Committee on Relations with Information Vendors (CRIV)
Annual Report, 2021-2022

Through our programming, publications, and in response to requests for assistance, CRIV has continued its mission this year of fostering positive, constructive, and open communication between information vendors and members of AALL. During the heart of the pandemic last year, our requests for assistance were higher than normal. As the pandemic fades and we begin returning to a new normal, requests this year were down significantly, but that does not mean the committee was without work! Instead, we were able to focus our efforts on generating content for *The CRIV Sheet* and the CRIV Blog, continue our semi-annual vendor calls with LexisNexis, Bloomberg Law, Thomson Reuters, and Wolters Kluwer, and prepare for the annual CRIV Vendor Roundtable, held in June. We took on one additional project this year, a survey to the AALL membership about awareness and use of CRIV services. Highlights of each of these initiatives follow.

*The CRIV Sheet* had a new editor this year, Andrew Christensen, who worked tirelessly throughout the year, writing, soliciting, and editing content for all three issues of volume 44. Traditional fare, such as the inclusion of the minutes from our vendor liaison semi-annual calls, summaries of CRIV-related AALL Annual Meeting program sessions, and previews of CRIV-related programming coming up at the 2022 Annual Meeting, continued to fill our pages. But we also brought in original content, from profiles of newer legal information platforms to recommendations for beta testing to working with the Uniform Electronic Legal Materials Act. I'd like to extend thanks both to Andrew for his work procuring content for each issue, and to Heather Haemker for her work assembling each issue into its publishable format.

The CRIV Blog likewise had a new coordinator this year, Christy Smith, who helped us produce 34 blog posts over the past year, keeping the content fresh and current. As always, the blog provides the earliest release of minutes from the semi-annual vendor liaison calls, prior to publication in *The CRIV Sheet*. The majority of posts profile new or interesting features of an array of legal information products, from well-known vendors to little-known or relatively new. Still other posts provide recommendations on working with vendors, building or assessing your print or digital collections, and how current events, like rising inflation, can affect our relations with information vendors. While many members of CRIV contribute content to *The CRIV Sheet*, all members of CRIV participate in authoring posts throughout the year for the blog, so I’d like to extend an enormous thank you to all current CRIV members for their work on the blog this year.

We held the CRIV Vendor Roundtable virtually again this year, on June 22nd. The committee settled on the broad theme of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and then put a survey out to the AALL membership to narrow that topic further, landing ultimately on the question of *how vendors ensure a diversity of voices are represented in their products and collections*. At the event, we heard from representatives of Bloomberg
Law, LexisNexis, and Thomson Reuters. Wolters Kluwer was also invited, but could not participate this year. Thirty-five people registered for the event and 22 attended. Speakers at the event agreed to have the event recorded and made available to those who were unable to attend; that recording should be available sometime in July. A summary of the event was also posted on the CRIV Blog.

Finally, this year CRIV worked on putting together and administering a survey to the AALL membership about CRIV’s services, publications, and programming. We administered the survey this spring and received 60 responses. Of those responding, 25% have worked with CRIV on a request for assistance; 51% have attended the CRIV Vendor Roundtable, virtually and/or in person at the Annual Meeting; 87% indicated interest in additional CRIV-related programming throughout the year, such as webinars put on through the support of the AALL Continuing Professional Education Committee; 42% regularly and 51% occasionally read The CRIV Sheet when it comes out; 16% regularly and 53% occasionally read CRIV Blog posts. Finally, the survey asked whether respondents had any additional topics they’d like to see CRIV cover, whether through our programming or publications. Responses ran the gamut, but could generally be grouped into the following categories: tips on establishing and maintaining healthy working relationships with vendors, especially in times of transition between reps; best practices for contract negotiation; accessibility and legal information preservation; an introduction to CRIV and vendor relations broadly for newer librarians. While 60 respondents is certainly a small fraction of the entire AALL membership, the results of the survey nonetheless illuminate areas that CRIV could grow, expand, and improve for the future. It is my hope that next year’s committee will be able to take this feedback and develop articles, programming, and other resources that address the needs of the AALL membership as expressed through this survey.

It has been a pleasure serving as Chair of CRIV for the past year, and I know the committee will be in good hands under the leadership of Cynthia Condit for the coming year. I’d like to extend a thank you to all current CRIV members: Cynthia Condit, Jane Bahnson, Andrew Christensen, Thomas Hemstock, Saadia Iqbal, Donna Lombardo, Larry Meyer, Carol Ottolenghi, Elizabeth Outler, and Christy Smith. Thanks also to our board liaison, Michelle Hook Dewey, and to Vani Ungapen, who attended nearly every CRIV meeting and all vendor liaison calls, and who were both available for advice and counsel, as needed. Finally, thank you to all AALL members who continue to rely on CRIV for vendor assistance, who read our articles and posts, who attend our programming, and who provide feedback to us throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Ames Ahlbrand
CRIV Chair, 2021-2022