addition, the Communications Program provided publicity for the dynamic e-journal research project, new Silver Platter databases, the work of the Undergraduate User Group, the Science Library open house, plans for the new Preservation Laboratory, and the Fulbright Scholar spending the month of May at the MIT Libraries learning how we acquire and make accessible electronic resources.

LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA COVERAGE

The development of a new system for producing library guides was completed this year. The new publications system, developed with the assistance of MIT Publishing Services Bureau and Conquest Design, was finalized; implementation began with the issuance of the Barker Engineering Library guide. Additional divisional and branch library guides and several service guides and electronic resource guides are scheduled to appear by the end of the summer. The new system will allow for a unified and attractive look for the publications, local flexibility on content with oversight by the Communications Coordinator, easy updating, and print on demand through MIT Copy Tech.

Publication of the semi-annual *BiblioTech; News from the MIT Libraries* continued, with the Communications Coordinator as editor and layout by Korn Design. Selection of content is coordinated with communications strategies and resource development goals.

The Libraries issued seven press releases that were sent to a selection of campus and outside media outlets from the continuously updated list maintained by the Communications Program.

The communications coordinator stays in contact with the Libraries' web manager and the Web Advisory Group in planning new web pages and coordinating print and web communications. The top page of the Libraries' web site has a news Spotlight feature, maintained by a member of the Web Advisory Group. The site's "News" page has links to the current issue and a complete archive of *BiblioTech*, all library press releases, and news pages on divisional and branch library web sites.

Fourteen articles about the Libraries appeared in the campus newspaper *Tech Talk*. Other MIT publications with articles on the MIT Libraries were: *The Tech*; *Graduate Student Newsletter*; *I/S: News about information systems throughout MIT*; the *MIT Club of Boston Newsletter*; *MIT Parents News*; and the Industrial Liaison Program's *The MIT Report*.

Over the course of the year, the MIT Faculty Newsletter carried three "From the Libraries" columns: "How Decisions are Made on Building Library Collections", "Ad Hoc Committee on the Humanities Library Calls for World Class Library for the Twenty-First Century", and "Inside the Institute Archives".

A half-page color photo and caption describing the new Aeronautics/Astronautics Library appeared in the April 2002 issue of *American Libraries*, its annual showcase of successful new facilities and renovations. Other library and information publications with articles about the MIT Libraries this year were *NEA (New England Archivists) Newsletter*, American Society for Engineering Education *Engineering Libraries Division Newsletter*, *Bulletin: The Newsletter of the Boston Chapter of the Special Libraries Association*, and *Library Journal*. The Libraries were mentioned twice in the *Boston Globe*—in a quote from the Institute Archivist in an article about the future of an important photography collection, and in a review of three landscape painting exhibits, one of which was in Rotch Library. A story in the February 19, 2002 *Economist*, "Route 128's technology—heavy economy motors again", mentions DSpace as a project of the MIT Libraries.

EVENTS

The Communications Program maintains a calendar of library programs, major presentations by the director and others, and activities for alumni. Events this year included:

- Presentations and tours at Fall orientation, Family Weekend, Campus Preview Weekend
- Eleven authors@mit programs
- Sixteen Independent Activities Period programs
- Participation in alumni/ae activities including the Boston and the DC MIT Clubs, the Emma Rogers Society, the Alumni Leadership Conference, and Tech Reunions
- A luncheon at the December Corporation meeting honoring Corporation members Shirley Ann Jackson and Marjorie Yang for their gifts to the MIT Libraries

In August, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) convened in Boston, the first meeting in North American in 16 years. Over 5,000 librarians from 150 countries worldwide participated. The MIT Libraries were visible in many ways. MIT sponsored a conference-wide dinner and reception, greatly enjoyed by the more than 2,000 who attended. During the week of the conference, the Libraries provided group and individual library tours and talks for several hundred delegates, and provided meeting rooms for two full-day conference sessions. Many library staff members served as organizers, planners, and volunteers at the conference.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS

Increasing the visibility of the Libraries in a positive way, the main goal of the Communications Program, fits in well with the goals the Libraries' Director of Development. Direct support for the publications and events of the Resource Development program has always been a priority for the communications coordinator. This year the

connection between the two functions was strengthened when the Communications Coordinator became a member of the resource development team.

The Communications Coordinator participates in developing strategies and planning activities as a member of the Research Development Committee and the Capital Campaign Steering Committee, and attends the Institute's monthly FYI programs for resource development personnel. Regular library communications with supporters and friends include:

- Annual holiday card
- Annual Director's Fund for Library Excellence appeal letter and brochure
- Fall and spring issues of BiblioTech; fall is the donor appreciation issue

As in FY00 and FY01, graduating student workers were recognized at the end of the academic year with a note of appreciation from the Library Director and an MIT Libraries paperweight, presented by the student's supervisor. The Communications Program coordinates the activity. This year 104 students in 19 library units were so honored.

GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR

1. Work with authors to create a full series of library, service, and e-resource brochures.
2. Approach selected library staff about developing public relations strategies for new library materials and services, as well as for those that are not as well known as they might be.
3. Further develop collaborations with communications peers at the Institute, particularly with colleagues in educational technology communications.
4. Continue to support Resource Development program with communication planning, publications, mailings, and events.

Ruth K. Seidman