

## ACRL in Indy: Tips for a Successful Conference

by Mandi Moning, Campus Library, Indiana University East

Continuing your education and networking with peers just got easier for Indiana University library faculty, staff, and students. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) is hosting its 2013 annual conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. IU librarians on the ACRL 2013 conference committee recently offered up some suggestions to help you take full advantage of this excellent opportunity. William Weare (IUPUI) is co-chair of the Local Arrangements committee; Courtney Greene (IU Libraries—Bloomington) is co-chair of the Conference Innovations committee; and Carrie Donovan (IU Libraries—Bloomington) is co-chair of the Panel Sessions committee. With the help of insiders' perspectives, I've compiled the following tips for a valuable ACRL 2013 conference experience.

**Find sessions that match your interests.** While all conference goers strive to attend the sessions most relevant to their current responsibilities, Carrie Donovan encourages attendees to be bold in their selections and “seek out the thinkers, innovators, and rabble-rousers that will challenge you and shake you up.” This year, conference planners developed new strategies to help you do just that. Presenters were asked to identify the level of expertise of their intended audience and describe the content of their session using a list of [tags](#). Knowing more about each session not only helped conference planners to choose a greater variety of sessions, but it will also help those attending the conference choose which of the more than 300 sessions are right for them.

**Get a new perspective on Indianapolis.** Working at Indiana University, many of you are likely already familiar with Indianapolis—but that doesn't mean you've experienced it all! Have you considered taking a walking or biking tour of the city? William Weare and Carrie Donovan recommend checking out Kristi Palmer's [“Introduction to Indy”](#) to take in some of the best sites. Courtney Greene also recommends browsing some of the shops along Massachusetts Avenue, including [Silver in the City/At Home in the City](#) and [Mass Ave Toys](#). And of course, while you're at the Indiana State Museum for the conference reception, the [James Dean exhibit](#) is a must-see!

**Don't skip the conference “extras.”** Attending a conference closer to home may tempt you to drive in for a few sessions and leave almost as quickly as you came. However, as Courtney Greene points out, “It's not every day a few thousand academic librarians are all together in one place and it's a pretty awesome thing.” Take advantage of all the fun and once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that a conference like ACRL has to offer. Our insiders recommend learning from the expertise of the [invited paper](#) presenters and being entertained by the [keynote speakers](#). The Friday night conference reception at the Indiana State Museum is also a great opportunity to socialize, listen to music, enjoy some tasty desserts, and explore the museum.

**Relax.** Take advantage of the new ACRL Invigorate which includes free chair massages, yoga sessions, and more. Enjoy ACRL [Battle Decks](#) (if, like me, you've never experienced Battle Decks before, I recommend searching [YouTube](#) for some amusing examples). And, of course, make time for some delicious food. As you explore Indianapolis, you might sample some of the local cuisine, including [Bru Burger Bar](#) or [MacNiven's](#) for pub fare, [The Libertine](#) for cocktails, or the new (if not local) [California Pizza Kitchen](#).

**If you're new to ACRL, get the full introduction.** First-timers can attend the [First-time Orientation](#) to meet new people and win prizes! Learn all about the conference large enough to attract big names like Henry Rollins but small enough that, according to William Weare, "you'll see people you went to school with." If you're worried you might miss out on something, watch the [ACRL Twitter account](#) or follow the conference hashtag, [#arcl2013](#), for the most up-to-date information.