A Look at ASIS&T 2010

Page 5

ANNUAL MEETING COVERAGE

INSIDE ASIS&T
5] A Look at ASIS&T 2010
8] 2010 ASIS&T Award Winners
14] ASIS&T New Leaders Award by Candy Schwartz
18] First ASIS&T Conference Contribution Awards

FEATURES

22] ASIS&T 2010 Plenary Session: Restoring Information’s Body by Steve Hardin
25] 2010 ASIS&T James M. Cretsos Leadership Award by Crystal Fulton

SPECIAL SECTION

Adding Value: Independent Information Professionals, Part III
28] Making It Work as an IIP by Crystal Sharp, Guest Editor
34] Collaborating – Key to Providing Complete Answers Online and Off by Risa Sacks
37] Independent Information Professionals in Europe: Using Geopolitical and Cultural Boundaries to Advantage by Valerie Matarese
40] How to Generate Income from Teaching and Training by Amelia Kassel
43] Think Strategically: Add Value to Your Business by Mary Ellen Bates
46] Strategic Communication: Making Your Marketing and Website Content Work for Your Business by Andrea C. Carrero

DEPARTMENTS

[2] Editor's Desktop
[3] President's Page
[5] Inside ASIS&T
[19] ASIS&T Webinars by Joseph A. Busch

COLUMNS

IA Column
[49] Challenges with Context by Thom Haller
We have photos galore in our expanded Inside ASIS&T coverage of the 2010 Annual Meeting. Also, we bring you an article on Lucy Suchman’s plenary address as reported by Steve Hardin. My thanks to Steve who has faithfully taken on this duty for us for as long as I’ve been editor of the Bulletin, which now qualifies as “many years.”

Related to this coverage we have several articles on leadership development for the Society and especially on the recruitment and retention of student members. I don’t think we can say “catch them while they’re young” because so many IS students have had significant careers before they turn to this profession, which makes them very able to make immediate and significant professional contributions. As the New Leadership Program shows, ASIS&T is particularly fortunate in this regard. Aspects of this theme are covered in contributions by Crystal Fulton, this year’s winner of the James M. Cretsos Award, Candy Schwartz in her report on the New Leaders Program and Linda Smith on her President’s Page.

Our special section on the business of independent information professionals is continued from the October/November 2010 issue (www.asis.org/Bulletin/Oct-10/index.html). The theme of Part III is “Making It Work.” Seven authors discuss such issues as expanding your business through subcontracting with domestic and international partners, marketing and using teaching as a strategic part of growing your business.

In his IA column, Thom Haller reinforces the customer focus of the special section with his look at the importance of considering the corporate context within which a particular project, such as a website redesign, takes place.

Looking beyond the content, the Bulletin package itself is undergoing a transitional process aimed at improving its visibility and utility. Most of the intended changes will roll out over several future issues. But beginning with this issue, you’ll see an important addition. Indexing that has always been available for the Bulletin version hosted in the ASIS&T Digital Library will now be included in the versions hosted at asis.org. Also, we are adding abstracts for all feature articles, including those in special sections, and many of our other columns and editorial elements. These improvements will give us more options for displaying content in the future.
One focus area during my year as ASIS&T president is recruiting student members and fostering their continuing engagement in our Society. I have a long-standing interest in student involvement in ASIS&T. When I joined the faculty at Illinois in 1977, I worked with master’s student Barbara Rapp (now chief, Office of Planning and Analysis, National Library of Medicine) to establish a student chapter, and in 1979 then-president James Cretsos appointed me special consultant to him on student membership. My goal then, as now, is to identify more ways in which student members can benefit from and contribute to ASIS&T.

So what does ASIS&T offer students? A close look at various ASIS&T units and activities demonstrates that ASIS&T already offers numerous opportunities to learn, contribute and receive recognition.

- Almost 40 ASIS&T student chapters give students an opportunity to plan and participate in programs and activities. While master’s students lead many of these chapters, undergraduate and doctoral students may also be involved. Students can also participate in chapter activities if they live in an area served by one of the regional chapters.
- Students can compete for one of several awards, including the Thomson Reuters Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Scholarship, ASIS&T/ProQuest Doctoral Dissertation, Pratt-Severn Best Student Research Paper and Student Chapter-of-the-Year.
- Students can contribute to program planning and communications activities of SIGs.
- Many students find opportunities to share their research and project results through posters, papers, panels and demos at ASIS&T Annual Meetings.
- The Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology includes a student member on its Advisory Board, and students can submit papers for potential publication in both the Bulletin and the Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology.

The 2010 ASIS&T Annual Meeting pioneered two new ways for involving student members.

Under the leadership of Barbara Wildemuth, professor and associate dean for academic affairs at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a student design competition was held. Several cross-institution design teams formed at the beginning of the meeting, and team members worked together for the next few days to come up with a solution to the assigned design problem. Their efforts culminated in presentations of their work to a panel of judges at a special session of the conference, at which they demonstrated their creativity and enthusiasm.

The other new initiative, the New Leaders Award which is described in more detail elsewhere in this issue of the Bulletin, features students who have already been involved as leaders in their student chapters and now have an opportunity to contribute their talents to SIGs, committees and regional chapters.
One of the challenges facing student chapters is the dramatic increase in online education, so that potential members are no longer co-located. At Illinois, for example, more than half of our master’s students earn their degrees through our online enrollment option. But just as technology enables such students to study at a distance, it can also facilitate participation in student chapter events. As one example, Illinois student chapter president and master’s student Adam Rusch organized a meeting on December 2, 2010, exploiting web-conferencing technology to enable students in Champaign and remote locations to hear, see and interact with Cassidy Sugimoto, ASIS&T Chapter Assembly Director and faculty member at Indiana University’s School of Library and Information Science, as she discussed her research on the MPACT project (www.ibiblio.org/mpact/). While Cassidy joined the group from a neighboring state, the same technology could be used to reach speakers and involve students from around the United States and beyond.

Just as the student design competition demonstrated the benefits of cross-institution collaboration, multiple student chapters could collaborate in exploiting web-conferencing technology in delivering programs that would benefit students from more than one institution. This is just one example of networking and collaboration that could go beyond the face-to-face activities possible at ASIS&T Annual Meetings. I welcome more ideas for strategies to involve student members and foster their continuing engagement with ASIS&T as they graduate.
A Look at ASIS&T 2010

Join us throughout this issue of the *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* for a look at some of the work and fun that members and guests enjoyed at the 2010 ASIS&T Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh. Following a photo montage from the meeting, here in Inside ASIS&T you’ll find news and pictures of all ASIS&T national award winners, as well as reports on the New Leaders Award program and the first ASIS&T conference contribution awards. Elsewhere in this issue of the *Bulletin*, other Annual Meeting coverage includes a report from the Lucy Suchman plenary session and a message from this year’s winner of the James M. Cretsos Leadership Award.
2010 Annual Meeting Coverage
Each year at the ASIS&T Annual Meeting, the Society honors the winners of the prestigious ASIS&T Annual Awards. This year’s winners are featured in this section.

**AWARD OF MERIT**

**Linda C. Smith**, professor and associate dean at the University of Illinois, is an extraordinary leader in our field. As her nominator for the award summarized, “Linda Smith’s career has exemplified the theory, the practice and the ethos of access of information in library and information science. Her research has spanned the areas of artificial intelligence, information retrieval, library automation and education. Her work in reference librarianship has made information more accessible to users everywhere, and she has developed and directed an award-winning online education program that has made LIS education accessible to many who would not otherwise have had that opportunity.

“As a mentor and teacher, she has had a lifelong impact on countless students, colleagues and practitioners. In all of these activities, Linda Smith has been unstinting in generosity, unassuming in leadership and unequalled in dedication to her profession…. Her dedication to students is legendary, and she’s been recognized with numerous awards for teaching and mentoring, including the 1987 ASIS Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award.”

Dr. Smith is a prolific author of journal articles, conference presentations and invited talks, as well as one of the field’s standard textbooks. She holds memberships in a wide range of organizations, and is a dedicated leader within organizations such as ALISE and ASIS&T. Despite all of these accomplishments, and her profound influence, Dr. Smith remains one of the field’s most humble servants.

Because of Dr. Smith’s extraordinary range of contributions to scholarship, teaching and service, we are delighted to award her our highest honor, the 2010 ASIS&T Award of Merit.

**WATSON DAVIS AWARD**

The 2010 Watson Davis Award goes to **Barbara Wildemuth**, a tireless advocate of the Society and its members since she first joined ASIS&T in 1976. She has served continuously over the years on numerous committees, award juries and boards, most recently serving on the Board of Directors in the position of director-at-large. She has co-chaired the Annual Meeting and the technical program of the Mid-Year Meeting. She was one of the founders of SIG/USE in 1999 and has continually contributed to its growth and strength, including initiating the first SIG/USE Research Symposium, which has become an annual event.

Another of her significant contributions to ASIS&T is her work on behalf of doctoral students. After winning an ASIS&T scholarship in support of her own doctoral work, she has reciprocated by leading and championing specific ASIS&T programs in support of emerging scholars and new members of ASIS&T. For the ASIS&T Doctoral Seminar, just one example of programs designed for students, she uses her extensive professional network and gentle and good-humored pressure to put senior and distinguished faculty in the same room with the next generation of ASIS&T members for an afternoon of mentoring. She has given great amounts of time and effort to ASIS&T with no diminution of her impressive scholarly activity. Barbara Wildemuth’s leadership and dedicated service to ASIS&T make her an exemplary recipient of the Watson Davis Award.

Outgoing president Gary Marchionini presents Watson Davis Award to Barbara Wildemuth.
**Research Award**

Susan Leigh Star, faculty member at the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Pittsburgh at the time of her sudden death earlier this year, is the recipient of the 2010 ASIS&T Research Award. During her 15-year career, Susan Leigh Star made incredible contributions to research in information science. Among her successes were two key monographs – *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (1999) and *Standards and Their Stories: How Quantifying, Classifying and Formalizing Practices Shape Everyday Life* (2009). Her scholarly work and leadership in the Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S) led to an outstanding national and international reputation. Her work couples a profound understanding of technology with a humanistic perspective. Of greatest relevance to information science is her research centered on the social and organizational aspects of large information systems, including digital libraries and medical classification. She was a key figure in a socially grounded approach to investigating information systems, drawing on social studies of science, information science, workplace studies and technological design. She undertook empirical studies of knowledge creation and use with methods informed by her PhD studies in sociology, including social networks, grounded theory and ethnography.

In the area of social informatics and infrastructure, Susan Leigh Star’s significance lies in being among the first to bring an ethnographic approach to investigating emerging cyber infrastructure. In the area of classification and standards, the chief strength of her work is its capacity to bring an almost invisible aspect of social life to the forefront of analytic treatment. Through her original and groundbreaking work Susan Leigh Star brought new insights and methods to research on questions important to information science. For her significant body of work she is richly deserving of (posthumous) recognition with this year’s ASIS&T Award for Research in Information Science.

**Best Information Science Book Award**

Two works in the field of information science are honored in 2010 with Best Information Science Book Awards.

*Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates* by Adrian Johns and published by The University of Chicago Press, is an elegant, astute and learned examination of piracy, in the sense of unauthorized reproduction of intellectual material. The book is an excellent example of how meticulous, wide-ranging historical research can form part of the interdisciplinary universe of information science. The book not only contextualizes piracy in time, place and social context, it uses that subtle understanding to illuminate current and future issues in the world of content distribution. Notably, the book moves beyond simplistic perspectives on piracy as good or bad, showing the variety of effects of piracy in an even-handed manner.

Moreover, the book’s clear, engaging writing style makes it accessible to the public as well as worthwhile for the scholar. *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, edited by Marcia J. Bates and Mary Niles Maack and published by CRC Press, is an extraordinary achievement. This comprehensive treatment of the major ideas in LIS will remain a lasting resource for the information disciplines. The editors have remapped and restructured the field, revealing its inner structure and multifaceted connections to cognate fields. While mapping an evolving field and exploring its trans-disciplinary connections, the various traditions within LIS and the duality between the scientific and the humanistic traditions is well balanced. ELIS addresses the informatics turn, and it builds bridges to domains, such as digital humanities, museum studies and book history. The integrative nature of the information disciplines is exposed and explored in depth. The scope is international, and the quality of articles is generally high. Multifaceted and authoritative, it provides a map to our field, revealing its vitality and growth but also its depth and emerging tradition.

**John Wiley & Sons Best JASIST Paper Award**

The paper addresses situations in which users have poorly defined or complex information search goals. Search interfaces that offer only keyword-searching facilities provide inadequate support to help these users reach their information-seeking objectives. The emergence of interfaces with more advanced capabilities, such as faceted browsing and result clustering, can assist such users. The evaluation of these interfaces is challenging because they generally offer diverse and versatile search environments that introduce overwhelming numbers of independent variables to user studies. The article presents a formative inspection framework for the evaluation of advanced search interfaces.

In terms of professional merit, the paper is both systematic and articulate in its presentations. Three aspects are particularly noteworthy: (1) the paper contains a detailed literature review and a synthesis of information seeking behavior models; (2) it introduces three faceted browsers and the evaluation framework used in the experiment; and (3) the contribution of the paper emerges from its theoretical base in human-computer interaction and resides in its breadth and in its application of user-models of search interaction to evaluation of rich faceted search user interfaces. It is systematic in its approach. The paper is well presented, clear, direct and understandable, and the argument and empirical content are well delineated.

**James M. Cretsos Leadership Award**

Crystal Fulton, an ASIS&T member since 2004, is the recipient of the 2010 James M. Cretsos Leadership Award recognizing new members who have demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities in professional ASIS&T activities.

As soon as she joined ASIS&T, Crystal became active in Special Interest Group/Information Needs, Seeking and Use (SIG/USE). In the ensuing years she has served in all of the SIG’s major offices, helped with all SIG symposia and led the development of a variety of innovative projects to celebrate the SIG’s 10th anniversary year. Among her successes for SIG/USE are the development of the Academy of SIG/USE Research Fellows and the incorporation of Second Life into SIG/USE events at the ASIS&T Annual Meeting.

In addition, Crystal has enthusiastically supported other SIGs and all ASIS&T activities in general.

**Thomson-Reuters Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Scholarship**

Jaime Snyder of Syracuse University is the winner of the 2010 Thomson-Reuters Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Scholarship for *Image-Enabled Discourse: An Investigation of the Creation of Visual Information as Communicative Practice*. This dissertation will explore the role that the creation of visual information, such as sketches, plays in face-to-face conversations. It will provide empirical evaluation for a new model of image-enabled discourse built on William Hanks’ concept of communicative practice. Human abilities to use images for communication are far more nuanced than technology-enabled tools currently support; this research will provide affordances for improving such technologies.

**ASIS&T/ProQuest Doctoral Dissertation Award**

The 2010 ASIS&T/ProQuest Doctoral Dissertation Award is presented to Alberto Pepe, student at the University of California at Los Angeles, for *Structure and Evolution of Scientific*
Collaboration Networks in a Modern Research Collaboratory. This exemplary, innovative, pioneering and potentially highly influential dissertation addresses an increasingly important area of study in information science – scientific collaboration throughout the world and across disciplines. Pepe investigated collaborative ecology of a multidisciplinary and distributed science environment, the Center for Embedded Networked Sensing (CENS). Using survey research and network analysis, this dissertation focused on three aspects of network interactions: co-authorship of professional publications, scholarly communication via network mailing lists and interpersonal acquaintance patterns. Pepe’s work explored social/scientific network analysis theories and concepts and examined the topology, structure and evolution of these networks in relation to the disciplinary and institutional arrangements of CENS. Pepe’s research methodology and data analysis were well designed, logically organized, thoroughly explained and comprehensively documented. This dissertation provides insights into how scientists communicate with each other on a day-to-day basis and how they negotiate the distribution of tasks and evaluate the contributions of one another to the project as a whole. As scholarly publishing and science itself adapt to the Internet age, Pepe’s work will stand as a model for information scientists studying these important developments.

History Fund Research Paper Award
The winner of 2010 ASIS&T History Fund Research Paper Award is Sarah Buchanan, University of California at Los Angeles, for her paper: “Name’s the Same?: The Los Angeles Chapter of ASIS&T Upon Its Semicentennial.” The award carries a $500 prize.

History Fund Research Grant Award
The 2010 History Fund Research Grant Award goes to Andrew Russell, assistant professor, Stevens Institute of Technology, for his proposal, “An Open World: Ideological Origins of Network Standards.” The award is a $1,000 grant.

From the left, Sarah Buchanan and Kristen LaBonte accept Chapter-of-the-Year honors for LACASIST from Amy Wallace.

Chapter Awards
Chapter-of-the-Year Award
The 2010 Chapter-of-the-Year Award goes to the Los Angeles Chapter of ASIS&T (LACASIST). The chapter is commended for its exceptional recruitment efforts and utilization of new members, timely and informative programs, projects and services that serve both current and future members, and use of technology to advance chapter business and events. The award jury noted that the chapter has an impressive array of meetings, both social and informative, which keep members engaged. The chapter continues to support projects and services that address member needs, including providing travel scholarships to the ASIS&T Annual Meeting and sponsoring annual memberships for student members via the Margaret McKinley Scholarship. The chapter has embraced technology for efficient communication with members, for board interaction, and to record and share program content for chapter members unable to attend as well as for information professionals around the world.

Student Chapter-of-the-Year Award
The 2010 Student Chapter-of-the-Year Award goes to the Simmons College ASIS&T Student Chapter which engaged in a number of significant programs throughout the year on an impressive list of topics. Among the activities cited by the award jury were two placement events – alumni speed networking and an online
career fair – designed to help student members find work in our harsh economy. The chapter also continued its noteworthy and impressive work on member recruitment and retention with the use of attractive publications and social media. In addition, the chapter showed its ingenuity with the establishment of an award to recognize contributions by a member of the student chapter. All in all, the chapter’s efforts resulted in an end-of-year membership count of 279 members and recognition by ASIS&T as the Student Chapter-of-the-Year.

**CHAPTER MEMBER-OF-THE-YEAR**

The 2010 Chapter Member-of-the-Year Award goes to Susan Fensore of the Northern Ohio Chapter of ASIS&T (NORASIST). Susan has gone “above and beyond” for her chapter by stepping up “to fill her chapter’s need for leadership and recruitment in a significant way” (noted one judge). The judges were particularly impressed by Susan’s emphasis on outreach through such efforts as representing NORASIST at job fairs, classroom visits and orientation events for the local library science graduate program. This type of outreach is an exemplary act of service that promotes both the local chapter and the national association.

**CHAPTER PUBLICATION-OF-THE-YEAR**

Both the Central Ohio Chapter and the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Society for Information Science and Technology are recipients in 2010 of Chapter Publication-of-the-Year Awards, and in both cases, their websites earned the citations.

As noted by one of the judges, the Central Ohio Chapter website “is very well done and exhibits excellent technological implementation and high-quality design.” New functionality of the website includes a search feature, an interactive calendar of posts, a dynamic tag cloud of site content and a clean version for mobile devices. The website is also highly integrated with other methods of chapter information dissemination, such as Facebook and twitter.

The Los Angeles Chapter (LACASIST) website, which was first launched in 1996, was redesigned this year on a new open-source content management system (Drupal). Since launching the new website, the site has seen a 527% increase in traffic. Though the redesign focused on a number of basic site elements, the judges particularly liked the emphasis placed on membership recruitment and retention. A dedicated section of the website provides prospective and existing members up-to-date and accessible information on getting involved in the chapter.

**CHAPTER EVENT OF THE YEAR**

Two Chapter Event-of-the-Year Awards are presented this year for two events: one developed by the Los Angeles Chapter; the other by the Carolinas Chapter and the UNC Student Chapter.

The Los Angeles Chapter is honored for its fall event, Collaboration Tools: Best Practices and New Trends, which brought academics and practitioners together to discuss ways to work more productively, benefits of cloud computing, state-of-the-art in collaborative work and how teams communicate across geographic distances. This event was held in cooperation with the Los Angeles user experience group and provided outstanding visibility for both ASIS&T and the Los Angeles Chapter.

The Carolinas Chapter of ASIS&T and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Student Chapter are awarded the 2010 Chapter Event-of-the-Year Award for Information Design Workshop which focused on information visualization and design for academic posters and presentations. The event, led by UNC doctoral candidate and designer Songphan Choemprayong, featured a stunning slideshow as it walked students through various aspects of designing and presenting information. The judges were particularly impressed with the collaboration between the chapters, as well as the large number of non-ASIS&T members who attended this event.
**SIG AWARDS**

**SIG-of-the-Year-Award**

The 2010 SIG-of-the-Year is **SIG/Information Needs Seeking and Use (SIG/USE)**. SIG/USE celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2009 with a special workshop and reception, publication, a promotional poster, conference swag and multiple contacts with members through traditional publications and a variety of online choices, including web 2.0 platforms and a Second Life presence. One of the jury members said it best: “This SIG leveraged the opportunity offered by the 10th anniversary year to aid in recruitment and retention of members, to publicize the SIG, to celebrate its members and to promote awareness of its activities... Their summary of their annual activities sparkles with energy and enthusiasm, and ASIS&T is fortunate to have SIG/USE as one of its constituent bodies.”

SIG/USE chair Soo Young Rieh, left, accepts SIG-of-the-Year honors from SIG Cabinet Director KT Vaughan.

**SIG Member-of-the-Year**

The 2010 SIG Member-of-the-Year is **Barrie Hayes**, chair of SIG/Digital Libraries (SIG/DL). Barrie continued her enthusiastic approach toward developing and expanding the SIG, as well as her dedication to providing a home for data-oriented practitioners within the Society as a whole. Barrie has been an exemplary chair from a governance perspective; she is one of the few to consistently manage SIG business with a keen eye for detail and deadlines. Under Barrie’s leadership the SIG held several Skype calls among the SIG leadership and with interested members, developed an excellent post-conference workshop for the 2010 Annual Meeting and made a concerted effort to grow the SIG through involving both the official members and those who had joined the Facebook and LinkedIn pages.

**SIG Publication-of-the-Year**

The 2010 SIG Publication-of-the-Year Award goes to “**A Decade of SIG/USE: Celebrating SIG/USE and Information Behavior Research**,” the special section of the February/March 2010 Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology. Edited by Crystal Fulton and containing five articles by nine eminent members of the SIG, this special section demonstrates the breadth and depth of the history, subjects and activity of the SIG and the field of information behavior research. The section will hold up for years as an introduction to researchers, students and practitioners of both the field and the SIG.
The New Leaders Award, inaugurated with the 2010 Annual Meeting, was a huge success, thanks in large part to the efforts of Chapter Assembly Director Cassidy Sugimoto. Recipients of the award, which partially funds conference attendance for two years, met up with their assigned mentors and plunged into leadership activities in their selected SIGs, chapters and committees. Several months after the conference, the new leaders were asked to share their thoughts about the program, the conference and ASIS&T. Before hearing about their experiences, let’s find out a little bit more about this first group.

Andrea Baer (mentor: Sanda Erdelez) received her master’s degree in information sciences from the University of Tennessee a few months after the Annual Meeting. She also has a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of Washington. She hopes to pursue a career in academic librarianship, particularly in the areas of reference, instruction and outreach work. In addition to conducting a job search, Andrea is currently developing English curriculum and teaching for Ashford University and serving as a reference administrator for the Internet Public Library. Soon she will also begin work as a consultant for the University of Tennessee Center for Information and Communication Studies.

Laura Christopherson (mentor: Cassidy Sugimoto) started her education with a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), majoring in drama. She stayed in the theater for a while, acting, directing and designing scenery at several venues, including work at Duke University theaters. Over the years she moved into designing websites and print materials and then into systems analysis, information architecture and project management for web development, working for places like UNC, Duke, Intrah ealth and Computer Sciences Corporation. During this time, she completed her master’s degree at UNC’s School of Information and Library Science, where she is now pursuing a Ph.D. Laura’s interests focus on how technology shapes our social, work, communication and information behaviors. She is interested in the ways people adapt and respond to technological change and how they do so in creative ways. She finds language, as evidence of these behaviors, particularly fascinating.
Alex Garnett (mentor: Diane Neal) began his higher education with a B.A. in cognitive science from the University of Connecticut. He describes this degree as being “about the single best way I could have prepared for a future in LIS – spending three years feeling like he was exhaustingly jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none.” He is now based in Vancouver and has just received his master’s degree in library and information science from the University of British Columbia. Alex is currently with Neurethics Canada, following work with the Public Knowledge Project, the Human Early Learning Project and the British Library. He is focusing his interests on open publishing, policy and education. He describes himself as “an information guy who works with high concepts and terrific people.”

Margaret Gross (mentor: Steve MacCall) is the institutional assistant director/ supervisor of the Learning Resource Centers for Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. She holds an MLIS from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and also has graduate degrees in English and education from Duquesne University. She is currently revising a paper called “Sister, Sister: Rethinking Sense-Making Theory through Consciousness-Raising,” presented with Lindsay Currie at the recent Medical Library Association conference. She enjoys working with the medical students at Lake Erie College, and her unit recently completed its first outreach community service project. The second round of the project, “Access to E-Health Information and Basic Medical Concepts: A Service-Learning Partnership between Second Year Medical Students and a 7th grade YMCA After School Initiative,” is already in planning. The results will be presented at the American Association of Osteopathic Medicine conference in the spring.

Thomas Heverin (mentor: Howard Rosenbaum) is a Ph.D. student in information science at the College of Information Science and Technology (the iSchool) at Drexel University. His research focuses on crisis informatics (the use of information communication technologies during times of crisis) and ethical concerns surrounding distributed surveillance through the use of social media. He has authored works on the use by city police departments of Twitter for information sharing and on the use of Twitter by the public in response to violent crises. His current research focuses on the factors that lead city police departments to adopt and use social media for public communications. Thomas has a B.S. in meteorology from Penn State and a master’s degree in library and information science from Syracuse University. He also served several years as an officer in the U.S. Navy.

Tina Jayroe (mentor: Barrie Hayes) graduated with an MLIS from the University of Denver in June and has been busy submitting Ph.D. applications to library and information science programs. Her undergraduate degree is in mass communications from Emerson College in Boston. Tina has worked as a teacher, docent, archivist and programming manager at The Integer Group, the University of Denver, Denver Public Library and Malden Access Television. She is interested in information retrieval and metadata initiatives. Tina currently volunteers for five non-profit organizations: two libraries, a soup kitchen, the Special Libraries Association (on the Executive Board of the Rocky Mountain Chapter) and ASIS&T.

Sara Mooney (mentor: Candy Schwartz) has a B.A. in communications from Elizabethtown College, an A.S. in show production and touring from Full Sail University, and an M.L.I.S. from Florida State University. She currently works for Cirque du Soleil in their Resident Shows Division as a technical documentation coordinator, which involves organizing, updating, preparing and validating content from 10 shows (over
100,000 show documents) for an upcoming SharePoint migration. In the past Sara has been a volunteer in several libraries and a lighting technician supervisor at Walt Disney World.

Denise Pasquinelli (mentor: Shelley Warwick) is a graduate student in information and library science at the Pratt Institute, focusing thus far on information architecture, usability experience and information/experience design. In the past she has worked for public libraries and museums, planning educational programs for children, adults and speakers of English as a second language. She has also worked as a volunteer to design and redesign library spaces for Bitch magazine lending library and the Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, Oregon. She studied theater arts, art, and Spanish as an undergraduate at Linfield College. Denise graduates from Pratt next spring and would like to end up as an information architect or part of a design consultancy. She is excited by creating engaging and accessible information experiences and thinks these are done best through considerations of cognitive psychology and, most importantly, play.

When asked about their motivations for applying for the New Leaders Award, many said that they were urged by individuals (often faculty) to apply, and some had held office in local ASIS&T chapters or student chapters. Tina, for example, characterized herself as already being a “walking cheerleader for ASIS&T.” Several mentioned that they were motivated by the desire to contribute. Peggy put it this way: “I decided I wanted to use my energy, skills and education to become more involved as an active participant rather than a passive observer.” Many pointed out that ASIS&T covers their areas of interest in ways that other organizations do not, and that they wanted to meet like-minded people.

This was the first Annual Meeting for most of the new leaders; only Tina and Thomas had been to ASIS&T 2009. All were made to feel very welcome – Denise described being stopped for amiable conversation by many long-term members, and both she and Tina pointed out that the relatively small size of ASIS&T made it easier to network. Phrases like “stack of new contacts,” “brain overflowing with new ideas” and “much more than what I’d expected” appear in their reports. Thomas and Alex both specifically mentioned that the New Leaders Award provided an extra boost to help them meet many new members, researchers and established ASIS&T leaders.

Each new leader was asked to engage in a specific leadership activity at the Annual Meeting and to set goals for the coming year. Many participated in SIGs. Laura, for example, joined the board of SIG/ED as communications officer and will be managing the SIG/ED Facebook presence, listserv and the wiki (should the SIG decide to retain it). As part of this position, she will be investigating other tools, such as academia.edu, that may be better suited to helping SIG/ED members connect and share ideas. She also agreed to be a part of a group that will propose a “birds of a feather” experience for the next ASIS&T Annual Meeting, aiming to group doctoral students interested in a particular topic with a mentor.

Alex was elected to the position of SIG/VIS webmaster and will be overhauling the website and doing his part to plug it into as many social media outlets as possible. He is also helping to plan a move away from image retrieval toward information visualization and other non-textual media for next year’s SIG/VIS workshop.

Andrea was introduced by her mentor to members of SIG/USE, and she volunteered to become the SIG’s communications specialist, in which capacity she will help implement and maintain a new SIG/USE blog.

Tina’s efforts are going to SIG/DL, for which she will be developing a series of webinars, including developing a course and its content, recording and editing the sessions, identifying the appropriate platform to deliver the content and delivering the final product(s) via one or several of those platforms. This activity will put her video and audio editing skills to good use.

Thomas is working on behalf of SIG/SI. His goals include creating a Facebook page for the SIG and helping develop a social informatics workshop for the 2011 Annual Meeting. Both of these goals will allow him to contribute to SIG/SI, promote social informatics as a research area and see how a SIG plans for a conference.

In Peggy’s case the lucky SIG was
SIG/HEALTH, of which she is now chair-elect and program chair. In this capacity she is brainstorming next year’s conference scholarships and awards, working on increasing membership and running a member needs assessment survey. In addition, Peggy joined the Leadership Committee and attended the first virtual meeting in mid-December.

Sara was the only new leader whose primary assignment was to a committee – specifically the Membership Committee. She will be involved with evaluating the current printable form and web form membership applications and making suggestions to improve them. She is looking forward to finding out the number of and reasons for lapsed memberships and attempting new methods of member retention. Incidentally, she also became involved with SIG/KM, setting up a Twitter account on the SIG’s behalf.

Denise is unique in contributing her energy to a chapter. She is helping to revive the Metro NY chapter, for which she is now the acting Chapter Assembly Representative. She will attend the first formal welcome back gathering planned for February and will also be working on a joint ASIS&T@Pratt/Metro NY symposium slated for May on the topic of social media ethics and privacy issues.

Not surprisingly, the new leaders threw themselves wholeheartedly into the entire ASIS&T experience. Laura was involved in her school’s recruitment activities. Denise and Alex made some terrific new friends though participation in the student design competition. Alex also enjoyed meeting far more “celebrities” than he thought he would. Peggy was very pleased to establish a personal connection with a major researcher in her field of interest. Thomas enjoyed attending the planned social events, as he had the chance to meet numerous fellow Ph.D. students and junior and senior faculty members, as well as deans of schools. Tina gave a presentation at SIG CON, which was for her a dream come true, as she enjoys combining the silly and the scholarly (she once dressed up as Noam Chomsky for a class presentation). Sara completed her MLIS fully via an online program, so she especially enjoyed placing faces to names at the alumni gathering, and she also appreciated the poster session for allowing her to explore new research and concepts by both reading and talking to the presenters one-on-one.

New leaders were asked how they kept their ASIS&T spark burning once the Annual Meeting was over and they had returned to normal life. Alex has established regular e-mail correspondence with a handful of junior faculty whom he met at the conference and whose interests closely parallel his own. Likewise, Sara and Denise have made a point of making contact with people they met, sharing ideas and research leads. Sara points out that keeping up with the various ASIS&T news channels helps and that she makes an effort to “keep the curiosity door cracked open at all times.” Thomas has kept in close touch with his mentor and finds that this contact helps keep the momentum going. Peggy’s and Tina’s committees and SIGs and Denise’s chapter have kept them busy since the Annual Meeting. Denise left ASIS&T 2010 with ideas she wanted to implement for the student and budding Metro NY chapters, and she reports that slowly but surely, those things are happening. Tina will be getting a booster ASIS&T shot by attending the IA summit in March, and Peggy is motivated by her goal to present a paper at next year’s Annual Meeting.

Finally, the new leaders were asked whether they would recommend the award to other new(ish) members. The answer was a resounding “yes.” Andrea described it as “a good opportunity to get more involved with the organization and to make more connections with other members.” Alex said “Absolutely! The funding is very generous, and it marks a wonderful vote of confidence to stick along with ASIS&T.” Peggy has already recommended it to a nonmember friend whose personality and intellectual interests are well aligned with ASIS&T members. Thomas highly recommends the program, saying “not only will you become involved with this great organization but you will be provided opportunities to meet so many people.” Tina feels that mentors were the key that made the difference to the success of the experience. There’s a little bit of tweaking to do, but given the success of this year’s program, the answer to “Shall we do it again?” has to be, in the words of Denise and Sara, “Definitely” and “Yes, yes, and YES!”
First ASIS&T Conference Contribution Awards

SIS&T 2010 conference chairs Cathy Marshall and Elaine Toms offered a couple of new awards this year to honor the tremendous contributions made by the hundreds of scholars and practitioners who submit their work for consideration as part of the technical program.

In this first effort, awards went to researchers for the Best Conference Paper and Best Conference Poster, for which there was a tie.

Best Conference Paper honors went to Soo Young Rieh, Yong-Mi Kim, Ji Yeon Yang and Beth St. Jean, all of University of Michigan, for their paper, *A Diary Study of Credibility Assessment in Everyday Life Information Activities on the Web: Preliminary Findings*.

The first of two Best Conference Poster honors went to Margaret E.I. Kipp and Soohyung Joo, both of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, for their poster, *Application of Structural Equation Modeling in Exploring Tag Patterns: A Pilot Study*. The second honorees were Justin Brinegar and Robert Capra, both of University of North Carolina, for their poster, *Understanding Personal Digital Music Collections*.

Conference co-chair Elaine Toms, second from right, enjoys the moment with three of the Best Conference Paper winners: Beth St. Jean, Soo Young Rieh and Yong-Mi Kim. Not pictured is Ji Yeon Yang.

Conference co-chair Cathy Marshall, left, honors Margaret E.I. Kipp, accepting the Best Conference Poster award for herself and Soohyung Joo.
Webinars are an efficient way to deliver information and training to a distributed audience. Instead of gathering everyone in the same room, instructors and students can participate from wherever they are located around the world. The presentation can be recorded and replayed whenever it is convenient. Webinars can transcend the constraints of space and time.

As an active leader in several professional societies, I have participated in discussions about how to extend the reach of our professional meetings to those who do not have the time or funding to travel to annual or regional meetings. While webinars are in common use by businesses to reach customers and prospective customers to transcend the limits of trade shows and exhibitions, professional societies have been slow to adopt the technology to disseminate services to their dispersed members.

I was contacted by Vanessa Foss, ASIS&T’s director of membership and meetings, in July 2010 and invited to propose a series of webinars in addition to the usual Annual Meeting taxonomy pre-conferences that I’ve been conducting for the past few years. In early August, we agreed on a series of four seminars that would be presented following the Annual Meeting. These would be:

- **Session 1: Introduction to Business Taxonomies** – provide an introduction to what a taxonomy is, the value it offers an organization and the various approaches to getting started designing effective taxonomies.

- **Session 2: Taxonomy Workshops** – present a methodology to leverage an organization’s stakeholders and system end users to design taxonomies; detail a practical approach to user-centered business taxonomy design that yields taxonomy designs that make sense to users, while driving adoption and ensuring the ultimate usability of the designs.

- **Session 3: Practical Taxonomy Design** – detail effective methodologies to take taxonomy design inputs from taxonomy workshops and use them to build and validate taxonomies.

- **Session 4: Taxonomy Governance and Maintenance** – discuss the best practices and lessons learned regarding effective governance to manage an organization’s taxonomies over time, ensuring their effective evolution; detail approaches to ensure the taxonomy is properly maintained.

We recruited my new colleagues at Project Performance Corporation (PPC) – Zach Wahl, Nick Nylund, Rachel Sondag, Jill Tabuchi and Sheri Darya – to assist in preparing and delivering the webinar series.

The key to offering a seminar series in person or online is getting people to register and ultimately to attend. The ASIS&T staff and PPC team met for a short conference call almost every week over three months to work out the details for developing the content and marketing the series. This effort paid off in webinar registrations. There were 141 logons for the first webinar session. The remaining sessions had 91 or more logons. These levels are consistent with the response to the webinar survey that was completed by more than 40% of the first webinar attendees (note that the following data is just for the first webinar in the series). Figure 1 shows that of those who answered the question, 85% were ASIS&T members and 15% were non-members.

**FIGURE 1. ASIS&T members vs. non-members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Member</th>
<th>Member</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Joseph A. Busch is senior principal, information management, at Project Performance Corporation. He can be reached by email at jbusch<at>ppc.com.
Fuller to Headline Start of ASIS&T Lecture Series

The ASIS&T Annual Lecture series, first announced in 2010 as an annual program to highlight and promote the progress of information science and technology, kicks off later this spring with a featured presentation by Dr. Sherrilynne Fuller, renowned researcher in areas related to health information systems and technologies.

Dr. Fuller, professor of biomedical and health informatics at the School of Public Health and the Information School, University of Washington, will speak on “From Intervention Informatics to Prevention Informatics,” Monday, April 11, at the University of Kentucky. While the onsite audience is expected to be the health and information community from University of Kentucky and the Lexington area, the presentation will be captured and made available to ASIS&T members and others afterwards.

Dr. Fuller is co-director of the UW Center for Public Health Informatics. Her speech will focus on her work on developing health information systems (from individual patient records to building integrated databases and tools to support disease surveillance). She will discuss how the established model of information systems to support intervention is leading to what she calls “prevention informatics,” in which information systems help prevent disease in the first place. She will discuss the use of information and communications technologies for improving health in low resource settings. She believes that many of the information systems problems in developing countries are mirrored in a variety of ways in the United States.

Welcome to SIG/Metrics (SIG/MET), officially chartered at the ASIS&T 2010 Annual Meeting. The new SIG describes itself as a special interest group for the measurement of information production and use. From its official information: SIG/MET encourages the development and networking of all those interested in the measurement of information. It encompasses not only bibliometrics, scientometrics and informetrics, but also measurement of the web and the Internet, applications running on these platforms, and metrics related to network analysis, visualization, scholarly communication and the design and operation of digital libraries. SIG/MET will facilitate activities to encourage the promotion, research and application of metrics topics.

The SIG has taken its first post-charter step with the appointment of officers for the current year: Jonathan Levitt, chair; Stasa Milojevic, chair-elect; Dietmar Wolfram, secretary/treasurer; Angela Zoss, communications officer/webmaster; Cassidy Sugimoto, programming officer; Judit Bar-Ilan, liaison officer; and Ni Chaojun, Student Paper Contest.
SIG/III Fundraising Reaches New Heights

Daniel Alemneh, chair of SIG/III, sends word that the generosity of ASIS&T members led to the SIG’s most successful fundraising year ever, all captured at the Columbian band and the University of Pittsburgh’s SLIS student chapter for putting together the raffle gift basket.

All proceeds go to the SIG/III InfoShare Fund, which offers ASIS&T memberships to information professionals in developing countries for whom the cost of membership would otherwise be a financial burden.

ASIS&T 2010 International Reception at the Annual Meeting. The growth came by way of bigger and better donations of items to both the silent auction and the raffle, as well as higher bids and better raffle ticket sales. In addition, the SIG credits both the School of Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for sponsoring the lively...
Information has lost its body, according to N. Katherine Hayles’ 1999 book, *How We Became Posthuman* [1]. Lucy Suchman, plenary speaker at the 2010 ASIS&T Annual Meeting, used that thought in titling her speech, “Restoring Information’s Body.”

Suchman, a professor of sociology and co-director of the Centre for Science Studies at Lancaster University, began her presentation with a slide of a performance art project called *Standard Time* (www.standard-time.com/index2_en.php), in which a group of workers in hard hats appear and reappear every minute for 24 hours to alter a representation of a digital clock to reflect the accurate time. Through the enactment of the passage of time, represented by the changing clock, we get a sense of materiality and labor in our thinking about information artifacts, which is what she wanted to discuss.

Suchman referenced a 1993 Geoffrey Bowker paper [2] that included a photo from a 1953 cybernetics conference which showed only two women: Margaret Mead and Janet Freed, the conference’s administrative assistant (to whom Suchman returned at the end of her talk, as a figure of invisible work). Cyberneticians predicted a new age in which Darwin’s placement of humanity among animals would be replaced by cyberneticians’ placing humans among machines.

A 1999 book by Bruno Latour [3] featured an image of a scientist in the field holding a collection of plants she would bring back to the laboratory for analysis. Suchman asked, “What makes this collection a reference sample and not a bouquet?” The distinction makes sense, she said, only if we locate it in its context. She quoted Latour [3, p. 32]: “We always forget that the word reference comes from the Latin referre, to bring back.” Attending to the material practices through which chains of reference get made is one way to get information’s body back.

Steve Hardin is an associate librarian at the Cunningham Memorial Library, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana. His email address is Steve.Hardin<at>indstate.edu.
Suchman showed an image of Jack Ruby aiming his gun at Lee Harvey Oswald. The National Rifle Association says the problem isn’t guns; it’s the way people use them: “Guns don’t kill people; people kill people.” Latour writes [3, p. 179], “You are different with a gun in your hand; the gun is different with you holding it.” Neither subject nor object is fixed. They become something else. We need to be thinking about these configurations. Suchman said this idea inspired her 2007 book, *Human-Machine Reconfigurations* [4].

She outlined the idea of reconfiguration: the “figural” – metaphorical – made up of associations that give rise to new meanings. Technologies may be considered “materialized figurations,” according to Donna Haraway [5]. Persons and things are configured, which leads to the question of reconfiguration, or how they may be figured together differently.

Suchman showed a photo of work at an airlines operations room in the 1980s, where she and her colleagues at Xerox PARC were considering the relationships between work and technology. Everyone in the room was working together quite closely, but all of the work in the room was about things going on somewhere else. They were concerned with getting airplanes out of airport gates on time. They used computers, a whiteboard, cameras viewing airport gates and radios. She described how workers in the operations room were able to assemble information resources into a working system. She also outlined how a civil engineer combined her intimate knowledge of a tricky highway interchange with information about the interchange’s context to understand their relationship. Multiple embodied ways of knowing, Suchman said, inform information systems like the operations room.

In *Acting in Anaesthesia* [6] Dawn Goodwin argued that, in anesthesia, you take the capacities in the body of the patient and transfer them out to a complex network of machines and people; the work of an anesthetist is to maintain the system during the course of the surgery. At the end of the surgery, the anesthetist’s job is to reintegrate the system with the patient. We think of the patient as being asleep during surgery, but actually the patient is an integral part of the process, Suchman said.

Suchman then discussed a topic related to her interest in humans interacting with machines. Performance artist Stelarc created a “Prosthetic Head” a few years ago; Suchman had a conversation with it in March of 2003. She showed a video clip of the conversation. The viewer sees a participant walk into a dark gallery, one wall of which features an enormous image of a head. The participant can interact with the head through a keyboard on a podium. In this case, Suchman was the participant; Stelarc himself stood next to her, coaching her interactions with the head. The head said it believed in reductionism and asked her if she believed in it too. When she responded that she wasn’t sure, it asked if there were anything it could do to make up her mind. She asked if it thought robots should have emotions. It replied, “That depends on what you mean by thinking.” What constitutes this exchange, Suchman said, is not the actions of the head or her queries. It’s the whole configuration, all parts working together to create something interesting and intelligible. She asked, “What’s the unit of intelligibility? How has intelligibility been created?”

Suchman also talked about one of her emerging projects: Warfare and Healthcare: Action at a Distance and Bodies in Contact. She related the story of a man in Canada who is AWOL from the U.S. army. Trained in helicopter combat, he fled to Canada because he would be ordered, when deployed in
Iraq, to break down the doors of Iraqi homes to search for insurgents. Asked if he were more likely to engage in combat from a helicopter, he answered, “You have to understand; I was raised on video games.” So war at a distance is more acceptable to him than war up close.

There are new forms of remote control warfare. Drone aircraft conducting our wars represent the intersection of military and games, Suchman said. Formerly used for spying, drones and remotely controlled robots now are armed with explosives and can fire weapons. There are troubling questions about target acquisition and discrimination among human beings.

For health care for the elderly, there are call centers and robotics. Will we be cared for by robots? They’re very popular in Japan, Suchman said. She also discussed a robot cat in the Netherlands that is designed to remind people to take their medicine. But one patient wanted the robot to address the lack of a swimming pool in the facility – beyond the ken of the robot.

Suchman concluded with a memorial reference to Susan Leigh Star, who died in March. [Star was honored posthumously at the Annual Meeting with the 2010 ASIS&T Research Award.] Star said in 1991 [7, p.276], “The deletion of the work from the formal model leads to the need for articulation work, which is also invisible to the model.” Star also talked about “invisible work and silenced dialogues in knowledge presentation.” Suchman concluded by saying she hoped her talk helped recover some of information’s body and that this continues to be a vital area for communications research.
2010 ASIS&T James M. Cretsos Leadership Award

by Crystal Fulton

ABSTRACT

Reflecting on how participation in ASIS&T led to her winning the James M. Cretsos Leadership Award for 2010, Crystal Fulton focused on how ASIS&T's Special Interest Group/Information Needs, Seeking and Use (SIG/USE) has added to her career. Dr. Fulton reflected on early engaging discussions with the SIG/USE scholarly network and members’ encouragement to become actively involved in SIG planning activities. This led to executive roles including chairmanship of the group in 2008-2009 and serving on the SIG/USE Cabinet. During Dr. Fulton’s chairmanship, the SIG celebrated its 10th anniversary with a range of activities aimed at membership development and communications and was named SIG-of-the-Year for the second time. Dr. Fulton recognized the many colleagues who have supported her career development and SIG participation and encouraged ASIS&T members to become active in special interest group planning.

KEYWORDS

leadership
honors
career development
information scientists
scholars

Winning the James M. Cretsos Leadership Award is a great honor and a highlight of 2010 for me. The award means a great deal to me, particularly as recognition of my work in ASIS&T for SIG/USE. I have been asked to discuss here my participation in the ASIS&T and SIG/USE communities; however, my story is really one of how ASIS&T has contributed to my development.

Although I had known about ASIS&T for some time, I did not become a member until 2004. At that point, I had already been living in Ireland for a few years where I had focused my efforts largely on European associations to “find my feet” here. However, I remained in close contact with colleagues who had formed the backbone of my support network during my doctoral years in Canada; my subsequent joining was due in no small part to Karen Fisher and Julia Hersberger, who not only urged me to travel to ASIS&T’s Annual Meeting, but also convinced me to join ASIS&T and SIG/USE (Information Needs, Seeking and Use).

Becoming a member of SIG/USE opened up to me a wider world of discussion about information behavior. The annual SIG/USE Symposium offered an introduction to a highly collegial network of scholars who maintained a strong presence in ASIS&T. I am very grateful to the members who engaged me in discussion at our symposia and in the hotel corridors during various ASIS&T Annual Meetings. While they are too many to list here, particular thanks go to Barbara Wildemuth, one of the founding members and organizers of SIG/USE, for her ongoing support and encouragement.

I immediately found myself helping with symposium activities at the 2004 conference. The SIG/USE planning meeting for the next year deepened
my participation and began my annual contribution to planning and implementing activities in our SIG. My interest in SIG/USE led subsequently to my executive roles as chair-elect of SIG/USE in 2007-2008, chair in 2008-2009 and past chair in 2009-2010. From 2007, I have been a member of SIG/USE Cabinet, a gathering of past chairs of the SIG who facilitate decision making in the group. Taking part also in the general ASIS&T SIG Cabinet not only helped me learn about the internal organization of SIGs in ASIS&T, but also importantly introduced me to K.T. Vaughan, whose bubbling enthusiasm and commitment to the SIGs were contagious.

In 2008-2009, SIG/USE celebrated its 10th anniversary. Officially chartered at the 1999 ASIS&T Mid-Year Meeting, SIG/USE has for now over a decade promoted research that explores cognitive and affective information behavior. Our 10th anniversary offered the SIG an important opportunity to pause and reflect on our accomplishments and future possibilities, not only as a special interest group in ASIS&T, but also as researchers. As a result, plans for celebrating this landmark year in SIG/USE’s history began a full year before ASIS&T 2009. Having previously chaired the ISIC (Information Seeking in Context) conference in 2004 in Dublin, I knew SIG/USE had a very busy year ahead.

Our 10th anniversary celebrations were a huge success, as a result of the time and support given generously by fellow SIG/USE officers (Karen Fisher, Olof Sundin and Soo Young Rieh), SIG/USE Cabinet, our SIG/USE membership and ASIS&T organizers. Our combined efforts enabled us to mark our 10th anniversary meaningfully with a number of events at the 2009 ASIS&T Annual Meeting.

A highly participatory anniversary panel, 10 Years of SIG/USE: A Fish Bowl Dialogue on Information Behavior Research Past, Present & Future, welcomed all ASIS&T members to discuss both accomplishments and future of information behavior research. While I moderated the session, Donald Case, University of Kentucky; Barbara Wildemuth, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Karen Fisher, University of Washington; and Heidi Julien, University of Alberta, reflected on the development of information behavior research. A fish bowl dialogue followed, initiated by discussants Marcia Bates, University of California at Los Angeles; Gary Burnett, Florida State University; Sanda Erdelez, University of Missouri; and Eric Meyers, University of British Columbia. With over 125 researchers participating in this event, the panel was an overwhelming success, the echoes of which will stimulate new ideas in information behavior research.

Inspired by our anniversary year, we undertook several new and exciting innovative projects, including the following:

1. **Academy of SIG/USE Research Fellows.** A first in SIG/USE and in information behavior circles, an academy of SIG/USE research fellows was established to celebrate 10 years of SIG/USE and to recognize the contribution of scholars to information behavior. Marking 10 years of SIG/USE, 10 academics were inducted at ASIS&T 2009. An additional fellow will now be inducted each year.

2. **Special 10th Anniversary Evening Reception.** Marking a departure from the usual evening receptions at ASIS&T, SIG/USE organized a special anniversary reception for ASIS&T 2009. Special thanks are due to SIG/USE member Ruth Vondracek who facilitated the organization of catering for this event, as well as the ASIS&T organizers who helped us organize our birthday cake.

3. **10th Anniversary Poster of Influential Models of Information Behavior.** SIG/USE members proposed 10 of the most influential models in information behavior research for inclusion on a poster, which was then sold as a fundraiser for our SIG.

4. **SIG/USE Presence in Social Computing Venues.** SIG/USE has led the charge in adopting a variety of social media to engage and communicate with our membership.

- **Virtual Discussion via Second Life.** A first at an ASIS&T conference, SIG/USE incorporated Second Life into both our 10th anniversary panel and our Annual SIG/USE Symposium, enabling SIG/USE members who could not physically attend the Annual Meeting to virtually participate in discussion. Allison Bruekner and Diane Nahl were instrumental in helping us extend SIG/USE’s presence virtually.
Twitter. Taking advantage of instant communication with our membership, we tweeted news to our membership. To date, SIG/USE remains the only SIG to tweet to its membership.

Facebook. SIG/USE was an early adopter of Facebook, and membership to our Facebook group grew in 2009.

Flickr. SIG/USE’s space in Flickr was updated, and all members are still encouraged to post their photos there.

SIG/USE website. We rejuvenated our web presence through the SIG/USE website, a main information portal to information about the SIG, awards, events and publications. Tawnya Means, our webmaster, facilitated expansion of our web site and brought together all of our social computing points under one umbrella.

Our various modes of communication were aimed to attract and retain members. To ensure effective communication across social computing venues as well as our SIG/USE discussion list through ASIS&T, Stephanie Willen Brown took on a new role of communications coordinator for SIG/USE and must be commended for her capable work behind the scene in managing overall communication to our membership as well as efficiently tweeting and Facebook-ing everyone.

Having won SIG-of-the-Year in 2008, our 10th anniversary year efforts were rewarded with the SIG-of-the-Year award again in 2010, two sterling outcomes for the hard work of so many members over the past few years.

In addition, our post-anniversary publication, “A Decade of SIG/USE: Celebrating SIG/USE and Information Behavior Research,” a special section in the February/March 2010, edition of the Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology [1], won the SIG Publication-of-the-Year Award in 2010. Editing this publication was a memorable experience and it was a pleasure working with my colleagues who contributed to this reflection on our 10th anniversary events.

My experiences with SIG/USE and ASIS&T have been very rewarding, both on the personal level of working with colleagues and as an academic. I would urge all ASIS&T members to consider participating in one or more SIGs, and I would especially encourage SIG/USE members to become actively involved in annual event planning.

In closing I’d like to thank Diane Sonnenwald, head of school at the UCD School of Information and Library Studies (www.ucd.ie/sils), Julie Hersberger, Stephanie Willen Brown, Gary Burnett, Soo Young Rieh, Lis Davenport, Claire McInerney and everyone in SIG/USE and ASIS&T for their hard work and kind support for my nomination for the James M. Cretsos Leadership Award.

Resources Mentioned in the Article

Adding Value: The Business of Independent Information Professionals, Part III
Making It Work as an IIP

by Crystal Sharp, Guest Editor

ABSTRACT
Independent information professionals not only provide critical information services to clients but, as entrepreneurs, must be attuned to promoting their business. Through a collection of articles, contributors explore how they have expanded their core skills to continually add value for their clients while working to strengthen their own businesses. Members of the Association of Independent Information Professionals (AIIP) describe adding valuable research support through collaboration and teaching, as well as reinforcing customer loyalty and creatively using communications channels to serve clients and expand business.

KEYWORDS
independent information professionals
value added
information services
entrepreneurs
business
information associations

Crystal Sharp, a past president of AIIP, is affiliated with CD Sharp Information Systems, Ltd. (www.cdsharp.com), which offers customized, innovative strategies and 12 years of experience to the development, facilitation and writing of multidisciplinary research grant proposals. She can be reached at crystal<at>cdsharp.com.

This special issue of the Bulletin offers a glimpse into the business of independent information professionals (IIPs). The overall theme is “adding value” because it most aptly describes how IIPs benefit the work of their clients and because, in many ways, it is what IIPs must strive for within their own businesses to ensure relevance and viability in the rapidly changing technological, competitive and information landscape. IIPs possess high-level skills in finding, managing, applying and communicating information, which they leverage in a variety of ways: consulting, writing, research and information management services to clients in a number of fields.

Adding value encompasses more than a focus on the bottom line, as you will see in the articles within this issue. The authors comprise a small sample of AIIP’s (Association of Independent Information Professionals) membership, but as a collection the 21 articles written by 28 authors broadly present through description, experience, case studies and narration the work IIPs do and how they do it. Because of the number of contributions, the section was divided between two issues. The first two of three parts, “Research: Much More Than Search and Retrieval” and “Services: Marketing, New Media, Writing, Consulting and Information Management,” appeared in the October/November 2010 issue of the Bulletin (www.asis.org/Bulletin/Oct-10/index.html). “Making It Work as an IIP” appears in this issue.

Making It Work as an IIP
Like my AIIP colleagues, I am an IIP because I have marketable skills (grant consulting and writing), and I enjoy working with different clients and
having some control over my time. However, we all face challenges in
sometimes having to provide a wider range of research support than we can
offer on our own – in marketing our businesses and in maintaining our
relevance and competitive edge. The articles in this portion of the special
section present some ways in which IIPs negotiate these challenges.

Udo Hohlfield and Marcy Phelps describe their international collaboration
on a project with a tight deadline, offering lessons learned about the essentials
of collaborating across borders. Risa Sacks discusses why, even with ever-
increasing information available online, there are reasons to add primary
research to one’s research mix. Valerie Matarrese’s article provides a glimpse
into how portfolios of European IIP clients and services are adapted to (or
dictated by) the multicultural work environment of Europe, based on one
aspect of the responses to her recent survey of European colleagues in
continental (non-Anglophone) Europe. Amelia Kassel presents practical
suggestions on incorporating teaching and training into a marketing strategy
to add value, not only in monetary terms, but also as a method for building
the reputation of the business. Mary Ellen Bates focuses on the need to
think strategically in building customer loyalty and in adding value to
services a business offers, rather than having the market or circumstances
determine the need for change. Finally, Andrea Carrero offers advice on
using marketing and website communications as strategic tools in bringing
awareness and attracting customers. ■
International Collaboration – Needs, Essentials and Pitfalls
by Marcy Phelps and Udo Hohlfeld

ABSTRACT
The experiences of two information professionals, both members of the Association of Independent Information Professionals, demonstrate the value and effectiveness of international collaboration. One used the organization’s discussion list to seek help from a colleague in Germany for a project researching a business acquired by a German firm. They agreed upon the scope of work, timeframe, delivery format, cost and payment method, and used the difference in time zones to their advantage. Using the AIIP’s framework for subcontracting and partnering, they were able to combine their skills across languages and cultures to generate a high quality product in timely fashion, gaining customer satisfaction while building their own professional networks. They also discovered important points for successful international collaboration and pitfalls to avoid.

KEYWORDS
independent information professionals
 colaboration
 cross cultural aspects
 international aspects

Marcy Phelps Describes Her Problem
As an independent information professional, it’s easy to fall into the Lone Wolf Syndrome. You become so accustomed to working alone that it becomes difficult to let go and trust any part of your work to someone else. The problem is that sometimes clients need something outside my area of expertise. Since it makes little sense to send them elsewhere when these situations arise, I’ve learned to work with several trusted subcontractors that help me provide a wider array of information services.

One of the first projects that I outsourced offers a great example of how easy and productive it can be when you call in an expert. In this case, it helped me uncover information I would not have found otherwise, and it added a much-needed international perspective to the project. This example also highlights the value I continue to receive from my membership in the Association of Independent Information Professionals (AIIP – www.aiip.org).

And, since it was my first experience working with another researcher, I learned several lessons.

Project Background
My client, the head of a creative agency specializing in business-to-business product launches, was in the early stages of a rebranding project. The client was working with a company that had recently been acquired by a German firm. My client asked me to help them develop a presentation for their client by finding the following information:

1. What other companies has the parent firm acquired, and what have they done regarding branding for these companies?
2. What is the perception of these companies and their products, both globally and in the United States?
3. What can be found regarding acquisitions and/or product launches for some of their competitors?

4. What can be found regarding branding after business acquisitions in this industry, as well as other business-to-business industries?
   Specifically:
   - How do they use sub-brands?
   - Are there examples of companies keeping their names after acquisition?
   - How did they use the parent company in the logo?

My client had a short timeline. Ideally, they wanted the research within three business days. After some discussion, we agreed that the project would be completed in two phases. Questions 1 and 2 would be sent within three business days. Questions 3 and 4 could be completed two business days after that.

**Project Strategy**

I first checked English-language sources, including Dialog, Dow Jones Factiva and SkyMinder. Dialog File 551 (TFSD Worldwide Mergers & Acquisitions) provided the information I needed about what companies the parent firm had acquired. SkyMinder had a great company profile that helped round out the data.

It wasn’t long before I realized that this project would not be complete without a search of German-language sources. The big problem was the timing, however. Not only was I facing a short turnaround time for the project, it was now Friday afternoon here in Denver, Colorado. Also, I had no idea where to start. How do I find a qualified researcher on such short notice?

I posted a message to AIIP-L, the AIIP private email discussion list, asking if anyone could recommend a German researcher. It wasn’t long before I had two responses, and both suggested I contact fellow AIIP member Udo Hohlfeld. Udo responded quickly, considering it was Friday night in his time zone, and we quickly came to an agreement regarding the following components of the project:
   - My client’s outstanding questions
   - How much time he would spend on the project

When and how the information would be delivered to me
   - Cost and payment method.

Over the weekend, I sent Udo the information I had already found and a list of my specific questions. He said that he would start first thing Monday morning his time.

**Project Outcome**

Thanks to the time difference, the results of Udo’s research were waiting for me in my inbox when I started work on Monday. He had confirmed what I discovered about the acquisitions. He also found some great information about the acquiring company’s branding strategies and the public perception of the company and its brands. One article, however, was in German, and for it to be useful to me it needed to be translated.

I was able to compile most of the information we found that answered the first two questions and send a report to my client by close of business Monday, per their required timeline. Udo provided the translation of the branding strategy article by Tuesday morning, and I sent my client the update before they arrived in their office.

Over the next two days, I completed the second phase. Since I knew my client would not have the time (or the inclination) to read all the documents we retrieved in the course of the research, I distilled much of the information into an executive summary. I also created charts that would help them visualize and compare the various approaches to branding sub-brands, using Udo’s helpful translations.

My client let me know that his team was very pleased with the research, and he even sent me their presentation. In it, they included the charts I had provided, and they inserted a number of quotes from Udo’s translated articles. He also said that his client was impressed with the thoroughness of their preparation.

I was happy I took the plunge and trusted someone to work with me on this project. From this experience, I found that it’s well worth the effort involved to incorporate into certain projects the sources and the perspectives of researchers from all over the world.
Essentials for Collaboration

I learned several lessons from that first collaboration and continue to learn something new each time I work with other information professionals on client projects:

Plan ahead. I was fortunate that Udo was available on such short notice and his research fit my budget. The time to consider working with subcontractors is when you’re working on the proposal.

Look to trusted sources for referrals. I turned to my AIIP network and found two people who had worked with Udo and recommended him. Make sure you develop your referral network before you need it, though.

Be aware of time differences and how they can affect your deadline. In this particular case, the time difference worked to my benefit. This might not always be the case, so take time differences into consideration when determining a reasonable project timeframe.

Be sure to discuss and put in writing all agreements. Always make sure both parties are familiar with and agree to what information is needed, as well as time, format and budget requirements.

Discuss how and when payment will be made and in what currency. Udo and I used a PayPal merchant account for this international transaction, but there are other options. Make sure both parties agree before starting the project.

Work as a team. Share goals with and get input from your subcontractors, and communicate clearly to avoid duplication. Be sure to provide feedback and discuss results.

Since this project, I have worked with several colleagues throughout the world. Their telephone, language or subject expertise helps me put together a richer and more robust finished product than I could ever provide as a lone wolf.

Project Insights from the Collaboration Partner

As a German competitive intelligence specialist I have long enjoyed the benefits of an international network of information professionals. On a Friday evening a call for help from my fellow AIIP member Marcy Phelps arrived in my inbox. I learned that she needed regional expertise and local language skills as Marcy worked on a project that involved a German company. As Marcy was in a tight timeframe, we agreed that we should exploit the advantage of being in different time zones and that starting early Monday morning central European Time would be sufficient to deliver valid answers to her open questions before the Monday morning deadline Central Mountain Time. Meanwhile Marcy would send me all of her results to avoid double work. The payment question also was easily solved as we decided to use the PayPal service, a simple and relatively secure way to transfer money between different countries and currencies.

Early Monday morning I started working on the open questions making use of specific German language sources. Within three hours I was able to confirm Marcy’s findings and to add important insight into the acquiring company’s marketing and branding strategy. Of course, I offered to translate some of the German sources into English. As I myself was on a tight deadline for another project that I had postponed half a day to support Marcy, the translation could not be done before the following day, Tuesday.

After all, this project starting out in the United States shows how easily the project scope can become international. In such a case the use of partners with special regional and local expertise and language skills adds importantly to project success and client satisfaction. The benefits of this special project are:

- The customer is satisfied with the outcome of the expert research.
- Marcy Phelps could impress her customer with superior results within a tight timeframe.
- AIIP, once more, proved to be of high value to its members.
- I have a new customer (Marcy Phelps).

But an international collaboration process is not always this easy and smooth. Marcy and I were able to operate the way described due to our professional association, which sets a sound framework for subcontracting and partnering among its members. Without such backing from an established, international association many pitfalls can destroy an international collaboration project.

Remember the goal of such a partnership is to connect skills and resources at affordable costs and to enrich the project with access to a broad range of
expertise and local/regional expertise as well as language skills. Partnering can also add to complexity, and complexity has to be managed as many issues may arise. Of course, one enters into a partnership or subcontract with the hope that there will be no issues. In fact, with careful planning, that can be achieved.

**Pitfalls to Avoid**

- **Dealing with different cultures.** Working with partners from other geographic areas means that other cultures and values are involved. Remember to consider this fact in your communication style. Adjust any of your communication so that it will not embarrass your partner.

- **Work ethics.** Values and ethics differ from culture to culture for a good reason. Yet, in the end your work is evaluated by your customer’s standards. So make sure that your partner sticks to your ethical standard of business conduct. Have the partner sign an agreement of ethical business conduct – this can also be part of your subcontractor agreement.

- **Language barrier.** Your partner most likely will communicate with you in your language; yet, s/he is not a native speaker. Make sure that your partner completely understands the task and what is expected from her/him. Have your partner provide you with a task restatement in her/his own words.

- **Skills.** Are you sure your partner has the right skills to support your project? Educational standards, quality standards and general education standards do vary from country to country. Request any appropriate proof of skills to make sure you are talking to the right professional for your task.

- **Intellectual property/copyright.** Make sure that all information you obtain from your partner is in compliance with legal rulings. This topic particularly needs a clear, honest and realistic discussion. Be prepared for the possibility that your partner is bound to more strict rulings than you are in your jurisdiction and educate your customer accordingly.

**Working without written agreements.** Do you know the sender-receiver problem: You say “A,” and the person you talk to understands “B.” These misunderstandings can happen to anyone for various reasons. When communicating with non-native speakers of your mother tongue, miscommunication is particularly a pitfall. Therefore, even under tight deadlines, you should always set up a written contract containing in easy and unambiguous phrasing:

- a thorough description of the task and expected outcomes
- schedule
- delivery terms
- payment terms
- quality standards
- code of ethical business conduct.

- **Ad hoc partnering.** Nowadays, the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies enable many individuals to promote their services and expertise globally. Collaboration across borders is easy from a technological viewpoint; yet, there is no guarantee of a successful collaboration. Avoid ad hoc partnering, unless, as Marcy and I showed, it is among the trusted members of an established association, which requires its members to adhere to standards and professionalism.

This review is as far as the theory goes, but of course in business reality things are not always so clear and easy. You should be prepared for the questions and issues of partnering, no matter whether locally, nationally or internationally.
Collaborating –
Key to Providing Complete Answers Online and Off
by Risa Sacks

ABSTRACT
Collaboration among independent information professionals is a worthwhile strategy for the right research project. Working together can supplement gaps in language, expertise and research skills. There is often a need for primary research, seeking information from original resources rather than online, but an info pro may be unable to pursue them due to confidentiality, impartiality, limited time or other reasons. A colleague skilled in primary research can fill in gaps and hard-to-access details, provide insight on attitudes and opinions, dig for clarification or more current information or even explain why online searching retrieves nothing on a topic. A successful collaboration demands sharing of information gathered and still needed, any limits to be honored and a reasonable timeframe. Organizations such as the Association of Independent Information Professionals provide directories of individuals with specific types of research skills.

KEYWORDS
- collaboration
- consultants
- human information resources
- independent information professionals

Collaboration among independent information professionals is a worthwhile strategy for the right research project. Working together can supplement gaps in language, expertise and research skills. There is often a need for primary research, seeking information from original resources rather than online, but an info pro may be unable to pursue them due to confidentiality, impartiality, limited time or other reasons. A colleague skilled in primary research can fill in gaps and hard-to-access details, provide insight on attitudes and opinions, dig for clarification or more current information or even explain why online searching retrieves nothing on a topic. A successful collaboration demands sharing of information gathered and still needed, any limits to be honored and a reasonable timeframe. Organizations such as the Association of Independent Information Professionals provide directories of individuals with specific types of research skills.

Why Collaborate with a Primary Research Specialist

Working with a wide variety of clients is one of the pleasures of being an independent information professional. One of the absolute joys, however, is getting to collaborate with an array of other talented information professionals. The learning, sharing and synergies allow for more complete information solutions than any of us could provide alone.

There are a number of reasons to collaborate, including needs for language, subject expertise, searching skills or geographic location. One of the most common and, in my view, most critical collaborations is between experts in online searching and those specializing in off-line or primary research. For purposes of this article, we’ll define primary research as involving activities such as finding and interviewing relevant people, digging in archives and finding answers that never made it into the online universe.

We’ll look briefly at why and when to collaborate with a primary researcher, how to find one and keys to successful collaboration.

Risa Sacks, owner of Risa Sacks Information Services (www.risasacks.com), is the author of Super Searchers Go to the Source. She has provided primary research services to companies, research departments and independent information professionals for over 15 years. She can be contacted at risa<at>risasacks.com or 508.852.8686.
Personal preference and/or Skill. Some information professionals would rather have a root canal without anesthesia than suffer through hours on the phone. They can handle 500 complex references without blinking an eye, but would choose not to deal with 500 cranky bureaucrats. For them, a single phone call to a fellow professional removes the pain and provides better results and better use of their time and resources.

Convenience/Not set up to call/Overload. A staff or individual information professional may handle a large number of online inquiries, but not be organized to accommodate the time and concentrated effort that a primary project may entail. Or any information professional may need to unload the overload at times. For them, a virtual staff of primary researchers provides the extra phone capabilities to meet deadlines and provide complete solutions for the clients.

Confidentiality. Sometimes it is critical that the client/company not be identified. The very fact that company XYZ is asking about the feasibility of a new technology or market can, in itself, raise red flags in the field. In these cases, the primary research consultant’s company is asking the questions and providing a shield of confidentiality.

Impartiality. Whether you can identify the client or not, there are advantages to having a third party ask the questions. People will frequently speak more openly to a third party. If I can offer anonymity, they often provide yet more in depth and honest information. Frequently, when collaborating or subcontracting for another independent information professional or research firm, I don’t know who the ultimate client is. I can honestly say “I don’t know whom the information is ultimately for,” and it keeps me from having even unconscious biases that could skew responses and results. In these circumstances, clients get results that may be deeper, broader, more honest and less biased than otherwise possible.

When to Call

The best information professionals have a keen sense of when to add primary research to the mix and collaborate with a primary researcher. One researcher refers to it as “when web-based searching reaches the limits of its usefulness.” Here are some examples of when primary collaboration may help.

The “Too” Rule. The information you need is too wide, specific, new, old, weird or whatever for the online world. “How many stolen rental cars were involved in injury accidents in California from 2000-2006?” “Is this case still alive in the EU court as of today?” “How will this completely new technology play in the marketplace?” “What four manufacturing plants were involved in the 1965 buyout of private company Z?” You’re providing the exact information your client requested, not just what someone else chose to write about – and you look like a genius!

Soft information. How does someone feel about an issue? What are the emotions behind the words? What are the nuances that can never come across on the printed page or even in a video or audio file? What do colleagues/customers/experts really think about an individual or company? What are their intentions going forward? This unique information may provide your clients a competitive edge and a deeper understanding of relevant factors.

Confirming, updating, clarifying. Is this published quote or data correct? Has the situation/information changed since publication? What in the world did this statement mean? How about these conflicting studies? The primary collaboration, by going the extra mile, may provide information that is more accurate, current and unambiguous than online results alone.

Proving a negative. Nothing is showing up online, or nothing definitive. Mary Ellen Bates commented that it is hard to prove a negative online and difficult to know when to stop searching. Talking with the experts can confirm, for example, that the answer to this “is zero” because it is not handled this way or that nothing has been published yet because of a specific restriction in this area.

Ways to Collaborate

Range of Options. Collaborations can range from “I need you to validate and update these few specific facts” to “Here’s what the client needs – get it
“done!” The primary researcher can provide anything from the brief answer to a single question, to write-ups of interviews or bullet points of information, to analysis and synthesis, or writing the complete report in your voice using your templates and desired format. In collaborating, the primary researcher may work, for example, completely independently or directly with the client as a staff member of yours or as part of a larger research team.

**Keys to Successful Primary/Secondary Collaboration.** Some general guidelines that contribute to successful collaboration include the following:

- Give the primary researcher whatever information you have, including secondary research results, relevant contacts and any guidance provided by the client.
- Clearly define what the primary researcher can say, not say and offer such as confidentiality, anonymity or reports to share.
- Allow as long a timeframe as possible – you can’t necessarily reach someone this very minute, and you are limited by normal business hours in the relevant location.

### How to Find Collaborator

**Identify Specific Primary Needs.** Does this project involve competitive intelligence (CI)? In-depth interviews? Specific geographical, language and/or cultural requirements?

**Resources to Find Primary Specialists.** Ask for referrals – personal chemistry as well as skills matter. Search membership directories of professional organizations, including AIIP (search by all the criteria mentioned above); the Strategic and Competitive Intelligence Professionals (CI by category); the Qualitative Research Consultants Association (focus groups and other qualitative research).

**Final Words**

Treat this type of collaboration is an iterative process – primary may turn up new directions for secondary – secondary may provide new leads to call. Whatever the specifics of your collaboration, let the process enrich both your results and your experience as an information professional.
Independent Information Professionals in Europe:
Using Geopolitical and Cultural Boundaries to Advantage

by Valerie Matarese

ABSTRACT
Building and running an information service business in non-Anglophone Europe is complicated by the multicultural environment. This paper analyzes how geopolitical and cultural factors influence the client base and service portfolio of independent information professionals (IIPs), by drawing on data from a survey of 18 entrepreneurs working in 11 countries of continental non-Anglophone Europe. These European IIPs facilitate the exchange of knowledge locally, across Europe and globally, by developing niche services that leverage language skills and local knowledge and that adapt to the impact of currencies.

KEYWORDS
independent information professionals
Europe
English language
non English languages
cross cultural aspects
geopolitical aspects

The independent information profession has roots in the United States, having developed contemporaneously with online databases, Internet and associations serving independent information professionals, such as AIIP. Although AIIP is an international association, more than 75% of its membership is based in the US and just over 5% works in non-Anglophone countries. As an independent information professional (IIP) in Italy, I’ve taken an interest in the role this figure serves in Europe, a geographical mosaic of languages, currencies, laws and cultures. To understand the challenges of running an information service business across Europe, I surveyed my colleagues in continental (non-Anglophone) Europe about business start-up, opportunities for continuing professional development, business focus and marketing. Initial survey results were presented at the 2010 AIIP conference. This paper examines in detail one aspect of the responses, namely how portfolios of clients and services are adapted to (or dictated by) the multicultural work environment of our continent.

The Non-Anglophone Europe IIP Study Group

Considering that the term independent information professional is not widely known in Europe and translates poorly into some languages (a literal translation into Italian defines a freelance journalist), the survey was not limited to self-declared IIPs but was open to any entrepreneur who met AIIP’s definition. Thus, the survey was extended to persons who ‘possess high-level skills in finding, managing, applying and communicating information, . . . pursue their calling with an entrepreneurial spirit ... [and] also consult in a wide range of specialty areas involving the organization and
use of information, such as: document digitization; database development; web and print publishing; library and document management; writing and editing; document delivery; coaching on information research skills; management; and technology training” [1]. This approach allowed inclusion of persons who were not AIIP members as well as some who were unaware that they could be classified as an IIP.

Overall, 18 IIPs responded to a questionnaire followed by discussion. Including myself, the study group comprised 11 AIIP members. Eleven countries were represented, mostly Western European nations (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland) but also former communist states (Bulgaria, Poland). All these countries but Switzerland are in the EU and thus obliged to implement EU directives in national legislation (although how and when this implementation is done varies widely). Only seven of them use the euro, while the others have different currencies, weaker or stronger than the euro. Finally, these countries have altogether 11 official languages, with Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland having more than one, and numerous recognized regional and minority languages. Thus, the study group is representative of professionals who work in the culturally diverse reality of Europe.

Languages and the Role of Language

That IIPs of continental Europe use multiple languages was expected but the responses were enlightening nonetheless. As a group, we use a median of three languages daily: we all work fluently in at least two languages (English and a national language), and as many as five languages are managed by one colleague (this contrasts with some Anglophone IIPs whose declared ability to work in multiple languages requires a multilingual staff). Even in this non-Anglophone setting, English was the first working language for seven interviewees. As Rita Weissenberger commented, “We could not have this business without fluency in English.”

Knowledge of a national language as well as other languages was, in all cases, a determinant of market geography, but the role of language varied. Some colleagues leverage language skills to help local (that is, same-country) clients access international information in English and other languages.

Examples of IIPs serving mostly local clients with international services are Guido Moradei researching patent data, Frédéric de Hemptinne specializing in environmental issues and Veerle Persy, expert in medical information. English fluency is key to helping clients work globally, especially for IIPs active in the sciences where English is lingua franca; a case in point is Brigitte Albers, whose services include the preparation of drug safety reports for regulatory purposes. Other colleagues use their knowledge of local language and economy to serve foreign clients in another language. For example, I offer a service of information research about Italy for non-Italian businesses that use English at work, while Martina Reich serves German-speaking clients interested in Spain. Finally, fluency in some languages allows IIPs to access information about distant markets, as in the case of Teresa Ramirez, whose first language (Portuguese) permits her to use sources from Brazil, Angola and Mozambique. Thus, European IIPs are not limited by language but use it to advantage for international business.

Local Knowledge: Fundamental Aspect of an IIP’s Business Niche

Language is a necessary but not sufficient aspect of local knowledge for an IIP’s business niche. A researcher fluent, say, in Italian who has never lived nor worked in Italy lacks local experience to understand the deeper meaning of Italian information sources. Also, a researcher not inserted into the local context will have difficulty interpreting the needs of local clients. Local knowledge comes from a presence in the community, exposure to issues that impact on the people, connections with business groups and institutions, and insight into the quality and authority of local resources.

Like language, the role of local knowledge in an IIP’s business niche varies. In limiting my research activities to Italy, I have made it my business to be knowledgeable about Italian information sources and to appreciate how governmental bodies and institutions share information; this allows me to gauge if a particular request from abroad can be completed and to advise clients appropriately. Anne Styren has established a vast international network of researchers in order to reap the value of local knowledge for global research.
Currencies and the Direction of International Business Exchange

Introduction of the euro in 2002 simplified doing business within the 16 countries that have now adopted this currency (in 2011 there will be 17 EU states using the euro). Within the euro area, international bank transfers are simple and fast and thus preferred to credit card or online payment systems. Moreover, currency transfer from banks in non-euro European countries or in the United States is straightforward. The knowledge that payments from these countries will actually arrive in one’s bank account makes working with foreign clients worry-free.

The possibility of currency exchange, however, is less market-determining than the exchange rate. When the euro was strong over the dollar, U.S. clients viewed my prices as high, while prospects from third countries, say Brazil, saw them as exorbitant. Particular cases of IIPs whose client base is influenced by currency include Susanne Riz in Switzerland, serving mostly Swiss clients who use the same strong local currency, and Viktor Manev in Bulgaria, who offers an international competitive intelligence (CI) service to Western European and American clients.

Conclusions

The IIP is not a common figure in continental Europe but, as this survey found, information businesses here are established and offer highly qualified, international services adapted to both the local market and requests from beyond borders. European IIPs facilitate the exchange of knowledge among diverse national economies, legal systems and cultures by leveraging language skills and adjusting to the impact of currencies. As Udo Hohlfeld, a CI specialist, observed, “Language is the key to culture, people and trust – particularly important in regard to primary research.” And, I would add, not only to primary research. Languages, local knowledge and specific (international) information skills are fundamental to an IIP’s success in Europe.


Resources Mentioned in the Article

How to Generate Income from Teaching and Training
by Amelia Kassel

ABSTRACT
An effective way for independent information professionals to expand business is through teaching the skills they use. Training opportunities include programs, workshops, courses, podcasts and webinars, offered at venues ranging from local meetings to international conferences. Distance education courses through universities are another potential instructional vehicle. Business organizations may offer a useful starting point with eager audiences seeking targeted material. Networking is important to share information on personal expertise and availability. One needs to balance the time and work involved against reasonable compensation, prospects for business development and personal satisfaction.

KEYWORDS
independent information professionals
business
strategic planning
training
marketing
information and reference skills

Establishing a teaching and training segment of an IIP business is one marketing strategy that serves double-duty as a profit center and also as a method for building your reputation, which is central to success. You can use your expertise and skills to reach potential clients while at the same time building brand name awareness and adding to your revenue stream. Teaching and training opportunities include presentations and workshops for associations, conferences and meetings – or even full-length courses at universities. You can teach courses as adjunct faculty for schools of library and information science or other educational institutions, conduct workshops for continuing education programs and develop customized presentations and workshops for your clients. Many business professionals and knowledge workers are interested in tips for finding information quickly and economically. A workshop with techniques for finding answers to their information needs using the Internet is a popular topic.

Although some IIPs are concerned about giving away their trade secrets, you’d be surprised how giving workshops about what you know educates prospective clients about the services and benefits you bring. Yes, it’s true that some in the audience may leave you out of the loop; others, however, may decide to hire you once they realize the complexities involved in the type of research they require. Still others are so impressed by what you do that they become part of your informal sales team, also called missionary marketers. They send their colleagues your way. The idea is to dovetail teaching and training based on your expertise as a way to leverage and expand your business.

Teaching Formats and Venues
In addition to on-site venues for face-to-face meetings at conferences and on campuses, opportunities abound for online teaching in the form of...
webinars, podcasts and other distance education formats. Distance learning programs can be found in a variety of places:

- The Peterson’s Distance Channel Online Learning Programs website www.petersons.com/distancelearning/code/search.asp?sponsor=
- The ALA Library and Information Studies directory www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=lisdirb&Template=/cfapps/lisdir/index.cfm

As you build a repertoire of topics, consider adapting them to various time slots and formats:

- short speaking engagements and panel discussions (20 minutes to an hour)
- two-hour presentations
- half- and full-day workshops
- two-day seminars
- short courses
- full semesters (as part-time/adjunct faculty)

Word-Of-Mouth

The best opportunities come from word-of-mouth referrals, which is why it’s extremely important to network with colleagues and let them know your strengths, expertise and interests and to develop market literature that incorporates your teaching and training services. Once you build a reputation as an expert, invitations often come your way, which is in line with my philosophy of “getting business to come to me” and based on a book by Paul and Sarah Edwards, Getting Business to Come to You [1].

Getting Started

First, evaluate your skill set. Start by teaching what you know based on your background, education and experiences. Identify business groups, associations and conferences related to your business mission and target market(s). If you are new to teaching, a good starting place is in your local business community. Contact program directors and conference coordinators to investigate opportunities. There are often several if not dozens of business and professional organizations in a local community and thousands of associations in the United States and worldwide.

If you can suggest a topic that’s a good fit for a professional organization, that’s half the battle since providing fresh ideas is helpful to program planners. Explore local college and university opportunities. Many offer short courses geared to the business community. At the national level, it’s common to submit proposals based on conference themes.

Fees

How to price isn’t necessarily easy. In many cases, however, an organization or institution has established fees for workshops or courses. Some conferences use revenue sharing, providing for example 40% or 50% after expenses. In other instances, your fee is negotiable. How much to charge can depend on a variety of factors:

- How much you want to gross and think you’re worth
- What the organization can afford or what they’ve paid other speakers and trainers.

Realities

Teaching comes with challenges. It can take time to overcome fears or cope with unfamiliar situations. Each presentation requires a tremendous effort and yes, it’s a time sink. Workshop preparation can take hours and is daunting in the beginning. Curriculum development for full-semester courses is especially time-consuming and without equal remuneration the first time around. Each time you repeat a course, you’ll make improvements, but it does get easier. Academic institutions require grading, which takes even more of your time. The good news is that, despite the initially long hours for development, you can use the same material again and again by adapting it to different venues or repeating a course either more than once during a year or a number of times year after year. Some of these realities are indeed difficult to fathom and then overcome but also consider some of the important benefits.

Benefits

Apart from longer-range goals of adding a revenue stream while building your reputation and connecting with potential clients, students, other faculty, administrators and staff, another invaluable aspect of teaching is the
satisfaction derived from imparting knowledge to colleagues, peers, clients and a new generation of information and business professionals. A perhaps less tangible benefit is the synergy that develops between student and teacher. Not only do students learn from you but you also constantly learn from your students, which is a building block for expanding your expertise.

Is It Worth It?

That depends. Whether and how much revenue is added to your bottom line is related to your overall personal, business and financial goals and how you decide to divide your time. Building a lucrative teaching and training practice takes time. You must decide whether you have the interest or inclination to invest in what can gradually become a financially and personally rewarding part of your career.

Tips

The following are some tips for adding teaching to your business:

- Develop a list of topics of interest to your target market that also educates them about the services and benefits you provide.
- Start at the local level, if inexperienced, where you can cut your teeth and hone your teaching skills, thus paving the way for regional, national and international opportunities that generate substantial revenue; some workshops can generate thousands of dollars for a half or full day;
- Negotiate an honorarium if possible; while many local speaking engagements are voluntary, it’s good experience to try to negotiate even a small fee and require payment for any expenses. Speaking or teaching may not be immediately financially rewarding, but the goal is to generate new accounts for your research business – if not on the spot, at least down the road.
- Inform colleagues of your specialization: they can serve as word-of-mouth referral sources for your training programs.
- Adapt workshop materials to a variety of situations by reusing or repurposing content. If you update and improve your presentations each time, you’ll maximize profitability.

Summary

As a marketing strategy, teaching and training are ways to increase the number of contacts you make that can lead to word-of-mouth referrals for other segments of your business. Giving presentations and programs at local, regional and annual meetings and gradually adding the longer-format workshops and courses in other venues is one path to success. Escalating the number of workshops you give over time is one way to generate even more revenue from teaching and training, should you decide it’s a good fit for your business plan and personality. Always remember that this is your business and you should enjoy what you do. Words of wisdom: Teach for fun and profit but also for other rewards you find satisfying.

Resources Mentioned in the Article

Think Strategically: Add Value to Your Business
by Mary Ellen Bates

Adding Value: Independent Information Professionals

ABSTRACT
For information professionals seeking to add value to their businesses, adapting to an evolving environment is critical. Identifying what to change starts by evaluating existing services, potential services to add or collaborate with, revenue sources, appealing opportunities and industry prospects. Both small and large projects offer value for information professionals. Smaller projects can fill gaps and smooth the income stream, while larger projects can offer expanded opportunities. One can nurture business opportunities by volunteering services, educating clients on services and capabilities, developing relationships based on confidence and trust and serving as a consultant.

KEYWORDS
business
strategic planning
change
project management
consultants
independent information professionals

Being an independent information pro means never having to endure another performance evaluation from your boss – and no pre-meeting meetings. On the other hand, being independent also means that you have to do your own review and strategic planning session every year, rather than waiting for someone to come along and hand you a raise.

The most important aspect of growing a business is watching for opportunities and new markets. The days of rip-and-ship – when all it took to wow a client was a printout from an online search – are long gone. We have to constantly identify new ways that we can add value to our services and build the loyalty of our clients.

In that spirit, this article will look at how to know when to turn to a new direction, what questions to ask yourself, how to shift your perspective to a more expansive view of what you do for your clients and what to do next.

Warning: Sharp Curves Ahead
I gave a presentation at the 2009 AIIP conference (www.aiip.org) on recognizing and making strategic change. In preparation for the talk, I interviewed a number of long-time info-entrepreneurs about how they recognized the need to change and how they made significant changes in their businesses. Some had expanded their business, a couple had closed their business, others had moved in completely new directions. When I asked them what prompted changes of direction, I consistently heard the same factors. As you read this list, consider if any of these issues apply to you and your business:

Mary Ellen Bates is the owner of Bates Information Services (batesinfo.com), providing strategic business research to business professionals and coaching services to info-entrepreneurs. She can be contacted at mbates<at>batesinfo.com.
“In my field, we constantly have to adapt. The industry changes rapidly, and if you don’t keep up, you’re left in the dust.”

“I wanted to expand my business, which meant that I had to bring in others to my business. Hiring an assistant gave me the energy and focus to go get new business.”

“I needed to diversify my revenue stream; I realized that I am too dependent on providing a single service to a niche market.”

What I found particularly interesting about these reasons for making big changes was that most of the info-entrepreneurs felt that they simply had no choice – they had to adapt to a changing environment or they would be out of business. While that impetus sounds somewhat negative and reactive rather than proactive, in fact it demonstrates a functioning early-warning system.

A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* focused on the problems of near-empty shopping malls. A woman who operated a business out of a kiosk in the mall said, “I’ve made my business here. I don’t want to move to another mall. I want [this] mall to be like it was eight years ago.” While I can sympathize with her longing for the shopping mall to return to its former vitality, choosing not to move to a more economically viable location means that she will likely suffer the same fate as the rest of the mall.

Questions to Ponder

Although we may be reluctant to admit it, many of us only make changes when we have to, because we are unsatisfied – for whatever reason – with the status quo. To speed up your planning process and to prompt new ideas, look for things that you are dissatisfied with or situations that you think you could improve. Here are some of the questions I ask myself every year to help me identify what needs to change.

- What business(es) am I really in? Is there an additional service I could provide that dovetails nicely with my existing services? What business have I wanted to get into this last year?
- Where is most of my revenue coming from? Is that where I want to be making most of my money? Is there something I could productize? Or would that just turn me into a commodity in the eyes of my clients?
- What am I really excited about? What do I look forward to working on? What kind of project is particularly satisfying for me? If what I really love to do won’t support me directly, how can I take that passion and convert it to a revenue-producing effort?
- What are the primary industries that I am known in right now? How strong are those industries? Should I expand to a new market?

Moving to the Next Level

Once you have been in business for a few years, you will begin to sense important – and telling – distinctions between small and large projects. While most people gauge the size of a project by its total budget, I focus more on projects in which I net the most profit. In some situations, that might mean serving more as a project manager and wrangler of researchers than a researcher and analyst. A smaller project that fills up much of my time during a slow period brings a welcome influx of cash when it is most needed, but it is more difficult to make a profit with smaller jobs.

There are a number of ways to cultivate the desirable larger projects, both by expanding your existing clients’ understanding of the range of your services and by reaching out to new client bases. Note that these two steps are not mutually exclusive – you can move up the value chain with your existing clients at the same time you move into other markets or groups of clients.

One of the easiest ways to get larger projects from your clients is simply to ask. Clients may not know the extent of your services (especially once you add in the services you can subcontract to other info-entrepreneurs), so
they would not necessarily think to ask you for in-depth analysis or a summary presentation or primary research.

Build relationships with your clients. They need to have confidence in you before they entrust you with a large project with high stakes. That may mean working with them on a volunteer project for a professional association or getting together with your client every few months, assuming you are in the same city.

Move toward a more consultative role with your clients. Find out if you can provide added value that your client might not have thought of; treat this interaction as a consultation rather than one in which you are just taking a fast-food order from your client.

And finally, listen to your head, your heart and your gut. With all three perspectives, you can find a successful way to grow your business and your skills.
Strategic Communications: Making Your Marketing and Website Content Work for Your Business
by Andrea C. Carrero

ABSTRACT
Effective business marketing communications require that messages be tailored for the audience, reflecting an understanding of the reader’s concerns and motivations. The message must directly address what is most relevant for the audience and inspire further interest in the information services or products offered. It must be written in sharp and concise language and should conclude with a call to action. The basic message can be presented through a variety of media, including brochures and articles, websites and webinars, Twitter messages and training events, and more, always branding the business consistently.

KEYWORDS
business
marketing
communications activities
information content
strategic planning
independent information professionals

Adding Value: Independent Information Professionals

It’s Not about You. That’s the first thing I tell my clients. “It’s not about you – it’s about them.”

It’s amazing how many businesses think that writing a laundry list of capabilities in their marketing materials or on their websites will entice clients to purchase products or services.

Think about it – when was the last time you bought something simply by looking at a laundry list of what it does? Probably not recently, if at all. You need to be convinced that the item offers something you need.

So why should your marketing and website content be any different? Let’s examine some key ingredients you will need to make your marketing and website effective as tools for bringing awareness to your company, which in turn can help to gain clients for your business.

Audience/Perspective
Who are you talking to? You need to understand who you are talking to and what motivates them or, in other words, what their pain points are. If you are targeting corporate CEOs, you likely will want to speak to a higher level of business concern than if, for example, you are pitching business to lower-level managers. The two audiences have quite different perspectives and quite different pain points.

For example, a CEO is not nearly so interested in how something gets done as in how much revenue (directly or indirectly) it brings to the firm. A manager, however, will be more interested in what it takes to get a project done, when it will be completed and how the cost will affect his or her budget. Knowing the demographics of your audience, such as who they are,
how old they are, what they already know and how they will receive your message, will help you to keep the right perspective.

**Message/Relevance/The Hook**

If you don’t have the right message – one that is relevant for the audience you’re addressing – then knowing whom you’re talking to won’t make a difference. Let’s once again look at the idea of pain points. If you are hurt and bleeding from an accident, would you really care that the bandage applied to your wound has see-through plastic straps to adhere to your wound? Or is it more likely that you would care that the wound will be covered with a gauze pad that will protect the wound and help to stop the bleeding? That’s addressing a pain point. We want to know what the product will do that matters for us.

The same applies to providing services to other firms. Your prospects want to know what you can do for them, so your message has to reflect the answers. And if you know their pain points, you can easily frame a message to speak directly to their concerns.

But what’s a hook? A hook is the compelling idea that makes the reader want to learn more about what you do. Generating an emotion is a classic way to hook the reader. You see them all of the time: “Want to generate more income? Become a network marketer and earn cash while sitting on the beach!”

Who doesn’t want or need to earn more income? Of course you’d be interested in learning more – this approach has caused an emotional reaction in you – hooked you – and you want to read on.

**Language**

Language is important, but we’re not talking about English versus French. What we mean here is that the verbiage you use to create your hook and your message needs to relate back to your audience. If you’re trying to capture the attention of a CEO, tugging on his or her heartstrings with flowery language won’t do the job. You need to use crisp, sharp, pointed language that addresses his or her concerns head on. Knowing your demographics on this person helps. After all, CEOs rarely have extra time to sit around and read endless copy. So, you should target his or her pain points with language that mimics how he or she thinks – what’s the end result? Or to phrase this requirement a different way, what’s in it for him or her?

Yet if you’re trying to sell the proverbial ice to an Eskimo, you need language that will be softer and address different concerns. Remember, at the heart of your communication is a message that you’re selling something.

**Call to Action**

Now that you know your audience, what they need to read and what key words and phrases your language needs to use, you have to have a strong call to action. A call to action is that last thing you hear on infomercials on television:

“How to generate more income? Become a network marketer and earn cash while sitting on the beach!”

Who doesn’t want or need to earn more income? Of course you’d be interested in learning more – this approach has caused an emotional reaction in you – hooked you – and you want to read on.

**Media**

The strategic part of communication relates to the media you use to promote your message. Your marketing message needs to reflect the media appropriately – your website, one-sheet, officer bio, blog, Twitter account, LinkedIn profile, tagline, articles, webinars, training, books...any communication you use to promote your business.

Make sure your message is consistent across each of these products so that you’re branding your business appropriately. Once you identify what the campaign needs to be about, then you need to craft a central message that hits the pain points of your prospects and refine that message to fit your media.

For example, you may want to write an article for your newsletter and...
invite your prospects to read that article by signing up for your newsletter. You may take the first few paragraphs of the article and put them on your website as an abstract, inviting readers to sign up for your newsletter in order to read the rest of the article. You may want to tweet (in 140 characters or less) that you’ve written the article and create a shortened URL link to where people can find the article/abstract. Of course, you’ll want to include hashtags to any industry or trade groups so that your tweet gets picked up and possibly re-tweeted. You may want to include a one-liner on the bottom of your email in the signature as to the availability of the article. And so on…

**Conclusion**

It is important to think through all aspects of your marketing communications and the media you are using. You need to speak to the right people, address their needs (not yours) using language familiar to them, have a solid message or hook and a strong call to action in order to attract prospects and win business. And you need to weave a consistent message across all of the media you’re using in order to brand your business. Thinking critically and strategically is crucial to your success and that of your business.
Challenges with Context
by Thom Haller

I recently met with former students at the conclusion of our information architecture/user experience class. Our conversation turned to a real-life project our class had explored – supporting a Federal organization in rethinking its architecture to better support the needs of site visitors.

The project had intrigued us. We faced a “2003, I want my site back” architecture. (The visual presentation seemed awkward and site content was tremendously siloed, creating challenges for individuals trying to accomplish tasks.) But more than that, we faced a challenge with context: the organization experienced internal conflicts about how it wanted to present itself. Some leaders valued their place in history and their work in national security. Others chose to downplay the organization’s role and remain invisible.

As we discussed the difficulties we faced developing a site architecture and good user experience in the face of these conflicts, one student commented, “Understanding context is ultra-important. It will make or break a project.”

I agree. As someone who stepped into the business of information architecture because of my belief that we can make the complex clear, I’ve always framed context as a central element in the structural choices we make.

Our conversation reminded me of five questions I often ask to help students think more deeply about context, focusing on how our content and structure choices differ:

1. When are businesses motivated by the desire to “just get something up there” as opposed to the challenge of enabling people who read content to get their jobs done?
2. When are bosses and organizations motivated by preference (“Let’s develop a cool site”) as opposed to creating an online environment that supports audiences and meets organizational mission?
3. When do organizational goals require a “perfect” site that solves a host of problems as opposed to “progressive success”?
4. When do organizations think of themselves as experts (“the company that wrote the book on repair parts”) as opposed to thinking of themselves as client-focused civil servants (providers of communication products that enable people to make many choices themselves)?
5. When do our own perceptions of document design and construction come from “intuitive models” (as writers, we are gifted with the ability to present information in clever ways which will get the attention of our peers) as opposed to coming from a systematic understanding of our audience and a reliance on feedback models to better understand users?

Following our most recent class experience, I’ll add a new contextual question:

6. How do our content and structure choices differ when our client organization is unsure about how it wants to present itself to its audiences as opposed to those who realize that, without focus, they only present meaningless data that ultimately serves no purpose?

I challenge you to think about context in the products you build. You may be surprised by what you learn.