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Is ASIS&T an international organization? Nominally, no, since the “A” in ASIS&T stands for “American” and its headquarters is in the United States.

But a look at our website suggests a broader outlook and appeal. Under “Coming Events,” you will see an announcement of an ASIS&T sponsored conference in Barcelona in September, the EuroIA Summit. On the home page, SIG/III (Special Interest Group/International Information Issues) announces the sale of raffle tickets to support the International Paper Contest and reports on a recent fundraiser at the Kenyan Embassy. There’s a link to “ASIS&T in *Your Language*,” multilingual brochures describing the Society in 11 different languages – and an invitation to send a query to the Society in any language at all. There are links to international chapters in Europe and Taiwan, with student chapters in Canada and Europe. SIG/III, the European Chapter and the New England Chapter have combined forces to create the International Calendar of Information Science Conferences (<http://icisc.neasist.org>), which lists over 500 conferences in more than 75 countries annually.

In terms of membership, about 22% of ASIS&T’s approximately 3,000 members have addresses from countries outside the United States – 81 countries in all. Many of these countries have only one or two members but others are well represented. As you might expect, Canada is second to the United States in the number of members, but Australia, India, Japan, Taiwan and the United Kingdom each has 20 or more members. Many regions of the world are represented by international liaisons who report on the activities of members and related societies to the ASIS&T board.

On the conference front, we are international in two ways. First, the U.S. conferences that we organize – our Annual Meeting and the Information Architecture Summit – have a substantial non-U.S. presence, 15% for the Annual Meeting and 20% for the IA Summit, with more than 20 countries represented. Second, we serve as sponsors and co-sponsors of a surprising number and range of international conferences. Recent examples include InSCiT2006 in Spain, Libraries in the Digital Age (LIDA) in Croatia, JCDL 2007 in Canada, ICKM in Vienna and a training course in Pakistan.

Two groups have contributed substantially to our growing international presence. The membership committee has worked hard to make ASIS&T better known internationally and to make it easier to join. Caryn Anderson has been an active and innovative contributor to the membership committee (she is currently its chair) and has worked on two major projects – the international conference calendar and the multilingual membership brochures. >

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Another ASIS&T success story is SIG/III. This enthusiastic group (they are the ones screaming “I-I-I” whenever their name is mentioned, usually as the winner of the SIG of the Year Award) has brought international awareness to the forefront. They have not only made international cooperation, communication, networking and debate their goals, they have taken active steps to promote these values. Their fundraising activities support their International Paper Contest, providing travel grants to the Annual Meeting based on an essay competition, and their InfoShare program provides memberships to information professionals in developing countries. Their international reception is one of the highlights of the Annual Meeting, and they also make sure that international issues are well represented in the program. As a group they have found innovative ways to make ASIS&T accessible to information professionals in developing countries, and their fundraising efforts are increasingly creative.

The most recent membership survey, conducted in 2003, elicited some member feedback about ASIS&T’s international role. Among many comments heard are a desire for more chapters around the world, a greater focus on needs of members and potential members in developing countries, an annual meeting or a summit in Europe, even a suggestion that “International” replace “American” in the name of the Society. In the four years since the survey was conducted there has been progress in most of these areas, excluding a name change. A series of actions shows the Society’s increasing concern with international activities. In 2002 a task force on international relations recommended the establishment of an international liaison who would report to the Board about international issues, and Julian Warner was appointed to that position. In the *Bulletin* of December/January 2005, Julian analyzed the value of international members to ASIS&T and of ASIS&T to international members, reflecting that both gained in the area of intellectual diversity. In subsequent years, the role of international liaisons has expanded to include regional representatives: Mei-Mei Wu for Asia, Johannes Britz for Africa and Michel Menou for Latin America and the Caribbean, while Julian Warner represents Europe.

Over the past year, the Board has been working on a five-year plan for ASIS&T, which includes goals related to an increased international presence. At its November 2006 meeting, the Board created an international relations committee with Michel Menou as chair and members from around the world. The committee is charged to “actively seek avenues to increase ASIS&T’s international presence through appropriate initiatives from ASIS&T, participation in international cooperative efforts and collaboration with societies active in the broad field of library and information science” and to liaise with the membership committee on ways to increase international membership and chapters. They are also charged with bringing forward concrete suggestions for international activities on an annual basis.

While we may not think of ourselves as an international society, we do have a demonstrable international presence through our membership and through our activities as a society. Through the efforts of a strong and proactive membership committee, globally engaged members of SIG/III and the newly formed international relations committee, we have the potential to further our goals of an increased international membership in ASIS&T and an increased ASIS&T presence internationally.