

Business Information Services (BIS)

Report for FY15

Submitted by Associate Professor Becky Smith

Service Description

Business Information Services (BIS) is a fairly new service model, which officially commenced in August 2012. Rather than being defined as a distinct physical collection and separate space, this new model is defined by some services that are embedded in the primary departments served and others that are integrated into broader library service programs that provide support for scholars and students throughout campus using business information. Unlike any of the other new service models, the organizational structure for faculty librarians is horizontal as two of the faculty members report to other units.

Collectively, the members of the group had presence in 2 locations: the Main Library and the College of Business ([Digital Research Library](#) [DRL] in Wohlers Hall) and via electronically (e-mail services). BIS has a website, <http://library.illinois.edu/bis/>, through which users can access resources and over 2 dozen Libguides as well as locate the e-mail link (bis@library.illinois.edu) to contact faculty and library staff for assistance. DRL also has its own e-mail account with the COB (DRL@business.illinois.edu), although it has very low traffic.

Group:

Becky Smith, Associate Professor & Business Information Services Librarian

Assisted by Zoe Revell, .5 FTE staff, Becky was in charge of all BIS collection development as well as the BIS website. Becky continued her duties of GA and GH supervisor for .33 FTE position. Becky's main thrust was her embedded role in providing leadership for the COB Digital Research Library (DRL). Between the one BIS GA, Zoe, and Becky, DRL was staffed 15 hours weekly in fall and spring Semesters, open solely to faculty, doctoral students, and COB research assistants. DRL employees worked on various projects in addition to assisting researchers, such as citation counts for COB going up for promotion, libguides, and updating Fast Answers. DRL was open by appointment only in the summer sessions and interims. Becky also provided HUB training on basic business reference, with an emphasis of using Fast Answers, which is a shared Business FAQ service. Becky conducted instruction to classes by request, as well as meet with student experiential learning groups during Carissa Phillip's sabbatical.

Carissa Phillips, Associate Professor and Business & Finance Librarian (on sabbatical), RIS

Carissa conducted workshops and answered questions in person and e-mail before going on sabbatical/vacation October 1-June 30th.

Yoo-Seong Song, Associate Professor and Labor/Economics Librarian, SSHEL

Yoo-Seong's area of expertise is career information searching, thus he continued to give presentations on career searching. He also performed instructional sessions on marketing research, LER, and international business. Yoo-Seong maintained the Career Corner libguide, as well as international business and marketing research libguides, and the LER Virtual Library website. Yoo-Seong also

answered e-mail reference questions and incorporated his GSLIS students from his Information Consulting class to be embedded with experiential learning teams in the spring.

Zoe Revell, LOA, 50% BIS, 50% Staff Development & Training (Office of Services)

Zoe worked with Technical Services on other serials issues. Zoe also helped supervise the BIS GA and she worked at the InfoDesk on behalf of BIS three hours. She worked on the BIS website and conducted a few individual consultations by request. As Beth Woodard (Staff Training supervisor) was on sabbatical, Zoe had to juggle more responsibilities in SDT, and as a result, was only available 9 hours a week, with her committee responsibilities taking up the rest of the time.

Graduate Assistants (all on State Funds):

Lindsay Shapray, .33FTE. Lindsay worked on updating Fast Answers, assisted on the *DRL Dispatch* newsletter to the COB and collaborated with Becky and Zoe in answering BIS e-mail/in-person reference inquiries. Lindsay also did instruction on research management tools in conjunction with Becky's requested classes for instruction and workshops.

GA Hourly for Fast Answers Project- Dylan Burns was hired as an hourly to do clean-up of links in Fast Answers after it was converted to LibAnswers. His project hours are for 40 hours for summer and FY2016.

Accomplishments for the BIS:

- BIS members authored 2 of the top 10 most popular libguides
- Becky had an opportunity to continue collaboration with the Biosciences Librarian on instruction & reference assistance to a Professional Master's in Science group performing experiential work
- Becky met with a business school student from the ULSAC to discuss marketing issues with the COB Library Committee and suggest avenues for marketing BIS services in the near future
- With Approval plan funds, Becky was able to purchase several reference works in digital format that crossed many disciplines. Becky received positive feedback for those purchases.
- Fast Answers had a good transition to LibAnswers. Fast Answers was on the University of Pennsylvania server and went dark in June, 2015 as Penn decided to migrate to its own Libanswers platform.
- Continued publishing the DRL Dispatch, an e-newsletter for the COB Doctoral Students and Faculty

FY15 Challenges for BIS:

- More monographic location title changes were needed. Upon request, Michael Norman took charge of changing 260 identified records.
- Meeting as a group, due to staggered embedded hours and duties in new units, instructional demands, and committee meetings. The group only met twice in person, and Carissa was on sabbatical most of the year.
- Having to use 100% of the CRCO fund to pay for serials inflation and any new databases.

BIS's partners on some databases no longer had any funds to contribute, so procurement of new databases was either through Data Purchases or the College of Business picked up the tab.

- Occasionally, undergraduate students were sent to DRL for class assignment assistance.
- Should BIS as a brand be marketed?
- Should BIS members in other units count their instruction and reference transactions as BIS or not?

BIS Plans for 2016

- As the University Library administration allocated funds to BIS as a unit which includes a 50% LOA, a GA, and Becky, the other BIS members will not be counting their activities as part of BIS. BIS will triage e-mail and other reference questions to other BIS group members as appropriate. This means Carissa and Yoo-seong will not be on the BIS e-mail list. However, they will continue to work with faculty and other university staff they have worked with in the past.
- Upon the suggestion of the ULSAC student, BIS was able to obtain a volunteer in the Library to develop flyers to hand out on Quad Day, classes, and other orientations. BIS appreciates the Office of User Services for paying for the printing costs (\$279 for 1500 flyers).
- BIS, in cooperation with the ER Librarian, will float out more database trials and possibly procure subscriptions to new resources, despite a flat budget, as some databases are less used and can be substituted.

Upcoming/Ongoing Challenges:

- The GA allocations have been decreased to 25% for FY16, thus project work for more robust virtual services will continue to be balanced with reference services. Virtual services do require different skills and expertise that are different in keeping the website and videos up to date and with changes in b-school curriculum that is incorporating more online courses. So far, the iMBA program, which launches in January 2016, has not required use of library databases, but only two modules have been released via Coursera.
- DRL will be taking on more advising for COB purchases of business databases BIS cannot afford (or cannot do due to issues related to procurement regulations). Similar to last year, BIS will have no monographic monies to cover 20% of the serials inflation, thus some cancellations will have to be made to lesser used databases and journals. We were not able to purchase any new databases/datasets, yet the appetite for market research (undergrads and grad students) and financial services datasets (faculty & doctoral students) far exceed what our budget allows. Illinois is in the bottom tier of its peers in the Academic Business Library Directors (ABLD) group (the top 50 academic business libraries in North America) in terms of collection budgets for BIS, thus we will continue to lag behind peer and aspirant b-school collections.
- The BIS Introduction to Business Research videos will need to be updated at some juncture. As long as the databases do not change their interfaces, they will be relevant for students to view for classes or expand their knowledge base for upcoming career fairs. They are helpful for those working at the InfoDesk/VRDesk to send a URL to the researcher for more information on how to research companies and industries.

- BIS's GA did not sign the offer letter for a second year and did not notify the BIS Librarian until GA training was about to begin. Lindsay Shapray received a lucrative job offer with the Department of Justice, thus she will be finishing her GSLIS studies via LEEP. Thus, BIS had to hire a new GA and train her/him on procedures and policies at the beginning of the school year.
- Should DRL serve more than just doctoral students and faculty? This is a question as much for the b-school as it is for the University Library. With limited staffing and hours and unknown budgets in the coming years, this is both an opportunity but it could be an issue without adequate staff resources.
- Cancellation of popular BIS databases but also available in aggregators, such as MarketLine/Datamonitor. However, this is necessary if BIS is trying to procure new content for changing research needs.
- **Many of the COB students we encounter do not know about BIS or its website of resources.** We hope the new flyers are a good step, but more work needs to be done in building further relationships with the COB to incorporate BIS services in the revision of the business undergraduate curriculum under development.
- **Donations for BIS are among the lowest.** It is challenging to obtain donor support for a virtual service and BIS collection needs are for recurring costs. In meeting with the Associate Dean for Library Advancement, it has been requested to obtain funds for more GA support in the future if budgets continue to look bleak. BIS does not have enough in its endowment funds to support a GAship even at .25%, unless it grows. A grad hourly is fine for small projects, but does not support a variety of projects as they arise, and especially if they are new to the University Library as they require much investment of time for training and staff development.

Reference Statistics

BIS members (including staff and GA) answered 389 questions via in-person, e-mail, phone and chat. This is a decrease from last year (41%). Yoo-Seong did not include his transactions, and Carissa was on sabbatical. In the future, Carissa and Yoo-Seong will be compiling statistics for their personal annual reports and their respective units.

The top categories for types of questions were these, according to Desktracker:

- Database Access (databases we don't subscribe to as they are expensive, often ones Ivy schools can afford)
- Other (Directional/hours)
- Finance
- Company/Organizational Structure
- Accounting
- Marketing
- International Business
- Mergers & Acquisitions

Business reference Transactions/Consultations were 55% of the transactions that required more than 5 minutes; Question type was 50% in the area Research and Data Assistance. 42% of e-mail assistance took from 15 minutes to more than an hour.

Note: Desktracker reported that 424 reference inquiries of all units reporting were on the subject of business. It was roughly 6% of all subject questions. This raises questions about the tracking of subjects as BIS answered 389 of 424 questions. It's not known what is reported under "Finding specific library materials" may have been for locating market research reports or other business materials in the University Library.

Instruction Statistics

There were 18 sessions recorded for FY2015, but again, each faculty member tracks her/her own. More outreach is needed in this area by the BIS Librarian. A few students in some of the instructional sessions wondered why BIS did not offer a course on business resources, or why we didn't have a dedicated space for them to obtain research assistance. The latter is an ongoing concern amongst COB faculty.

Web Statistics

We don't keep track of the web pages analytics via Google. We do inquire about database usage statistics from vendors. Some are able to send specific reports, others are not able or have the capability. Vendors occasionally provide (upon much prodding) information about how much the data would be worth on the open market, but it is misleading because opening a report in a PDF doesn't verify if it was truly used or used for what purpose.

