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Profile

Profile of Jim O'Donnell

31st Annual NASIG Conference Vision Speaker

Sharon Dyas-Correia

Jim O'Donnell is one of three Vision Speakers scheduled to engage and enlighten participants at the 31st annual NASIG Conference. O'Donnell holds a Bachelor's degree from Princeton and a PhD from Yale. In addition to being the University Librarian at Arizona State University, O'Donnell is a classical scholar. According to the entry about him in Wikipedia, "O'Donnell writes and lectures on topics of the late [Roman Empire](#), [Augustine of Hippo](#), and also on information technology in the modern academic and cultural world. O'Donnell was an early adopter of the [World Wide Web](#) for academic collaboration within the humanities."

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_J._O%27Donnell).

The Wikipedia entry for O'Donnell also indicates that "In 1994, he offered the first Internet [MOOC](#) when five hundred students around the world participated in his University of Pennsylvania seminar on the life and work of St. Augustine through [gopher](#) and email connectivity"

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_J._O%27Donnell).

The profiles editor asked O'Donnell to provide brief written answers to a series of questions about his ideas, interests and background as well as a teaser or two of what conference attendees might be treated to in June. The following are some of the answers provided by O'Donnell. He is sure to be a stimulating and absorbing speaker who will engage the minds of conference goers. His vision will undoubtedly provide much food for thought.

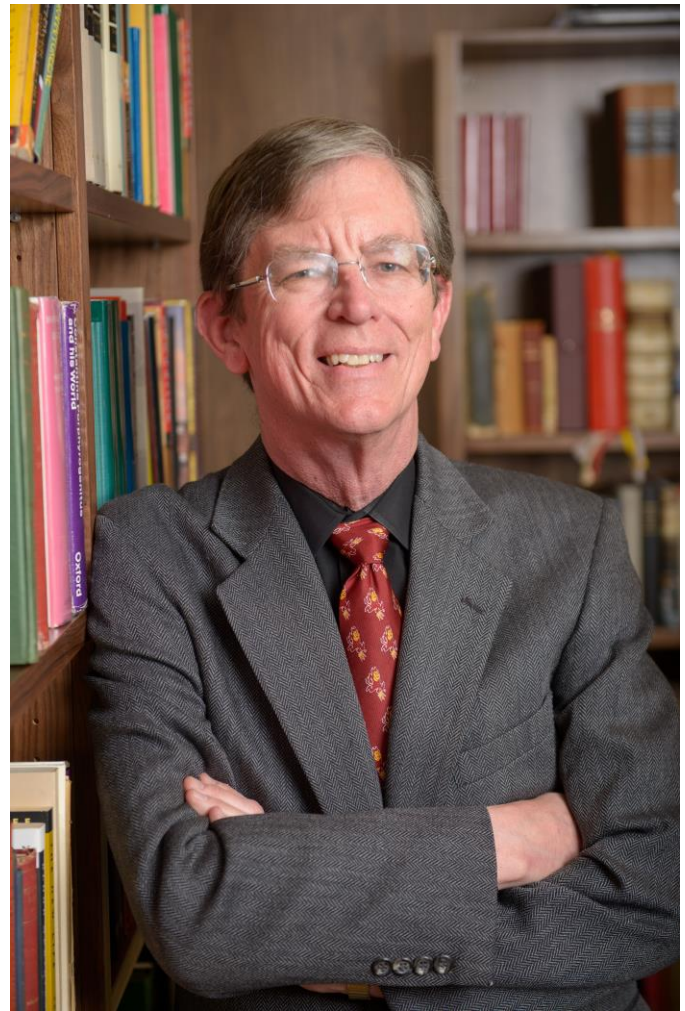


Photo courtesy of Jim O'Donnell

What do you hope to accomplish in your current position?

In the most innovative university with the best president in the country, we have a chance to transform library spaces and services in a very short time. Stay tuned.

Are there highlights of your work background you would like to share?

This is my fourth career (professor, chief information officer, provost, university librarian): I like to bite off more than I can chew.

What makes your background ideal for your work?

I'm a pretty nontraditional candidate for university librarian, but it's worth noticing that my dissertation a long time ago was a biography of a scholar/monk/librarian from the sixth century AD.



Photo courtesy of Jim O'Donnell

What background do you wish you had?

I wish I had a long and successful career as center fielder for the New York Yankees. I'm also available to serve on the Supreme Court if needed, but dowager countess of Grantham looks like a pretty good job as well.

What is the topic for your vision session at the conference in Albuquerque and can you give us some highlights or a teaser?

Working on it, but ask yourself: how many libraries should there be in the world in the year 2100? I can think of two answers.

Are there other fun things or facts about you that you would like to share?

See the photo taken with my friend Gary in Brisbane a few years back.

Anything else you would like to include?

I'm the co-founding publisher and editor of the oldest open access online journal in the humanities, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* ([first published in] November 1990). I actually invented the online journal all by myself (thought it up from scratch) only to discover that about a dozen other people had beaten me to it, so I'll never be famous.

O'Donnell's Vision Session is sure to be thought-provoking and stimulating – a great way to start another great day with colleagues at the NASIG Conference in Albuquerque!