



**Thriving
on Diversity:
Information
Opportunities
in a Pluralistic
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ASIS&T Reacts to ALA Accreditation Report

In mid-April the ASIS&T Board of Directors sent a letter to the Office of Accreditation of the American Library Association (ALA) expressing organizational concern regarding a recent report of the ALA Library Education Task Force.

The Board is concerned that the report advocates a regressive narrowing of the curriculum of LIS programs at a time “when the need for information professionals is burgeoning in all areas of human enterprise.” The letter notes that some 30% of LIS graduates do not pursue library jobs, yet the “emphasis on specific competencies will displace content that addresses on-library-related knowledge and skills.” According to the ASIS&T letter, this portion of the report is inconsistent with ALA’s longstanding commitment to diversity and liberal thinking.

Other concerns of the ASIS&T Board are that the requirements for faculty educated in LIS and library-centric curricula undermine the diversity and interdisciplinarity of LIS programs; the changes proposed in the report are prescriptive rather than dynamic; and changes proposed do not consider the interests and perspectives of organizations allied with ALA.

To review the entire letter, visit www.asis.org/news/ALA_COA_response.pdf

MEETING NEWS

5th Annual European Information Architecture Summit

EuroIA, the European version of the highly popular Information Architecture Summits sponsored by ASIS&T, will visit Copenhagen, Denmark, for its fifth meeting, September 25-26. Exploring the theme *Beyond Structure*, EuroIA will focus on the new level that websites have reached.

Any random page can now be accessed by Google. Pages themselves may consist of information from many sources. And even the concept of a “page” is changing. In other words, we’ve moved beyond the traditional site map and into a new era of web development.

Organizers suggest several ways that “structure” can be considered:

- Mash-ups, tagging and emergent structures (e.g., wikis) change the way we conceive site design.
- Semantic technologies become more widespread and bring new possibilities for structuring content and showing relationships in information previously not known.
- The way that design teams are structured, as well as business models and businesses themselves, deeply affects the quality and success of the user experiences created.

Visit the EuroIA website at www.euroia.org/ for updates on meeting plans.

EuroIA follows on the heels of the successful 10th anniversary IA Summit held in Memphis, Tennessee, March 18-22, at the Peabody Hotel. And it precedes the 2009 ASIS&T Annual Meeting, to be held this year November 6-11, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

MEETING NEWS

2009 ASIS&T Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting theme is *Thriving on Diversity – Information Opportunities in a Pluralistic World*. Meeting organizers note that we live in a culture where countries, organizations and individuals have never been so closely linked politically, economically and socially. These linkages are founded on rapid and efficient information transfer and access. Yet we also co-exist in a world that displays its rich cultural diversity and relies upon information sharing to reinforce its plurality. The 2009 Annual Meeting will give participants the opportunity to explore how information research and practice can promote global communication while maintaining diversity.

Keep up with the plans for the 2009 ASIS&T Annual Meeting by checking the website regularly.

Recent ASIS&T Chapter Activities

The Northern Ohio chapter of ASIS&T (NORASIST) featured **Jared Bendis** discussing *Non-Linear Thinking and New Media Literacy* at a recent evening meeting. Bendis, award-winning artist, photographer, filmmaker and teacher from Cleveland, is currently creative director of new media in the Freedman Center of Case Western Reserve University. He specializes in photograph, virtual reality and computer graphics.

The Los Angeles Chapter of ASIS&T (LACASIST) centered its annual workshop around the topic of *Accessibility: Are you Reaching Everyone?* The program focused on the accessibility and usability of websites and web-based products and services. Given the fine line between accessibility and usability in today's realm of information technology, the two terms are often intertwined. Yet fundamentally, *accessibility* refers to the general availability of products and services; the mere availability of an accessible technology does not ensure its usability. Ultimately, when users with disabilities cannot use a product or service – regardless of its accessibility – it becomes a usability issue that should be addressed. Among the scheduled speakers were **Rhea Joyce Rubin**, librarian; **Gerry Hanley**, executive director of MERLOT; **Patrick Burke**, UCLA Disabilities and Computing Program; and **Susan Cullen**, CSUN Accessible Technology Initiative.

Susanne Humphrey Retires

After 43 years at the National Library of Medicine (NLM), longtime ASIS&T member Susanne Humphrey, information scientist in the Lister Hill Center (LHC), retired on January 2, 2009.

Susanne performed research in the area of knowledge-based systems for indexing and retrieval and lead the Journal Descriptor Indexing (JDI) project. The JDI system automatically indexes documents according to a set of Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) descriptors used for indexing journals according to discipline in the list of journals indexed for MEDLINE. Prior to JDI, she developed MedIndEx (medical indexing expert), a knowledge-based, computer-assisted indexing prototype.

Susanne joined NLM in 1965 as a medical literature analyst in the Division of Library Operations (LO). For 15 years she worked under LO in various phases of NLM's MEDLINE indexing and retrieval system (known as MEDLARS in the beginning), including indexing, searching, database management, user training and thesaurus management, the last 10 years in the MeSH section. She joined LHC in 1981.



Susanne Humphrey receives 1988 Best *JASIST* Paper Award.

She has authored numerous publications on her research as well as a textbook, *Databases: A Primer for Retrieving Information by Computer* and has contributed chapters to several books. She received the 1988 Best *JASIST* Paper award for a paper on MedIndEx.

Among Susanne's ASIS&T activities, she was primary founder of the SIG/CR (Classification Research) Workshop, held as a pre-conference at the ASIS&T Annual Meeting; she was primary editor of the first volume of *Proceedings of the SIG/CR Workshop*, which won the Best SIG Publication Award in 1991, and she was 1990 chair of SIG/CR. ■

The International Calendar of Information Science Conferences (<http://icisc.neasist.org/>) is a nonprofit collaboration between the Special Interest Group/International Information Issues (SIG/III) and the European (ASIST/EC) and New England (NEASIST) chapters of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, with the additional support of Haworth Press.