



## Profile

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### Profile of Jim O'Donnell

#### 31<sup>st</sup> Annual NASIG Conference Vision Speaker

Sharon Dyas-Correia

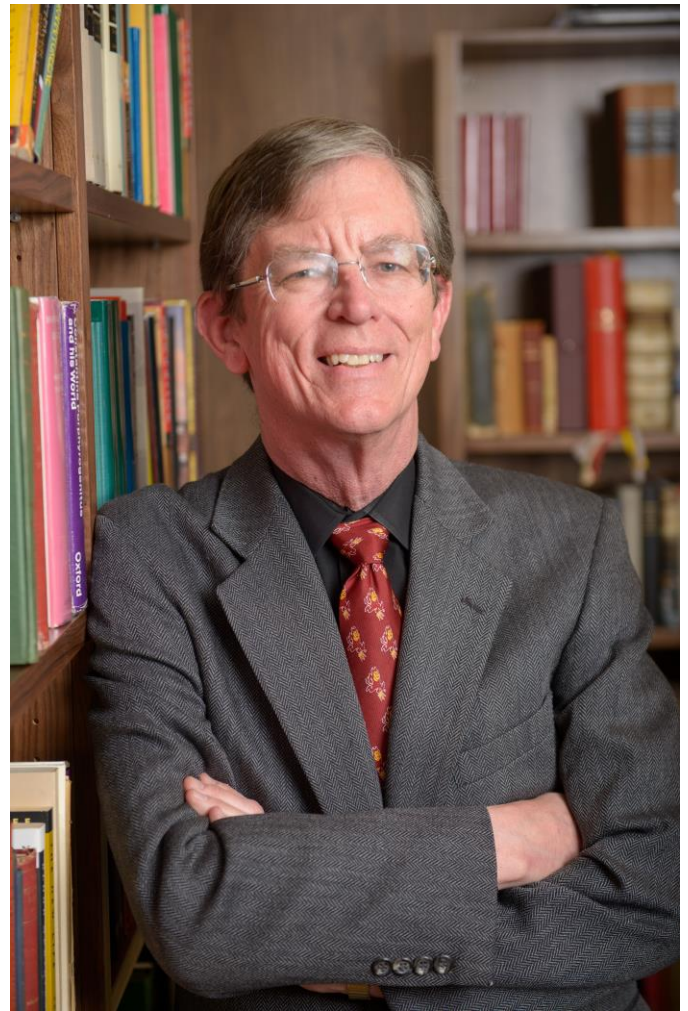
Jim O'Donnell is one of three Vision Speakers scheduled to engage and enlighten participants at the 31<sup>st</sup> annual NASIG Conference. O'Donnell holds a Bachelor's degree from Princeton and a PhD from Yale. In addition to being the University Librarian at Arizona State University, O'Donnell is 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](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](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!*