Earlier today I had the opportunity to reflect on my past career and the importance of ASIS&T as I accepted the ASIS&T Award of Merit [1]. In this address I want to look to the future, to what I hope to accomplish over the next year as ASIS&T president as we look ahead to 2012, when we will celebrate our 75th anniversary, and beyond. To remain vital we must be open to doing things in new ways and to doing new things to benefit our members. As one example, Gary Marchionini, working with conference co-chairs Elaine Toms and Cathy Marshall, sought ways to make a number of changes to enhance this year’s Annual Meeting, including increased student participation as exemplified by the student design competition.

In 1999 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Journal of the American Society for Information Science, I published an article entitled “Journal of the American Society for Information Science (JASIS): Past, Present and Future”[2]. I concluded that article with a section that I titled “Final Thoughts on the Cobbler’s Children” as follows:

In introducing the first edition of the ASIS Thesaurus of Information Science and Librarianship to the ASIS membership through an article in the Bulletin, Milstead and Borko (1994) titled the piece “Shoes for the Cobbler’s Children,” [3] noting that many years after devising thesauri to index the literature of other disciplines, the field of information science and librarianship now had a current thesaurus. Ironically specialists often do not apply their specialties to their own applications. The processes of creating each issue of JASIS and developing overall editorial direction are already collaborative, involving the editor, the editorial board, authors, referees, the ASIS board of directors and the publisher’s staff. The pressures on scholarly journals and the emerging electronic environment offer both challenges and opportunities to foster new forms of collaboration in both the production and use of the journal. The challenge is to channel the expertise of ASIS members on scientific communication, information retrieval, information design and interface design to develop further a journal and associated value-added features that can foster research communication in information science….The future offers opportunities to preserve JASIS as a key element in the online intellectual information science community, but creative thought and collaborative efforts will be required to make this happen.

Fast-forward 11 years. Scholarly and professional societies in general are facing considerable challenges as new information and communication technologies offer new ways to communicate, publish, keep up-to-date and perform other
functions that historically have been the province of such societies. ASIS&T is not immune to these challenges. With the support of the Board, committees, SIGs, chapters and the membership at-large, I would like to find ways to build on the initiatives of prior ASIS&T presidents and boards in order to shape a society that is well matched to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, applying information and communication technologies in new ways where appropriate. This will include focusing on the following activities:

1) **Enhancing the role and structure of SIGs and chapters.** We already have introduced virtual SIGs to supplement the more formal SIG structure. How can we enhance the effectiveness of these different types of SIGs to foster communication and collaboration? Are there also options for new, more flexible forms of chapters? The Chapter Assembly and SIG Cabinet can contribute to exploring these questions.

2) **Recruiting and fostering continuing engagement of student members.** Student chapter advisors and leaders have a key role to play in this. I recently had the opportunity to review applications submitted for the New Leaders Award. A number were from students active in leadership roles, including several who had revitalized their student chapters with encouragement from faculty advisors. We need to find ways to share their strategies with other student chapters and foster continuing engagement with ASIS&T as these students graduate.

3) **Improving the use of the web and online communication channels.** In September 2010 Melissa Weaver submitted an ASIS&T Membership and Web Channels Report to the Board, including analysis of multiple sources of data. One set of recommendations relates to the *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, migrating to a new web format so that articles will be more findable and discussable. She made a number of other valuable recommendations, and it will be important to take action on these in order to enhance the ASIS&T web presence and take best advantage of current and emerging online communication channels.

4) **Developing online education offerings in various formats.** While the annual meeting and other face-to-face events like the annual IA Summit and the 2010 Research Data Access and Preservation Summit support research dissemination and continuing education, ASIS&T also needs to develop online education offerings in various formats, both asynchronous and synchronous, to enhance the benefits available to our members. The Information Science Education Committee can contribute to guiding this effort.

5) **Expanding our international reach and collaborating with other associations.** ASIS&T can enhance its impact by making more connections internationally and with other associations. In the coming year the Board will include two members from Canada, one from Sweden and one from Ireland. We already have chapters in Europe and Taipei. SIG/III is one of our most active SIGs and we have an International Relations Committee. Each year the Annual Meeting attracts a number of attendees from around the world. All of this experience can contribute to developing strategies to further expand membership and activity outside of North America. ASIS&T also needs to continue to pursue opportunities to collaborate with other associations on activities of mutual interest, such as co-locating and/or co-sponsoring conferences. This year we are co-located with both ICKM and DC-2010 and we hope to schedule a joint conference with the Canadian Association for Information Science in the next few years.
Speaking of conferences, I will close by encouraging you to plan ahead for ASIS&T 2011, “Bridging the Gulf: Communication and Information in Society, Technology and Work” to be held in New Orleans in October 2011. Conference co-chairs Suzie Allard and Abby Goodrum have released the call for participation, so please review that and submit proposals for papers, panels, workshops, tutorials, posters, demos and/or videos. We need your participation to make it a successful conference. There is much work to do in the meantime in the areas that I have outlined, and I look forward to collaborating with many ASIS&T members to lead these efforts over the next year as your president.

Resources Mentioned in the Column


New ASIST Titles from Information Today, Inc.

**Information and Emotion: The Emergent Affective Paradigm in Information Behavior Research and Theory**
Edited by Diane Nahl and Dania Bilal
ASIST member price $47.60

**ARIST 41**
Edited by Blaise Cronin
ASIST member price $99.95

**Covert and Overt: Recollecting and Connecting Intelligence Service and Information Science**
Edited by Robert V. Williams and Ben-Ami Lipetz
ASIST member price $39.60

**Theories of Information Behavior**
Edited by Karen E. Fisher, Sanda Erdelez, and Lynne (E. F.) McKechnie
ASIST member price $39.60

Note: Prices do not include shipping and handling.