



Athena Alliance

Exploring the promise and pitfalls of the global information economy

2014 Annual Report

Introduction

Athena Alliance is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the vanguard of identifying, understanding, analyzing, and educating on the information, intangibles, and innovation economy—that is, the I-Cubed (I³) economy.

Intangible assets—worker skills and know-how, informal relationships that feed creativity and new ideas, high-performance work organizations, formal intellectual property, and brand names—are the new keys to competitive advantage. Information and intangibles—a combination of formal research and informal creativity—drive innovation. These combined elements lead to the productivity and improvement gains needed to maintain prosperity.

Although the economic rules have changed, public policy has not caught up. Government leaders struggle with how to utilize information, foster development of intangibles, promote innovation and competitiveness, and frame policy questions to reflect and address the realities of the changing economic situation.

Athena Alliance undertakes outreach activities to help members of Congress, the administration, constituency groups, and the media better understand these issues and craft informed policies and programs. The Athena Alliance mission is threefold:

- **Reshaping the Debate.** Developing and utilizing information, managing intangibles, and fostering innovation underpin discussions on a variety of subjects, such as intellectual property rights, education and training policy, economic development, and technology and trade policy. Creating new public policies in these areas requires infusing a better understanding of intangibles and the information economy into the public debate.
- **Crafting Strategies, Policies, and Tools.** Global economic shifts call for different ways of thinking about economic activity, different means of promoting and organizing economic opportunities and activities, and different economic policies and programs. We must enlarge the repertoire of strategies, mechanisms, tools, and capabilities that individuals, firms, and communities can use to shape positive economic futures, with special attention to those in danger of being left behind. All Americans must be able to participate—economically and socially—in the emerging information economy. Athena Alliance undertakes practical policy research aimed at creating new solutions to these new sets of problems.
- **Building Partnerships and Sharing Knowledge.** We are not alone in seeking to understand the challenges of the global information economy and the need for new

solutions to confront them. We engage in academic and scholarly research; corporate policy, research, and strategic activities; and practical, on-the-ground efforts with community activists and economic development practitioners to advance the public debate about the information economy. We do this through conferences, workshops, research activities, publications and reports, and public education.

As noted in previous Annual Reports, because of funding issues has Athena Alliance dramatically scaled back activities and moved to a volunteer staffing model. However, the organization has continued with a number of activities during 2014 to advance our three-pronged mission, including speaking at conferences; publishing articles (including blog articles); and conducting outreach to businesses, government leaders, and others.

Activities

Reports/Articles

In February 2014, Athena Alliance published *Additive Manufacturing as a Disruptive Technology*, Working Paper #10. The report is based on Dr. Jarboe's presentation "Additive Manufacturing as a Disruptive Technology" to a workshop of the Defense Materials Manufacturing and Infrastructure standing committee of the National Academies in Washington DC in 2013. It is taken from the National Academies' publication, *Limited Affordable Low-Volume Manufacturing: Summary of a Workshop*. The report and the presentation highlights how additive manufacturing can change the manufacturing production process and puts the technology into the context of macro forces at work in the economy.

In September 2014, we published a paper "[Strengthening Innovation Policy: Response to Request for Comment on the Strategy for American Innovation](#)" by Dr. Kenan Jarboe and Dr. Stephen Merrill. In the summer of 2014, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the National Economic Council issued a Request for Comments as part of a review and update of the Administration's *Strategy for American Innovation*. This document is a response to that Request of Comments. In it propose policies and actions in five areas: Understanding How Intangible Assets Fuel Economic Growth; Enhancing Policy Development and Implementation; Evaluating Administration Initiatives; Foster Design Thinking; and, Financing Innovation Through Intellectual Property.

In October 2014, we published *Knowledge about Knowledge: The OECD Project on Knowledge-Based Capital*, Working Paper #11 by Dr. Brian Kahin. The paper is a review of the OECD report *Supporting Investment in Knowledge Capital, Growth and Innovation*, a book-length report that culminates the first phase of its flagship project on *New Sources of Growth: Knowledge-Based Capital*. This paper by describes the report and difficulties facing the U.S. government in addressing the issues raise in the report. Note that the OECD project was kicked off at a 2011 conference organized by Athena Alliance.

Presentations/Panel Discussions/Roundtables

On January 14, Dr. Jarboe gave a presentation on "Intangibles and Knowledge Based Capital" at a at the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation's panel discussion on the Role of Intangible, Knowledge-based Capital in Economic Growth, focused on the OECD's project on knowledge-based capital, aka intangibles assets (which was kicked off at a conference hosted by Athena Alliance in May 2011).

On August 20, Dr. Jarboe participated in a session at the Digital Government Institute's Government Knowledge Management Conference and gave a presentation on [“Measuring Intangibles as part of KM”](#).

Dr. Jarboe also gave three presentation on "Additive Manufacturing as a Disruptive Technology":
on June 25 at the CONFABULATION2: Symposium on 3D in the classroom at Prince Georges Community College;
on September 17 at the Inside 3D Printing Conference & Expo panel on 3D Printing Politics organized by Mediabistro; and,
on November 3 as part of a George Washington University lecture on globalization and 3D printing.

Outreach

The Athena Alliance blog, [The Intangible Economy](#), remained a vital communications and outreach tool. Articles were posted that highlighted new research reports and analyzed public policy issues affecting the intangible economy. We also continued posting our monthly analysis of U.S.–international trade in intangibles. Dr. Jarboe also continues to post comments and informational links via Tweeter at @IntangibleEcon.

In 2014, Dr. Jarboe continued his activities with the Intellectual Capital Practitioners Network. and held discussions on intangible economic issues with various policymakers and attended numerous other meetings, conferences, presentations, and events. He also served as an external reader for a Ph.D. dissertation on *Innovation in the Service Sector* at the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs, George Mason University

Athena Alliance Officers

- Richard Cohon —Chairman
- Kenan Patrick Jarboe, Ph.D.—President
- Joan L. Wills—Secretary/Treasurer
- Jonathan Low—Board Member
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