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The last issue of the *Bulletin* (October/November 2007) dealt in large part with the impact of new web capabilities on information products and web use. This issue still largely concerns the web but focuses on the challenges to those who provide services using this vehicle.

Yungrang Laura Cheng from the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University has put together a broad-ranging special section on virtual reference – its history, its evaluation, its users and non-users, its ethics and its future. For our authors consideration of the future revolves around whether the data gathered through virtual reference and/or the evolving social aspects of the web can be used to enhance reference service as we know it. The special section includes articles by Joe Janes, David Lankes, Jeffrey Pomerantz and Pnina Shachaf, as well as one co-authored by OCLC researchers Lynn Connaway, Marie Radford and Timothy Dickey.

Two of our other authors also examine the challenges of making information available, although from very different perspectives. On the one hand Ophir Frieder, the recipient of the 2007 ASIS&T Research Award, is, as he told me, an engineer of the real hands-on variety, which makes him an unusual ASIS&T member. Much of his work has concerned computer architectures to search the huge volumes of text generated by the web, but he has also studied user behavior through query log analysis and through building and testing SENTINEL, an interactive information retrieval and stereoscopic visualization system. In an article written at our

invitation he discusses his research career and the results of his work.

On the other hand James Kalbach is looking at the retrieval problem through the lens of information architecture (IA). In our IA Column he ponders the close linkage between IA as an information profession and the problem of exploiting the “long tail” possibilities of the web that have accounted for so much of its innovative impact.

Finally Olugbenga Ademodi, a Nigerian lawyer and information professional who is now working and attending graduate school in the United States, reflects on the potential for the Web 2.0 technology and open source in Nigeria as well as on the very real barriers to implementing the web in developing countries. He also gives specific examples of the difficulties associated with citizens in Nigeria obtaining in any form the kinds of public records information whose availability we take for granted in Europe or the United States. It has been several years since we carried such an overview, and I think it is very valuable to remind ourselves as we read about virtual reference and web searching and navigation, that most of the world’s population does not have even rudimentary access to the web, much less that requiring broadband communication. Many of these problems will not be solved quickly, and, indeed, considerable controversy about the value of information technology relative to other development priorities remains, making ASIS&T’s outreach to the international community all the more important. ■