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Good News, Bad News – Or Not

You know the old joke about the good news, followed by the bad news.

All of the announcements in this column are about ASIS&T publications, and you have probably already heard the good news. Now it is time for the not-as-positive news. However, the reality is that, in the long run, it is likely to be good news as well.

The initial good news – truly excellent, very, very good tidings – was last fall's announcement of the new publishing contract with Wiley-Blackwell. That has brought new funds into the Society, as well as making the *Journal* more available to members.

The more difficult publication issue was addressed in an ASIS&T publications retreat last November. At that time members of the Publications Task Force, selected Board members and our publishing consultant got together with representatives of Wiley-Blackwell to discuss what to do about the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology (ARIST)*. We had preceded this with discussions with Information Today, Inc., the current publisher of *ARIST*, which has generously supported a publication with declining sales for a number of years.

I think that most of us present hoped that some way could be found to either keep *ARIST* alive in its present form or at least continue to produce similar chapters in an electronic format. *ARIST* has had a laudable history going back to 1966, and many of us spoke of our emotional attachment to those bound volumes on our shelf. However, after examining the economics of the publication, along with worsening issues surrounding the

soliciting and successful submission of the chapters, we all agreed that a different model needed to be found.

Given that one thing that predicts high impact factors among journals is the presence of review articles in those journals, it seemed like the best alternative was to fold shorter versions of *ARIST* reviews into the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (JASIST)* itself. This not only keeps *ARIST* alive (albeit in a shorter and serial version), it should also help *JASIST* raise its impact factor. The Society's flagship *Journal* faces increasing competition from other publications, and old competitors that are improving.

We realize that the discontinuance, in 2011, of bound *ARIST* volumes will not please some members of the Society. But circumstances have changed a great deal in our field over the 43 years of *ARIST* publication, and maintaining the status quo was simply not wise any longer. *Information Today* will publish the final two volumes over the next 18 months.

Finally, another decision that is somewhat related to the above: *JASIST* will also be discontinuing the Perspectives section. Perspectives, while rigorously edited, were not refereed, and their inclusion in a top-ranked scholarly journal was sometimes criticized. On the positive side, the *Bulletin* is no longer bound by the legal restrictions that limited the size and nature of its articles in the past and frequently carries special sections on similar topics. We hope it will be able to fill some of the gap left by the more formal publication.

The Society would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Perspective's editor, Lois Lunin, for her many years of dedicated service to the Society and its publications. Perspectives issues have been published under her tireless supervision and leadership since 1981, with her final Perspectives to the published this year. The literature of our field is much richer for them. ■