**SPECIAL SECTION**

**International Information Issues and ASIS&T**

9] **Introduction** by Daniel Gelaw Alemneh and Abebe Rorissa, Guest Editors

12] **Interviews with SIG/III Co-founders: Reflections of Toni Carbo and Michel Menou** by Daniel Gelaw Alemneh

17] **Strengthening ASIS&T’s Chapters by Enhancing Communication between Chapters and with SIGs** by Naresh Agarwal

23] **ASIS&T: The Student Perspective** by Catherine Dumas and Abebe Rorissa

28] **We’ve Built It, But Are They Coming? International Participation in ASIS&T Online Educational Offerings** by June M. Abbas and Diane Rasmussen Pennington

32] **Some Points about ASIS&T Global Initiatives** by Diane H. Sonnenwald

35] **MOOCs – International Information and Education Phenomenon?** by Lee Wilson and Anatoliy Gruzd

41] **Indigenous Knowledge in a Post-Apology Era: Steps Toward Healing and Bridge Building** by Jamila Ghaddar and Nadia Caidi

46] **Information Policy: Global Issues and Opportunities for Engagement** by Kristene Unsworth

**FEATURE**

50] **Google, Tear Down this Wall to Exploratory Search!** by Charles Cole
Last year ASIS&T changed its name from the American Society for Information Science and Technology to the Association for Information Science and Technology and established an Asia Pacific chapter. Moreover, the European Chapter was Chapter-of-the-Year, and the Association recently voted to have the 2016 Annual Meeting in Europe. With these and other actions reflect our expanding international interests, this issue is largely dedicated to ASIS&T’s present and past global activities and their frequent sponsor: SIG/III (Special Interest Group/International Information Issues).

Guest editors Daniel Alemneh and Abebe Rorissa from SIG/III have assembled articles that discuss the founding of SIG/III (Alemneh), ASIS&T’s potential role in international information policy (Unsworth) and the Association’s current international activities, which are reviewed by past president Diane Sonnenwald and by Diane Pennington and June Abbas, who have been deeply involved with its online education and outreach. Wilson and Gruzd also discuss international education in information science for the underserved, in this case the potential for using massive open online courses (MOOC), while Ghaddar and Caidi discuss improving library services, especially knowledge organization, for indigenous peoples. Two other articles in the section by Agarwal and by Dumas and Rorissa target ASIS&T’s internal structure, focusing respectively on the function of regional chapters and SIGs and of student chapters.

On the President’s Page Harry Bruce, recently returned from the Council of Scientific Society Presidents (CSSP), discusses the common problems of scientific societies and the solutions that ASIS&T is pursuing.

In our RDAP Review, Jared Lyle, director of curation services at University of Michigan’s Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), discusses their openICPSR program for data self-publishing, now in beta.

Finally, in our feature article, Charles Cole calls upon Google leaders to add features to their system that will support exploratory search, a process that he describes in detail, drawing on his recent book, Information Need: A Theory Connecting Information Search to Knowledge Formation.
I have just returned from a meeting of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents (CSSP) in Washington, DC. CSSP is an association of science leaders from disciplinary research associations encompassing over 1.25 million researchers in over 150 disciplines. The disciplines represented are very diverse, including American Nuclear Society, American Chemical Society, American Psychological Society, American Institute of Physics, Association for Computing Machinery, Geological Society of America and American Association of Physical Anthropologists, just to name a few.

Participants at the conference were treated to several stimulating presentations by scientists who focus upon energy, water, the human genome and the global economy. There were very informative presentations on STEM education and how associations can work more effectively with congressional leaders. We also had the opportunity to attend smaller group discussions on a range of topics including diversity and the challenges facing modern scientific associations. I was intrigued by the similarity of the challenges that face such a broad and diverse range of scientific associations. It seems that we, as scientific association presidents, are all concerned about the engagement and satisfaction of our members. Most associations are mindful of the need to better leverage online technologies to connect with members and to increase the opportunities for all members to engage more fruitfully with the various services and benefits of association membership. Many of the presidents attending the conference were leaders...
of associations that continue to specify that they are *American* by name and yet their membership was beginning to reflect a more international community of scholars and researchers. I was able to share our story of changing our name from the American Society for Information Science and Technology to the Association for Information Science and Technology. A number of scientific associations may follow our lead on this.

We are, of course, working on other challenges that are common to our scientific association colleagues. We are working to gather data on the value that members receive from ASIS&T and additionally the benefits that they would hope to receive. Our membership committee is currently conducting short interviews with a sample of members to ask what value they receive from ASIS&T membership. Members of this committee are also contacting people who have let their memberships drop. It will be important to know why this decision was made and also to understand what might convince a lapsed member to re-join our association. If a member of the membership committee contacts you, please share your views. If you are not contacted but want to participate, please get in touch with Bill Edgar or Heather Pfeiffer.

In terms of increasing the level of engagement of our membership, we are also about to launch a social media initiative, and we will soon be assessing proposals from individuals and companies interested in developing and updating the ASIS&T website. We have invited a number of selected individuals to activate our social media presence and to stimulate discussion across these media. We hope that both initiatives will facilitate increased engagement by our members and the opportunity to participate in stimulating discussion of topics central to our mission.

As I listened to the presentations at CSSP, I was struck again by the importance of information science serving as a metadiscipline that connects the work of other scientific disciplines, fields and subfields. Challenging issues of energy, water, the human genome, the global economy and more will undoubtedly be addressed by a collaboration of disciplines and areas of expertise. The glue that binds these collaborations and makes these partnerships greater than the sum of their individual parts is information science.

Since my last column, my school (the UW iSchool) experienced the loss of a beloved and admired colleague. At every Annual Meeting, we announce the loss of practitioners and scholars in our discipline. The loss of my colleague Professor Eliza Dresang has once again brought into sharp focus for me the impact that information scientists and information professionals have upon our world and our communities. Dr. Dresang was an eminent scholar in the field of children and youth services. She worked directly with children with the aim of making the world a better place. She also worked directly with librarians and information specialists providing services to children. I have in the past weeks received messages from scholars and practitioners from around the world. Their kind words reinforce for me the great privilege we all have to serve our intellectual and professional communities and the impact that information scholars and professionals can have on the world.

So, please keep doing your important work and know that your association, ASIS&T, is here to support you and to promote the activities of information scholars and professionals around the world.

Best wishes for the summer.
77TH ASIS&T ANNUAL MEETING

Connecting Collections, Cultures and Communities

The 77th ASIS&T Annual Meeting is within sight, and the Association will continue its celebration of its recently reaffirmed commitment to an international focus. The conference committee for this year’s gathering is hard at work reviewing the hundreds of submissions it received. By the middle of June, the committee will have selected the papers, panels, workshops and tutorials that will fill the five to seven dozen available pre-conference and technical schedule slots. Within the broad theme of Connecting Collections, Cultures and Communities, the committee will seek the greatest variety among topics that share innovations, ideas, research and insight into the state and future of information and communication.

The 2014 ASIS&T Annual Meeting will be held in Seattle, Washington, October 31-November 4, at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel.

One activity already underway is the solicitation of items for donation to the ASIS&T SIG/III silent auction. As part of its International Reception, the SIG sponsors the silent auction to raise funds for the SIG/III InfoShare project which awards one-year memberships to information professionals in developing countries. For the first time, the SIG will showcase auction items on the SIG/III website in advance of the Annual Meeting. To donate an item, please visit http://goo.gl/vHFCgf to provide a description and image of your items. For more information, contact Catherine Dumas at asistsigiiiauction<at>gmail.com.

ASIS&T to Create New Web Presence

Have you visited the ASIS&T website lately? If so, you have seen a new home page that just tickles the edges of what ASIS&T plans to offer later this year.

Proposals are in hand from website designers interested in helping ASIS&T create a web presence and associated infrastructure that will provide an informative, interactive, engaging, and maintainable presence for ASIS&T members and prospective members for the rest of this decade. The Association issued its call for proposals in early April inviting any experienced designers to come forward with their thoughts and insights. The ASIS&T Web Presence Task Force, chaired by ASIS&T director Diane Rasmussen Pennington, will now review the proposals based on prior experience of the principals, references and qualifications, understanding of the work involved and price.

Constitutional Amendment Passes

ASIS&T members voted overwhelmingly in favor of the amendment to the ASIS&T Constitution reducing the number of days that must be allowed between distribution of electronic ballots to the membership and members’ return of executed ballots. This change makes the constitution symmetrical with the bylaws which were previously amended.
José-Marie Griffiths, former ASIS&T president and vice president for academic affairs, Bryant University, spoke on The Spider and the Web: Can the Information Age Survive Another 25 Years? at the annual networking dinner of the New England Chapter of ASIS&T. In her speech, she explored some of the trends that are straining the interwoven strands of the information universe, from net governance and neutrality to data policy and stewardship to individual privacy.

Also at NEASIS&T, the chapter presented its 2014 Student Travel Award to Regina Pagani, student in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College, for her essay addressing why she wants to attend the 2014 ASIS&T Annual Meeting and how she believes it might further her education and career. Regina will receive up to $750 to help defray costs of attendance at the Annual Meeting in Seattle.
In Memoriam

Gretchen Whitney

Gretchen Whitney, longtime ASIS&T member and retired associate professor at University of Tennessee-Knoxville School of Information Sciences, passed away suddenly in early April. She earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and her doctorate in library science from the University of Michigan. Gretchen is best known for creating the JESSE listserv in 1994, which was the leading discussion group for library and information sciences educators for more than a decade.

Within ASIS&T, Gretchen served on the Board of Directors and in the SIG Cabinet and was a presenter at numerous ASIS&T Annual and Mid-Year Meetings. She also established and managed the email list for SIG/Metrics.

Gretchen taught courses in information environment, Web design and content representation from 1994 until her retirement from the University of Tennessee in Oct. 2009. Prior to coming to UT, she was on the faculty at the University of Arizona. She also worked in special libraries and the information industry.

According to her personal website, Gretchen had branched out from her scholarly pursuits and completed a novel that was to be released this spring.

Gretchen is survived by her sister Kay Whitney Fagundus of Winterville, NC.
In Memoriam

Allen Kent

Allen Kent, a true pioneer in the field of information science, passed away on May 1 at the age of 92. Winner of the 1977 ASIS&T Award of Merit, Kent helped change the world through his pioneering work in computer technology and the development of a system that anticipated the Internet search engine.

Born in Harlem, New York, in 1921, Kent was the son of a tailor. He studied chemistry at City College of New York before serving in the U.S. Air Force during World War II. Following the war, he became an editor of technical manuscripts, which led to a legendary career in information science. Enlisted to participate in a classified project at MIT, he helped develop a system for mechanically encoding key words to help find specific bits of information within large documents, the precursor of today’s Internet search engines. At Western Reserve University, he helped establish the first academic program in the field of mechanized information retrieval, first using cards, then utilizing new reel-to-reel tape technology.

Kent’s 1959 article for Harper’s Magazine, “A Machine That Does Research,” was among the first pieces in the national popular press explaining to Americans how their lives would soon be changed by electronic information technology. In 1963, he founded and became director of the Knowledge Availability Systems Center at the University of Pittsburgh. He was also chair of the interdisciplinary department of information science and head of communications programs. Early in his Pitt tenure, he served as an advisor to the Kennedy White House regarding the creation of a National Information Storage and Retrieval Network. A prolific writer and editor, Kent wrote the Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science, the Encyclopedia of Computer Science and Technology, and the Encyclopedia of Microcomputers.

In addition to this Award of Merit, Kent also won the 1979 ASIS&T award for best book with his co-author Thomas Galvin for The Structure and Governance of Library Networks. If desired, memorial contributions may be made to the Allen Kent Scholarship at Pitt. For more information, contact Marci Carothers (mbc20@pitt.edu).
Introduction: International Information Issues and ASIS&T

by Daniel Gelaw Alemneh and Abebe Rorissa, Guest Editors

We are pleased to bring you this special issue of the Bulletin of the Association of Information Science and Technology, dedicated to international information issues and topics related to ASIS&T’s activities, special interest groups (SIGs), chapters and members. ASIS&T was established in 1937 with the goal of stimulating communications and interactions within the information science community. Despite the evolving focus areas reflecting the range of its members’ academic and professional interests, this goal remains highly relevant and even more pressing in today’s globalized world. ASIS&T is a truly international organization, with members from over 50 countries from around the world. The international nature of ASIS&T has allowed a cross-continental network of information scholars and professionals to develop. This in turn has allowed exchanges on international information issues, challenges and opportunities to take place. A number of ASIS&T presidents, including Harry Bruce, Donald Case, Andrew Dillon and Diane Sonnenwald, and their respective boards of directors, much to their

EDITORS SUMMARY

Since 1937 ASIS&T has promoted sharing within the information science community, a goal made more critical in an expanded, globalized environment. The Association’s increasingly international reach stimulates discussion of global issues and challenges, lays a foundation for future growth and has prompted the development of Special Interest Group/International Information Issues (SIG/III). SIG/III has been active in member recruitment internationally and organizes the International Paper Contest to stimulate research and sharing at a global level. Devoted to international issues, this special section features interviews with SIG cofounders and leaders in information science, a discussion of ASIS&T chapters and SIGs and their role in strengthening the Association, virtual networking activities and past and current organizational initiatives. Massively open online courses (MOOCs) that aid the globalization of education, indigenous perspectives that expand our thinking and the pervasiveness of information policy elements all reinforce the international relevance of the field and the Association.

KEYWORDS

international aspects

globalization

trends

information science

collaboration

Association for Information Science and Technology

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Abebe Rorissa is an associate professor in the College of Computing & Information, University at Albany, SUNY. His involvement with ASIS&T spans over 12 years and includes being a student member, a Bulletin Advisory Board member, a proceedings assistant editor, Bulletin guest editor and chair of SIG/III. He can be reached at arorissa@albany.edu.
credit, worked tirelessly for these interactions to happen. They recognized that ASIS&T’s future growth is partly tied to its internationalization and, accordingly, they set in motion various reforms [1] [2] [3] [4].

In addition to ASIS&T’s efforts and activities as an umbrella professional organization, its special interest groups (SIGs) provide a focal point for members with common interests to interact and share information. SIGs and chapters are where most of ASIS&T’s activities take place. For instance, Special Interest Group/International Information Issues (SIG/III), which is one of the largest of the ASIS&T SIGs, provides a forum for members to explore, share and discuss international information issues as well as ways to address them. What is more, SIGs and chapters are at the forefront of membership recruitment. Programs such as SIG/III’s InfoShare have introduced ASIS&T to numerous information professionals around the world. Through InfoShare, SIG/III has sponsored over 150 annual ASIS&T memberships of individual information professionals and students from more than 30 developing countries (Figure 1). Also, for the past 15 years, SIG/III has organized the International Paper Contest. While there can be up to six winners (each winner receives a two-year individual membership to ASIS&T), the first place winner (who is a citizen of and resides in a developing country) is often fully funded to attend the ASIS&T Annual Meeting. So far, about 400 authors from more than 50 countries have participated in the International Paper Contest. A number of winning papers have also been published in International Information and Library Review. These and similar efforts by other SIGs with international members and/or focus provide a wonderful opportunity to learn from our colleagues in developing countries and to share ideas and experiences.

To highlight some of the activities and provide insight into ASIS&T (including its internationalization), we put together this special issue of the Bulletin. The special issue contains eight great contributions by some of the most active and leading members of the ASIS&T community. The first set of articles highlights the challenges as well as successes that ASIS&T and its wider community have had in the past. In the first of this set, Daniel Alemneh provides a summary of interviews conducted with Toni Carbo and Michel Menou, co-founders of SIG/III along with Tefko Saracevic and countless other pioneers and leading figures of the field. The interviews were originally conducted as part of ASIS&T’s 75th anniversary and the 30th anniversary commemorative publication of SIG/III [5]. Continuing the topic of SIGs, Naresh Agarwal (the current director of the ASIS&T Chapter Assembly) discusses how enhancing communication among the different ASIS&T chapters and SIGs can strengthen the Association. He emphasizes the need to evolve from a platform of information dissemination to one of information creation, contribution and shared participation. Similarly, in a student perspective article, Catherine Dumas and Abebe Rorissa advocate for strengthening ASIS&T’s 43 student chapters and 13 regional chapters, most of which have student members.

In “We’ve Built It, But Are They Coming? International Participation in ASIS&T Online Educational Offerings,” June Abbas and Diane Pennington lead us through our existing virtual networking activities and suggest further conversations to identify mechanisms to foster and enhance ASIS&T’s online presence. In “Some Points about ASIS&T Global Initiatives,” Diane
Sonnenwald (ASIS&T past president) summarizes some of the recent initiatives undertaken by ASIS&T, which are, in many ways, a continuation of past activities and efforts by many members over the years with some new ones added. Among other things, she invites members to propose additional initiatives.

Lee Wilson and Anatoliy Gruzd use their article “MOOCs – International Information and Education Phenomenon?” to show the sudden rise of MOOCs as vehicles for a new age in education wherein anyone, anywhere can have access to free, high quality education. In a slightly different vein, Jamila Gheddar and Nadia Caidi urge us to incorporate indigenous views and values into our knowledge organization and representation approaches in “Indigenous Knowledge in a Post-Apology Era: Steps Toward Healing and Bridge-Building.” Finally, in “Information Policy: Global Issues and Opportunities for Engagement,” Kristene Unsworth challenges us to find an issue in our daily lives that does not potentially have some information policy element, be it an international, ethics, government, education or other information policy issue.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the ASIS&T Bulletin Advisory Board for the opportunity to put together this special issue, and Toni Carbo for her guidance and constant feedback. As the past chairs of SIG/III, we both are particularly delighted that this special issue focuses on international information issues. We would like to thank our contributors and colleagues for such wonderful articles. With individual and institutional members from around the globe, ASIS&T is a truly international society. We echo our contributors in saying that ASIS&T’s initiatives are already global initiatives. Indeed, there is no other place to get the gist of current knowledge, issues and questions regarding information science and technology on a global scale. Let’s get involved and be part of the global phenomena as our association continues to embark on another chapter in its evolution and, of course, progression!

Resources Mentioned in the Article


Interviews with SIG/III Co-founders: Reflections of Toni Carbo and Michel Menou
by Daniel Gelaw Alemneh

Interviews with SIG/III Co-founders: Reflections of Toni Carbo and Michel Menou
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If I have seen farther it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.
—Sir Isaac Newton

As part of the 75th ASIS&T anniversary and the 30th anniversary of Special Interest Group/International Information Issues (SIG/III) in 2012-2013, we interviewed SIG/III co-founders, Toni Carbo and Michel Menou. It is very fitting to open our interview (our "Cofounders Reflections") with Sir Isaac Newton's famous saying.

While it is true that leadership potential is inherent in almost every individual when he or she is born, it is the opportunities provided as people grow and mature that lay the real foundation for development of leadership skills. Taking advantage of these opportunities and learning from their experiences is what makes leaders in almost any field.

These interviews provide a great opportunity to learn from two pioneers in the founding of SIG/III in the early 1980s. Their reflections on a variety of issues, including where we have been, give us insight that will help us all maintain the legacy of SIG/III and make a lasting contribution to ASIS&T and our field.

Toni Carbo’s Reflections

Toni Carbo first became involved in ASIS&T when she entered the master of science program at Drexel in the fall of 1971. Carbo learned about ASIS&T (ASIS at the time) from Belver Griffith and Carl Drott and decided to run for chair of the student chapter.

“I was delighted to be elected and to attend local
chapter meetings and the annual conference,” she says. “Several members, including Tefko Saracevic, Michael Buckland and Stella Keenan, were especially kind and helpful during my years as a student member and over the past decades. There are many other individuals who have helped me tremendously since I first joined, some of whom, sadly, are no longer with us.”

When reflecting on her career, Carbo says that while there are many people she admired and whose work she followed closely, she never really tried to emulate anyone – her education and work experience allowed her exciting and unexpected opportunities to develop a unique career path.

“I think that as the fifth of seven daughters [with no brothers], I have always been encouraged to be independent and carve out my own path,” she adds.

Carbo has traveled extensively outside the United States, primarily for work-related projects and international conferences and workshops; she also lived in the U.K. for three years. “I have been on all continents except for Antarctica, and I plan to get there some day. My favorite city in the world is Paris, and I have been there 21 times,” she says.

Through work and travels, Carbo made many friends and colleagues – all of whom helped her learn about multicultural and diverse information communities. Working on international information ethics and policy projects, information literacy programs and other activities, as well as participating actively in groups like IFLA and the International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID), made Carbo realize how much she did not know and that we all need to expand our perspectives beyond familiar national and cultural boundaries.

“For example, organizing a workshop for UNESCO on indexing and abstracting back in the 1970s, and working with NATO AGARD, the British Library and other groups, helped me realize how much I didn’t know,” she says. “I realized that I was not alone, and I thought that ASIS, my own primary professional association, could expand its programs and activities to help all of us increase our awareness and understanding.”

This perception is what prompted Carbo and the other founders of SIG/III to start the organization.

“Then I did the easy part,” Carbo jokes. “I told my dear friend, Michel Menou, that we really needed to do this, and I suggested that he should start the SIG. He did the hard part and the vast majority of the work. I assisted as much as I could by helping to get others involved and doing some tasks to help with the process.”

Carbo says the broad goals of starting SIG/III were to help all of us expand our awareness and understanding of our increasingly global village and to find ways we could harness information and appropriate technologies to improve the quality of life for people around the world.

But there were more specific objectives, Carbo says:

- Recognize the many contributions of members outside the United States
- Increase international membership
- Conduct programs and develop publications to share information and provide continuous education for all of us
- Build and strengthen networks among information professionals around the world
- Expand ASIS&T programs and activities around the world through chapters, programs and co-sponsorship of meetings and workshops
- Bring in support to help individuals from countries and areas with fewer resources to become members and, if possible, participate in conferences
- Provide opportunities for us to have fun with our international colleagues

When asked what achievements she is most proud of as a founder of SIG/III, Carbo cites her vision in getting Michel to take the lead in starting it. “I am also pleased that I have been able to help SIG/III get selected articles from the International Paper Contest published in the *International Information and Library Review* (IILR), which I edited for many years. This also helped several authors get helpful feedback from reviewers, so they could improve their scholarly work.

“I’m also happy that I have been able to help bring in some outside resources to support our activities, such as the donations from Elsevier and also the contribution provided through my service on the Elsevier Foundation Board,” she adds.

Though Carbo doesn’t think there were any major obstacles to achieving
SIG/III’s goals and objectives, she acknowledges that getting sufficient funding and encouraging more people to get involved with activities are always challenges.

“Working with members, including many fine students, and a good dose of patience and enthusiasm always seem to help in meeting challenges. We have certainly used these as we built the SIG over the years,” she says.

Carbo sees three critical issues facing ASIS&T and SIG/III today: 1) budget restrictions limiting individuals’ abilities to participate more actively in events like the Annual Meeting and SIG activities; 2) increased competition among the many professional organizations with more demands on individuals’ time; and 3) ongoing challenges of getting people to understand what we do and why it is important and valuable.

“Personally, I think that reducing the length of time for our annual conferences was a big mistake. We are trying to cram far too much into too little time, resulting in fewer high-quality programs being accepted, competition among concurrent sessions, and too little time for key networking opportunities. I have heard from many colleagues that taking the time and using the funding to travel to such a short event is very hard to justify. This is especially true for those who have to travel long distances, especially from other continents;” she says.

Carbo’s vision for SIG/III is that it will continue to provide high-quality programs, webinars, sessions and publications to benefit members and the wider global information community and that it will bring in more active members to lead it in the future.

“SIG/III is an extremely valuable asset to ASIS&T and to the global information community, and I expect that it will become even more valuable in the future. I am excited about continuing to do whatever I can to help make this vision a reality,” she says.

In terms of how being active in ASIS&T has helped Carbo in her professional life, she says, “I could write a 10-volume work to respond to this question! To begin with, I have made many outstanding friends around the world with Michel Menou at the top of that list. I have learned so much from all of them, and their energy and enthusiasm have kept me excited about our field and our future;” she says. “I have also had many wonderful and fun experiences with them, including exploring new places, different foods, learning about different cultures and even getting some dancing lessons. The energy and enthusiasm of this amazing community are contagious and invigorating.

“Secondly, I have explored and learned about new technologies, practices, issues, developments, changes, types of knowledge (including traditional knowledge), cultures and traditions. The knowledge, skills and attitudes I have learned have expanded my competencies tremendously.

“Thirdly, I have gained a lot of experience in chairing and serving on different committees and groups, starting with my first responsibility when I became a member, as chair of the Committee on Intersociety Cooperation (CISCO). I learned a lot about many of the other organizations in our field and their different perspectives and experiences. Serving as president and a member of the board provided another very helpful set of experiences in working with society leadership and our wonderful ASIS&T staff. I think there is no question that without my involvement in ASIS&T over the 40-plus years, I never would have had such a successful or fulfilling career – and life – as I have had,” she concludes.

Carbo advises young ASIS&T members to get involved as fully as they can in ASIS&T. “Build your network in part through active participation in ASIS&T and also in other groups within your local area and globally through social networks and other online activities. Travel and explore new places as often as you can. Reach out to others; don’t wait for them to come to you,” she says. “Ask for help – go up to that individual whose work you have admired and introduce yourself. That’s how I first met Tekfo Saracevic. Take risks; don’t take the job for which you are fully qualified, because that’s one you should have had years ago. Have fun – socialize and, if possible, dance!”

Carbo summarizes her top reasons young professionals should become involved in ASIS&T: 1) you will learn a lot and grow in your career; 2) you will expand your horizons and learn about new opportunities, ideas and perspectives; 3) you will meet outstanding leaders in our field, as well as many individuals who are up and coming leaders and others who are just starting out; and 4) you will have fun and make friends.
Responses from Michel Menou

Michel Menou says that publications, especially the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* (ARIST), were the door through which he became involved in ASIS&T.

“I inquired with the executive director if the society were open to foreigners. He said, ‘Yes, of course.’ So I joined. In 1968, I guess,” he remembers.

Menou attended a few Annual and Mid-Year Meetings and was active enough to be selected for the special section on "young information professionals," which appeared in the *Bulletin* and was subject to a special exhibit at an Annual Meeting.

“With the launch of SIG/III, I became even more active, if I may say. That was 1981,” Menou says. “It seems I kept involved. Until last year (2011).”

When asked if there was a particular person throughout his career whom he admired and tried to emulate, Menou responds that there are “so many that mentioning only a few would be unfair to the others.”

“If one practical example is nevertheless to be given, I’d mention Peter Havard-Williams, who led Loughborough and later University of Botswana departments of information studies. Peter always mentioned the *Loughborough connection* as a catalyst in spreading information science across the globe, with due attention to local socio-cultural environments,” Menou says.

“We just wanted to have fun,” Menou joked when asked if there was a specific objective, goal or reason to start SIG/III.

“OK, I'm kidding, but we had fun too, did we not? In the early years, we had for instance, the ‘hectic travel award’ for the colleague having achieved the maximum number of miles, stops and places visited abroad over the year. Not to mention the secret parties in a room of the Annual Meeting hotel,” he says. “On the serious side, if information science is to be a science, it has to be universal, thus based upon observation of what goes on throughout humanity. It can’t rely only on the observation of information use by small groups of yuppies living in major cities of the North, as had been the case for many years. The goal was to facilitate exposure of information activities outside the United States and Canada and to provide a focal point for international concerns.”

His observation that there were almost no contributors to the Annual Meetings from outside North America is what prompted Menou to take a leadership role in founding SIG/III. More generally, he elaborates, there was a need for a hub to connect ASIS&T members to developments in all countries and international colleagues to those taking place in North America.

As one of the founders of SIG/III, Menou says he’s “not proud of anything, because pride is a dangerous sentiment. I am satisfied and happy that the SIG attracted over the years so many talented and dedicated members and officers who keep working hard. I am happy for them that they were so often recognized with the SIG-of-the-Year award,” he says. “Yes, OK, I might be proud of SIG/III when it will celebrate its centennial, because then I won't risk to misbehave, contrary to what I often did.”

Menou says many activities carried out by SIG/III can be regarded as achievements:

- international sessions at the Annual Meeting
- international receptions at the Annual Meeting
- Infoshare program to support international colleagues
- international column in the *Bulletin*, which for many years carried contributions from colleagues outside the ASIS&T community
- International Paper Contest
- reduced membership fees for colleagues in developing nations.

Though there have been many achievements, Menou says there were, and still are, many obstacles:

- Many colleagues outside North America having seen, and still seeing, ASIS&T as an unreachable promised land when they simply don’t know it
- Bureaucratic and financial constraints for paying membership dues and attending meetings in the United States faced by colleagues in many countries
- Marginal interest in international issues among many ASIS&T members, which was natural but has steadily changed.
“How do we overcome them? Hard work, patience, continuity and support from countless good people,” Menou says. He adds a special salute to Jan Krcmar who “invented” the SIG/III auction, through which the SIG has been able over the years to fund its outreach activities.

“Information science emerged as a response to the recognition of the vital role of information in human activities and the need to organize its control and access in front of the information explosion,” Menou says. “Thanks, if I may say, to the spread and rapid change in information technologies, the chaos which we face now is far greater than it was then.”

Yet, Menou says, there is still lack of a clear definition of the scope and boundaries of the field, which he thinks is one of the most critical issues facing ASIS&T and SIG/III today. “Today, any particular object or activity is turned into an i-science of some denomination. The common core is to be rebuilt,” he adds.

As far as his vision for SIG/III, Menou says, “If and when ASIS&T becomes a true international society, it should disappear.” Until then, it should pursue its course.

“It should probably try and make more extensive use of available technologies to offer more opportunities for international interaction. For instance, I'd welcome regular webinars which would allow for discussing key issues in information provision from a cross-cultural perspective,” he says.

Menou says being active in ASIS&T was valuable to him in his professional life because it gave him the opportunity to help many colleagues from different countries take advantage of the fine connections he enjoyed within ASIS&T.

He advises young ASIS&T members to cultivate critical thinking and not to dwell on a career, but instead concentrate on doing the best they can in a responsible way. He says young professionals should become involved in ASIS&T because “there is no other place to get the gist of current knowledge and questions regarding information as the lubricant and energy in the growth of human knowledge.”

“You will gain visibility and be connected to the finest people in the field,” he adds.

(Note: The full video interview with Michel Menou available at http://tinyurl.com/lyvfew2). ■
Strengthening ASIS&T’s Chapters by Enhancing Communication between Chapters and with SIGs
by Naresh Agarwal

EDITOR’S SUMMARY
While the ASIS&T Annual Meeting is an excellent opportunity for information professionals to gather, the special interest groups (SIGs) and chapters support interaction year-round. SIGs bring together members focusing on 21 areas of interest, while 20 chapters are organized by region, with 43 university-based student chapters. Each group operates under a governance committee or assembly, works through the year to deliver stimulating educational programs, projects and services and to recruit and retain members, and submits annual reports on their efforts. A shared challenge rises from a tendency toward one-way communication to members from the Association, chapters or SIGs, an obstacle that can be overcome through deeper use of the ASIS&T’s rich web content for members and involvement in chapter and SIG leadership. A number of resources are available to group officers to support SIG and chapter initiatives and administration. Sharing best practices though reports, awards and virtual meetings strengthens all groups and the Association as a whole.

KEYWORDS
information associations communication channels
meetings management
leadership governance
students engagement
organizational communication Association for Information Science and Technology

The ASIS&T Annual Meeting [1] is a premier conference that brings together information professionals from North America and across the world. Many of the members have been coming to the Annual Meeting each year – some for more than four decades. It is such a wonderful community that when you come once, you want to keep coming. However, the meeting is not the only way for ASIS&T members to interact. They have two other avenues to make a difference and get involved throughout the year – the SIGs and the chapters.

What Are SIGs and Chapters?
SIGs [2] are special interest groups that focus on subject areas of interest in information science, such as education for information science, classification research, digital libraries, health informatics, information needs, seeking and use and knowledge management. Each of the 21 SIGs has its own set of officers and organizes webinars, panels, symposiums and other events during the year to engage its community. ASIS&T members choose one SIG with their membership, but can be involved in multiple SIGs.

While the SIGs focus on areas of interest, chapters focus on geographical communities. There are two types of chapters – student chapters [3] and regional chapters [4]. Larger in number (there are 43 student chapters), the student chapters are housed in colleges and universities, largely in North America, but with a chapter each in Europe and at Taipei University. The regional chapters cater to professionals in geographical regions and cover areas across the United States and Canada. Reflecting the growing international nature and the name change of ASIS&T from American Society for Information Science & Technology to Association for Information Science & Technology, a recent Asia Pacific chapter was started, to join
with the already active European and Taipei chapters. There are 20 regional chapters, 15 of which are currently active. Like the SIGs, both the student and regional chapters elect their own officers, hold membership drives and organize activities through the year. Unlike the SIGs, whose activities find an important place at the Annual Meeting (but can also continue during the year), the chapters organize their events and activities largely independently of the Annual Meeting and in their local campuses or regions.

**Governance of SIGs and Chapters.** The SIGs are overseen by a SIG Cabinet Steering Committee [2], which consists of the SIG Cabinet Director, the Deputy SIG Cabinet Director and a set of advisors. The chapters are overseen by the Chapter Assembly [5], which consists of the Assembly Director, the Deputy Assembly Director, the Immediate Past Assembly Director, a representative (or alternate) from each regional chapter and one assembly representative (or alternate) for all student chapters combined. The Chapter Assembly is advised by the Chapter Assembly Advisory Committee. The SIG Cabinet and the Chapter Assembly meet each year during the Annual Meeting.

**Annual Reports and Awards.** At a date before the Annual Meeting, each SIG is expected to submit a report [6] to the SIG Cabinet highlighting the efforts that the SIG has made in recruiting or retaining members, sponsoring and organizing programs to engage members either at the Annual Meeting or during the year, and creating publications and newsletters to reach out to members. In these reports, the SIGs can indicate if they want to be considered for the SIG-of-the-Year Award, which is decided by a jury. Similarly, the regional chapters are expected to submit an annual report [7] to the Chapter Assembly, highlighting efforts the chapter made to recruit new members, foster member participation in the chapter, retain current members and to follow-up with members who did not renew their ASIS&T memberships. The report also contains the meetings, projects and services organized by the chapter and the efforts made by the chapter to communicate with its members. The Chapter-of-the-Year Award is decided by a jury. Similarly, the student chapters report on their efforts in membership, activities/programming and communication areas through the year and are considered for Student Chapter-of-the-Year [8].

**So, What Are the Difficulties?**

In an association as wonderfully connected as ASIS&T is, the difficulties largely arise from lack of communication – not having the right information at the right time (at a time of need), not knowing whom to contact and when the information is there, not knowing how to act on it. While there are various channels of communications, ranging from physical meetings [1] to webinars [9], newsletters, listservs [10] and Facebook groups, the communication is largely one-way dissemination from the association to members or from a SIG or chapter to its members, as opposed to two-way and multi-way interaction. The forum at which multi-way interaction is most visible and thriving is at the Annual Meeting, followed by mostly one-way dissemination of information during the year. An individual ASIS&T member or officer in a SIG or chapter is often not able to comprehend how all the pieces fit together. It is only when a member is continuously involved in the activities of the Association for a few years that the pieces start to fall together, and you finally have more answers than questions.

The following are a few among various useful things that individual ASIS&T members should know:

- Apart from a subsidized cost of attending the Annual Meeting or participating in webinars, you are not making full use of your membership if you are not logging on to the members only area [11] of the ASIS&T website. This area allows access to the ASIS&T digital library/JASIST and to recorded webinars on many timely issues in information science and technology pertinent to one’s professional development. You can also search for and connect with other ASIS&T members based on particular SIGs, chapters or areas of expertise.

- If you’ve forgotten how to log in [12], the default for your user id is simply the first letter of your name, followed by last name. For example, the user id of John Doyle would be jdoyle. If your name includes a middle name, for example, John Robert Doyle, your user id would be jrdoyle. The password is your six-digit ASIS&T membership number. However, you can change either of these once you log in.
A member can easily get involved [13] as a SIG or chapter officer (you can write to the chair of any SIG [2], go to the SIG planning meetings held at the Annual Meetings or contact a chapter chair, officer [4] or advisor [3]). Your involvement can pave the way for professional engagement and years of fruitful relationships. Often, the roles include that of chair, chair elect, secretary/treasurer, communications officer and so forth.

**Difficulties Faced by SIG or Chapter Officers.** Once a member is elected an officer in a SIG or chapter, the degree to which s/he is aware of the duties and responsibilities depends on whether and how much information has been passed on from the outgoing chair. Some officers do a good job of passing the baton, but, at times, owing to a variety of factors or timing, this transfer falls through the cracks.

Each year a small number of SIGs and chapters submit their annual reports and may opt to be considered for the SIG/Chapter/Student Chapter-of-the-Year Awards. Generally, the SIGs or chapters that do well continue to do well each year, while others often struggle in various ways – ranging from filling officer positions to getting new members to organizing activities. Five of the 20 regional chapters are in need of revitalization. And while the major awards receive nominations and are given out during the awards luncheon at the Annual Meeting, there are often no nominations for the other awards for regional chapters such as publication, event, innovation and member.

Active chapters may also face difficulty contacting their members due to the tedious process of obtaining membership data, which they receive in spreadsheets that may not always be clean or up-to-date or have clear demarcation about status of membership. If an officer wants to reach all his/her members, then s/he has to manually copy and paste member email addresses in order to create a mailing list with which to reach members. Individual officers are not always clear on the management of mailing lists.

The following are a few among various useful things that SIG or chapter officers should know:

- The ASIS&T website [14] and the resources and documents listed under the respective pages for SIGs [2], regional [4] and student chapters [3] are a very useful source of information.
- There are few key people one can contact for questions and advice related to
  - SIGs – SIG Cabinet Director or Deputy Director [2];
  - Regional and Student Chapters – Chapter Assembly Director or Deputy Director [5];
  - Student Chapters – Student Chapter Representative or Alternative Representative [3]
  - anything one is unsure of – the Executive Director [15].
- The ASIS&T bylaws are a must-read and contain the answers to most questions one might have about the workings of the Association. For the latest copy of the bylaws, look on the ASIS&T website under About ASIS&T/Mission & Vision.
- An incoming chair of a SIG/chapter needs to be aware of the format of the group’s annual report [6],[7],[8] at the start of the year to be prepared when the time comes to submit. Juries use the report when deciding the awards for the SIG/Chapter/Student-Chapter-of-the-Year. An awareness of the annual report and judging criteria can be very helpful in planning SIG or chapter initiatives for the year.
- There are funds that SIGs [16] and chapters [17] can apply for.
- A SIG or chapter cannot achieve much if its officers do not supplement asynchronous means of communication (email) with regular synchronous communication (online meetings or conference calls between SIG officers) and face-to-face or online meetings between chapter leaders and advisors. This interaction helps establish common context and helps set deadlines for individual accountability.
- Webinars are easy to set up with a quick email and write-up to ASIS&T headquarters [15], and they make for excellent programming.

**How Can Chapters and SIGs Be Strengthened?**

Chapters and SIGs can be strengthened by enhancing communication among the SIGs, among the regional chapters and among student chapters, as well as between regional and student chapters and between SIGs and chapters. It is only when communication is decentralized and moves to interaction rather than dissemination that the true potential of ASIS&T and
its members can be realized. It requires implementation of knowledge management approaches (see Agarwal & Islam [18]) in the working of the Association, its chapters and SIGs. These approaches are crucial for knowledge retention, sharing and transfer between outgoing and incoming officers. The Chapter Assembly has embarked on a number of approaches to enhance greater collaboration and knowledge sharing within and among chapters, SIGs and other bodies.

**Rewarding Collaboration.** The Chapter Assembly at the 2012 Annual Meeting voted to modify the judging criteria for student and regional Chapter-of-the-Year awards to allocate five points for collaboration with a SIG, chapter or other body within or outside ASIS&T. For the student chapter award, these points would be taken from the 40 points allocated for chapter activities. Suggestions for collaboration could include inviting regional professionals to keynote events, co-branding events with other library organizations or having regional chapter leaders mentor student chapters and provide additional resources for programs. The SIG Cabinet could similarly vote in and change its annual report to build in an expectation of collaboration with other SIGs or with chapters.

**Making It Easy to Contact Chapter Leaders.** The Chapter Assembly recently voted to create an opt-out (instead of opt-in) to the various lists for leaders. Regional chapter officers are added to chapters-l@asis.org and student chapter officers to students-l@mail.asis.org.

To make it easier for chapter officers to update/find current contact details of officers in other student or regional chapters, a shared spreadsheet was created [19], and chapters are encouraged to populate it with the name, designation and email of current officers. The officer contacts updated by chapters were also added to the chapters-l mailing list (based on the opt-out mechanism discussed above).

Regular communication with the chapters using the listservs includes informing chapters about the names and contact details of the Chapter Assembly Advisory Committee [5], Chapter Awards, Chapter Funds [17] and deadlines for annual reports [7], [8].

**Sharing Best Practices and LessonsLearned among Chapters.** The Chapter Assembly decided to make all student and regional chapter annual reports public [20] (instead of them being viewed only by the jury), but only after the jury has decided on the award. A chapter submitting a report will have an opt-out option in the submission form if it doesn’t want the report to be made public or can contact the Chapter Assembly Director or Student Chapter Representative [5]. The idea is to share examples of best practices and to provide inspiration to other chapters. The reports serve to document best practices and lessons learned in three areas: 1) gaining and retaining members, 2) communication mechanisms and 3) ideas for events and activities.

**Increasing Interaction through Virtual Synchronous Meetings.** Regular (monthly or bi-monthly) online meetings of the Chapter Assembly Advisory Committee [5] have been instituted and are held using Skype or GoToMeeting. These meetings are helpful in establishing a common context in the work of the Chapter Assembly. Rather than just meeting once a year at the Annual Meeting, the Chapter Assembly has decided to hold quarterly online meetings of regional and student chapter leaders. The first virtual meeting/webinar of regional and student chapter leaders was held February 25, 2014. Collaboration and sharing of best practices was an important theme in the virtual meeting, with these questions raised to chapter leaders:

- Which student chapters are currently working with regional chapters?
- What was one recent successful program that the chapter organized and the lessons learned from holding the event?

The meeting was recorded [21] and made available for the chapter leaders or advisers who could not attend.

**Grouping Regional and Student Chapters for Greater Synergy.** Within ASIS&T, the term chapter means regional chapters, as evidenced by the Chapter-of-the-Year Award. Student chapters are referred to separately. At the 2013 Annual Meeting, Chapter Assembly discussed the role of student versus regional chapters – particularly in light of the fact that some regions with no chapters often had active student chapters. Others have active regional and student chapters where collaboration is encouraged. The
Assembly decided that it is important to harness the energy in the student chapters to help grow regional chapters. Rather than looking at regional and student chapters as separate entities, an attempt was made to color-code/group both regional and student chapters by geographical region for possible collaboration [19]. Both types of chapters could be strengthened if they support and collaborate with each other, as well as with SIGs. This relationship could be further strengthened if there is a representative from the student chapter in the local regional chapter’s leadership and vice versa.

The Chapter Assembly also discussed the need to reexamine its configuration that gives each regional chapter one vote at the Chapter Assembly, and all student chapters one combined vote. The Assembly will explore this further and, at the least, consider giving voice to those student chapters without regional chapter representation.

Creating Shared Collaborative Spaces/Enhancing Knowledge Retention across Years. A common Wiki for SIGs and chapters [22] provides a space that leaders of the Chapter Assembly and the SIG Cabinet can easily edit and keep current with useful information/links. Individual chapters are encouraged to collaboratively edit the Wiki and use their personal spaces [23] to transfer knowledge to future officers and share working documents, email drafts, links to Dropbox folders and other resources with other officers, chapters or SIGs.

Each SIG and chapter should think about issues of continuity and establish a mechanism whereby outgoing officers fill out forms with two columns to be passed on to new officers:

1) best practices (things that went well, and that new officers would benefit from continuing) and
2) lessons learned (things that didn’t go well and that would benefit from change).

This information can be kept in the Wiki space for individual chapters. Apart from the Wiki, a shared cloud space solution could also be implemented for SIGs and chapters to share the documents they create.

Simplifying/Providing Support with Annual Reports. Chapters are encouraged to get started on annual reports early rather than waiting for the end of the year. A space was created in the Wiki for chapters to indicate their plans for the year on membership, communication and events [24]. Once the annual report forms are simplified, the report writing could be integrated within the Wiki itself.

The report template (for both student and regional chapters) can be modified to address

1) rewarding collaboration (discussed above),
2) integrating the application for other regional chapter awards within the report itself, rather than requiring separate applications,
3) adding fields with plans for membership, communication and events that can be filled out at the beginning of the year (with what was accomplished filled at the end of the year) and
4) simplifying as much as possible.

In the first virtual meeting of regional and student chapter leaders, volunteers were sought, so chapters could share ownership of this process.

Orienting New Chapter Leaders. An orientation mechanism needs to be built for new chapter leaders (to provide support as they join). This orientation could be integrated with the first quarterly virtual meeting right after the Annual Meeting.

The Chapter Assembly has begun work on updating the Chapter Officers Manual [25]. A Wiki or Google-docs based mechanism could be adopted whereby the manual for new officers could be easily updated and kept current.

Increasing Chapter Presence at the Annual Meeting. While SIGs are actively involved and represented at the Annual Meeting, the only activity involving chapters is the Chapter Assembly Meeting (along with a traditional secret student party organized by the Student Chapter Representatives for the Chapter Assembly).

At the 2013 Annual Meeting, chapters were represented for the first time at the New Members’ Brunch, where the Chapter Assembly Director and the Student Chapter Representative spoke. The presence of chapters can be enhanced in the Welcome Reception.
Making It Easier for Chapters to Contact Their Members. An opt-out mailing system can be implemented for regional chapters (and possibly also for student chapters). The system needs to ensure that members are automatically added to chapter mailing lists, with an option to opt out, and that the mailing lists are kept current. When someone joins ASIS&T and selects a regional chapter, s/he should automatically be added to the mailing list created for that chapter. This addition should be done retroactively for old and ongoing members, thus for every ASIS&T member. A complete and up-to-date list would make it easier for all chapters to reach out to their members.

Reviving Chapters and Starting New Chapters. A mechanism needs to be adopted to revive the defunct regional chapters or to convert them into virtual chapters. Building on the model of the newly created Asia Pacific Chapter, new chapters could be created in Africa, Middle East, India, China and other regions. A phased plan for this expansion needs to be worked out.

Other Ways of Sharing Best Practices. Along with the Annual Meeting and the quarterly synchronous meetings of chapter leaders, chapter officers can brainstorm other ways of sharing best practices, including the Wiki, Dropbox, Google Drive or other cloud-based spaces, listservs, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, blogs, YouTube videos and Google hangouts.

With its name change, plans to hold Annual Meetings outside North America and creation of an Asia Pacific Chapter, ASIS&T is now a truly international organization reflecting membership of individuals from more than 50 countries. We have begun the process of redesigning our website and using social media for outreach and member engagement. Our hope is that ASIS&T and its SIGs and chapters will evolve from a platform of information dissemination to one of information creation and contribution and of shared participation.
ASIS&T: The Student Perspective
by Catherine Dumas and Abebe Rorissa

EDITOR'S SUMMARY
An engaged student membership is a key source of strength and vitality for a professional organization like ASIS&T. With 43 student chapters around the world, ASIS&T has a good foundation of student support; having an active chapter at each university with studies in information science would further strengthen the Association. An early 2014 survey elicited responses from 38 current or past students, 28 of whom had a local ASIS&T student chapter with 23 being members. Just over half had attended an ASIS&T Annual Meeting. Respondents noted the value of networking within the Association and special interest groups and the assistance available for career and research goals. They also observed drawbacks including the cost of Annual Meeting attendance and feeling lost at the large conference. Students are drawn by the opportunities for involvement and networking. Among the numerous suggestions offered to strengthen and enrich the student experience were leadership training, practical skill development and improved communications.

KEYWORDS
information associations leadership
students organizational communication
engagement social networking
career development Association for Information Science and Technology

A professional organization is only as good as the level of involvement and engagement of its members. The more involved and engaged an organization’s student members are, the more promising its future – student members not only give the organization youthful energy and vitality, they are ideal potential professional members. After all, most, if not all, of the members of ASIS&T’s Board of Directors and even presidents (for example, Sam Hastings [1]) started as student members.

In terms of its student membership and their activities, the Association for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T) is well served. ASIS&T has 43 student chapters (and 13 regional chapters, most of which have student members) in the United States and Canada, one European student chapter and a Taipei Chapter (www.asist.org/wiki/chapters-sigs/index.php/Main_Page). This data shows ASIS&T possesses a solid foundation for achieving the ideal situation where a student chapter, with both undergraduate and graduate student members, is active in each college or university that has a library and information science or informatics program of study. Closing further on that ideal would provide more opportunities for student chapters to help introduce ASIS&T to students and to serve as avenues for recruiting new members.

Transition and Responsiveness
In the last issue of the Bulletin, 2014 president Harry Bruce rightly said that ASIS&T is both a member-driven association and a member-responsive one [2]. He specifically tasked ASIS&T’s Membership Committee to find ways to boost the number of students who transition to being professional or academic members.

In order to gauge how responsive ASIS&T is to its members, especially student members, and in an effort to capture a glimpse of the student’s perspective of ASIS&T, we conducted a cross-sectional survey at the
beginning of this year. We distributed a call for participation in the survey to the various ASIS&T listservs. Our survey questionnaire consisted of questions designed to elicit responses from current or past students regarding their involvement in student chapters, ASIS&T Annual Meeting attendance, SIG memberships and overall experience with ASIS&T. In this article, we report a portion of the responses we received. A more in-depth report is forthcoming.

After the initial call and an additional round of reminders were sent to the listservs, we received a total of 38 responses from a diverse group of students. About 74% of the respondents were from colleges or universities featuring student chapters of ASIS&T. A majority of these respondents (61%) are members of the student chapters. Of those whose institutions have an ASIS&T student chapter, 82% indicated that they are members. Figure 1 shows the distribution of our respondents with respect to their student chapter membership.

Of the 38 respondents, a little more than half (53%) have attended an ASIS&T Annual Meeting. Some of the respondents cited the high cost of going to the Annual Meetings as a major factor for not attending multiple meetings. Their main suggestion was the creation of more opportunities for students to be funded to attend Annual Meetings. (The respondents showed little awareness of ASIS&T’s volunteer program, which allows students to get Annual Meeting fees waived.)

Of those respondents who attended an ASIS&T Annual Meeting, several reported positive and negative experiences and offered suggestions. In order to further parse the responses, we categorized them into four main themes: positive experiences, negative experiences, factors drawing student members to ASIS&T and suggestions to ASIS&T leadership.

**Positive Experiences**

**Networking and Being Part of a Community.** Networking is a major draw for being involved in a professional organization like ASIS&T. In the responses, networking with professors and researchers of all backgrounds and from all over the world was frequently listed as a positive experience of attending an Annual Meeting. Several students commented on being able to meet the major scholars in the field of information science and feeling a sense of community. These were among the responses:

- “Getting to meet with renowned faculty members that I have been reading their papers and interacting with them.”
- “Attending the international [reception] and having fun while exchanging ideas with fellow information scientists from around the globe is an enriching experience.”
- “Everyone I met was incredibly helpful and willing to answer further questions by email after the conference – PhDs and professionals alike.”
- “Meeting great people and feeling part of something larger.”
- “It was a great opportunity to network with interesting people with whom I am still in touch.”

As the first author of this article reflects on her experience as a student attending the Annual Meetings, she can attest to feeling a part of something larger and being connected to people in her field. She remembers presenting at the poster session at her second Annual Meeting when Dania Bilal and Jim Jansen walked by and asked her about her research. She had read their work and was delighted when they introduced themselves. They were approachable and showed genuine interest in her study. Over the years, she has experienced a number of similar instances. As a student, it means a great deal to interact with well-known scholars in the field. Students greatly appreciate such accessibility.

**The Value of ASIS&T SIGs.** Special interest groups (SIGs) are a vital part of ASIS&T. Among our respondents, interest in SIGs was high – 74% indicated that they belong to an ASIS&T SIG. SIGs are often introduced to new attendees at the Annual Meeting’s new members reception, giving them an opportunity to find a sub-community within ASIS&T that aligns with their interests. SIGs also provide an avenue for new members to become
actively involved in ASIS&T. One respondent who attended an ASIS&T Annual Meeting said, “[I] learned about the SIGs and the focus of each, including being able to ask many SIG folks questions about the work they do as part of the SIG and professionally.”

Other positive comments on the SIGs focused on students’ experiences:
- “SIG/DL’s student session provided a great opportunity to present our work for those of us who study at the master’s level.”
- “Very difficult for master’s students to get work accepted at this conference. SIGs do a better job via workshops supporting students.”

**ASIS&T Helping Career and Research Goals.** Almost three quarters (71%) of the respondents believe that ASIS&T is helping them in their career and research goals. Respondents talked about how belonging to the organization and attending an Annual Meeting had a direct influence on their future and research ideas. These are among the comments relating to career and research goals:
- “After being undecided about whether I wanted to pursue a PhD, I was able to speak with many PhD candidates and attend sessions at which they shared their research; I came away with a clearer vision of the direction in which I was headed, both in terms of end degree and focus for academic electives.”
- “Getting feedback on my research.”

In the first author’s experience, talking to other faculty and students from other colleges and universities has been influential to her own research. Over the years, several senior researchers have given her suggestions on different research questions to pursue.

**Negative Experiences**

Of course, negative experiences were also reported, but most were limited to the Annual Meetings. Each comment is unique and worthy of mentioning.
- “Poor planning for the AM luncheon where New Leaders were supposed to be recognized and photographed and were not even mentioned to the gathering at large.”
- “Most of those attending the Annual Meeting were PhD students or faculty teaching information science. As a graduate student who seeks to be a librarian practitioner, I felt out of place.”
- “Topics sometimes old-fashioned, too many similar papers accepted, no diversity.”
- “Many of the groups are very cliquish. There is little outreach for newcomers.”
- “Presentations that were too specific to the domain of libraries and archives were hard to follow and not interesting to me.”
- “Not organized according to the needs of the students. Students do not know how to interact/connect with desired scholars.”

The range of issues that students called attention to in this survey was wide and varied. It would be interesting and helpful to hear what other members think about the issues raised by students so that a holistic perspective of ASIS&T could be gained. Perhaps a similar, all-ASIS&T member survey would shed light on these and other issues. The responses could highlight improvements that might be addressed by ASIS&T leadership.

**Factors Drawing Student Members to ASIS&T**

So what draws students to ASIS&T? A number of respondents found out about ASIS&T through their deans, chairs, faculty and other students in their colleges and universities. Some reported that their schools had strong student chapters. A few talked about reading articles in *JASIST*. Once again, networking was mentioned several times as a reason they were drawn to ASIS&T:
- “I was recruited by a fellow student and it sounded like an interesting group, as well as a great chance to meet others in the field at the Annual Meeting.”
- “The opportunity to network with leaders in the field.”
- “Direct connection to the IS academic community.”

Respondents also commented on how ASIS&T emphasizes more technical subjects, information management professions, informatics, and information science. Some talked about ASIS&T having a long tradition and reputation of research that has made advances in the information science field.

Generally, the people who make up the ASIS&T membership serve as a crucial draw for students. Making connections and networking were key
factors in keeping them involved. Also, taking on leadership roles, getting involved and becoming a part of the community were listed as important. The following are sample comments:

- “The people I’ve met over the last few years are wonderful, intelligent and very helpful.”
- “Scholarly networks.”
- “Welcoming community.”
- “Supportive and convivial attitude, interesting programming.”

Suggestions to ASIS&T Leadership

The respondents were asked if they had any suggestions for ASIS&T leadership. The following is a partial list:

- “Create a real new leaders program; otherwise, you may just throw money out the window and call the New Leaders Award a scholarship and be done with it. If you expect to keep new leaders, you need to teach those that are given this designation and award how to be a leader.”
- “Less emphasis on academia, PhD students and theory, more emphasis on practitioners, case studies and skills development.”
- “Fix the membership databases, they are horrible!”
- “Redo the website! It's slow – it took half an hour to download one webinar using a PC, after several failed attempts on Mac – and the look and feel are extremely outdated for an organization that has the word technology in its name.”
- “Increase outreach to those who wish to be librarian practitioners.”
- “I would suggest to communicate to ASIS&T members in a better way and offer options to exchange ideas, e.g., Wiki, blogs, etc.”
- “Incentives to be officers, such as free or reduced membership fees or costs for the Annual Meeting, etc.”
- “Encourage ASIS&T to be more inclusive in regard to research from other disciplines.”
- “Provide more opportunities for new members to participate in the community. Provide more mentoring opportunities for doctoral students and young scholars in the field.”
- “Recruit the new leaders for outreach in their own communities and expand beyond the United States.”
- “Students should have a mini-leadership, apart from SIGs, roles which will be helpful in future.”
- “I feel like there should be at least equal focus on both professional and scholarly pursuits/issues (if not weighting more toward professional than scholarly). Right now, it feels like the professional resources are undervalued and therefore underutilized. There are far more IS and IT professionals than there are IS/IT scholars and practically ignoring their needs feels like a huge missed opportunity.”
- “Better mentoring options.”
- “It is prohibitively expensive for many students to travel to and attend most ASIS&T conferences. I'm sure student members would appreciate these events being more financially accessible.”
- “Open up to online students. I was an online student rep and they didn't know what to do with me. My everyday world is about collaboration, analysis, data, and I couldn't collaborate with my own peers. Hopefully they will do more in the future.”

The ASIS&T Board, its various SIGs, chapters and groups are either aware of or already addressing some of these suggestions. Still, a more concerted effort is required to better communicate that awareness and any responsive initiatives to both student and professional members.

Concluding Remarks

Once again, if ASIS&T is to grow as a professional association and attract new members, especially student members, it must strengthen and expand existing programs, activities and chapters. It must also maintain responsiveness by continuously assessing those programs. As shown by our survey results, student chapters are at the forefront of recruitment for new ASIS&T members. Existing programs such as the New Leaders Award (www.asist.org/awards/asistnewleadersaward.html) and the student volunteer program during the Annual Meeting are crucial because students who attend ASIS&T meetings tend to remain members when they transition to being professionals. Those students who benefit from these programs will likely
publicize their experiences (see, for example, http://asistpratt.wordpress.com/2010/11/01/asist-annual-meeting-student-volunteer-edition/). SIGs and regional chapters also need to play a more active role in introducing ASIS&T to students through funding opportunities similar to the NEASIS&T Student Travel Award (https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/acrl-nec-news/3Ra3Lqk76Tg). Last but not least, now that ASIS&T is a truly international association, international student member recruitment programs such as SIG/III’s InfoShare Program (www.asist.org/SIG/SIGIII/infoshare) should be expanded.

Resources Mentioned in the Article


We’ve Built It, But Are They Coming? 
International Participation in ASIS&T Online Educational Offerings

by June M. Abbas and Diane Rasmussen Pennington

EDITOR’S SUMMARY

ASIS&T has offered 55 educational webinars on key topics in information science since 2010, originally prompted by the Webinar Task Force. The successor Online Education Task Force broadened the goal to promote online education and communication among the membership and was followed by the Web Presence Task Force, which aims to bolster the Association’s online presence overall, starting with a website redesign. The ASIS&T website offers members the potential for professional development and networking, and online channels are being explored to enhance engagement for all members, especially international members and those unable to attend Annual Meetings. A spring 2014 survey revealed that, while 75 percent of site visitors were from the United States, a substantial number represented India, European nations and North/East Asian countries. Webinar registration is strong for international members and visitors. Based on these indicators, several recommendations are offered to drive ongoing education, international outreach and recruitment efforts.

KEYWORDS

distance learning, international aspects
web sites, information associations
social networking, Association for Information Science and Technology
engagement

In 2010, under the initiative of past president Linda C. Smith, ASIS&T began offering educational webinars on trending topics in information science. Linda’s longtime interest in online education, as well as comparable offerings in other professional associations, informed this decision. With the Board’s support, Linda formed the Webinar Task Force in early 2011, and appointed Diane Pennington, who was then co-chair of the Information Science Education Committee, as its chair. Linda believed that webinars would provide substantial membership benefits in the form of convenient professional development and charged the task force with determining whether information professionals would find them valuable. The task force’s final report, which is available at http://asist.org/Conferences/webinars/TaskForceOnWebinars.pdf, demonstrated members’ support for webinars, and the webinars have evolved into a popular, valuable membership benefit. Members can access archived webinars at http://asist.org/Conferences/webinars/.

In fall 2011, after the work of the Webinar Task Force had concluded, President Diane Sonnenwald morphed the Webinar Task Force into the Online Education Task Force. This task force considered the nature of ASIS&T’s online offerings: were webinars enough or were there other delivery formats and communication channels that would be valuable to the membership? The task force recommended a more holistic approach to addressing the evolving online education and communication needs of ASIS&T members. The task force’s final report can be found at http://asist.org/Online_Education_Task_Force_Report_final.pdf. Additionally, a panel of Online Education Task Force members was convened at the 2012 Annual Meeting, and Diane and Linda published a Bulletin article in 2013 (http://asist.org/Bulletin/Feb-13/FebMar13_Rasmussen_Smith.html) to update members on this work.
Past president Andrew Dillon appointed the Web Presence Task Force in 2012 in order to continue this interconnected work, and Harry Bruce, the current president, has sustained its existence. The Web Presence Task Force, with Diane as chair once again, has been investigating issues surrounding ASIS&T’s entire online presence. As noted in Harry’s “President’s Page” column in the February/March 2014 issue of the Bulletin (http://asist.org/Bulletin/Feb-14/FebMar14_PresidentsPage.html):

[I]t was decided that the Association would commission a redesign of the ASIS&T website. A survey conducted by the Web Presence Task Force, chaired by Diane Rasmussen Pennington, revealed the urgent need for updating and upgrading to current technology and design so that our website better reflects a world-leading information association. We will soon be releasing a call for proposals from experts in the field of website design and construction to submit outlined plans for the website. In the meantime, the Board has decided to commission the Web Presence Task Force with the implementation of several changes to the current ASIS&T website including:

1. Creating a central, rotating-image, news banner that makes it easy to refresh and update important information that is relevant to ASIS&T members;
2. Changing location of the login section and making it uncomplicated for users to log in and stay logged in;
3. Altering the size of the main ASIS&T banner on the homepage to allow for more usable space for essential items; and
4. Tidying up the layout and navigation “above the fold” to ensure essential activities (such as connecting to the Digital Library) are easy to find.

Membership Has Its (Virtual) Benefits

The Board and the various task force members have continuously explored the notion of more fully utilizing the potential for an expanded online presence to enhance membership benefits. The leadership hopes these efforts will improve opportunities in professional development and networking regardless of time or physical location.

While our vision is not yet entirely realized, opportunities already exist. As Diane noted in “ASIS&T’s Webinar on Webinars: How to Propose, Organize and Present a Webinar,” any ASIS&T-related group can host a webinar (www.asist.org/Conferences/webinars/2012/webinar-on-webinars.php). Staff members at ASIS&T headquarters are ready to work with anyone who has an idea for a professional development topic or even a need for improved communication. Since many members who have a desire to meet or collaborate are physically dispersed throughout the world – perhaps the Taipei chapter and the European chapter would like to co-host an event! – using the webinar platform is an ideal way to work together and learn from each other.

The Board will continue to explore online modalities that increase our ability to connect across time and place. Members who cannot attend Annual Meetings and already receive ASIS&T publications through their institutions may have questioned the value of personal membership, but we hope that current and online initiatives will provide services to all information professionals, regardless of their role in our profession and their physical location.

This increased connection is an important point for all members, but it is especially important for international members. When Diane Rasmussen Pennington traveled to Finland in 2011 to present at the European Chapter’s ISSOME conference (www.asist.org/Chapters/europe/?p=83), she heard several pleas from European members for ASIS&T to involve them more fully in organization-wide events and communications. The conference was packed with fascinating, cutting-edge research; imagine if it had been webcast to ASIS&T members worldwide!

Increasing ASIS&T’s internationalization was a major initiative of Diane Sonnenwald’s presidency, and it led to our recent name change from the American Society for Information Science and Technology to the Association for Information Science and Technology. Although the majority of members are still based in North America, the Association has a sizeable amount of activity from information professionals worldwide. The next section provides data about where our website visitors and webinar attendees are physically located.
Web site Use

A snapshot of the asist.org website using Google Analytics between February 16, 2014 and March 18, 2014 showed that there were 21,552 total visits (return and new visits) to the asist.org website. Unfortunately, data is not captured on whether or not the visits are by members or non-members. Of the total visits, 17,914 were unique, first time visitors to the site. A total of 16,778 (or 77.82%) were new visits. The majority of the visitors to the site were from the United States with 10,411 total visits (or 48.31%), with 7,868 or 75.57% being new visits. Following U.S. visits, India (1,246 or 5.78%), Canada (850 or 3.94%), the U.K. (840 or 3.90%), China (639 or 2.96) and Australia (519 or 2.41%) were the top five non-U.S. visits. The top 10 non-U.S. countries comprise 5,671 or 26.31% of all visits to the site. See Table 1 for the United States and top 20 countries (including the United States) that visited asist.org during the snapshot period.

Regional Views

A snapshot of two regional views shows that visits to asist.org from European or North/East Asian countries comprise only about 5.5% of all visits to the website.

European view: A sample of European countries with visits to asist.org shows that visits from countries including France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden equal 1,178 visits or 5.46% of visits to the website during the snapshot period.

North/East Asia view: A sample of North/East Asian countries with visits to asist.org further illustrates that visits from a sample of countries in this region including Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan equal 1,193 visits or 5.53% of total visits to the site during the snapshot period.

These figures, and more specifically the regional views presented, show that international visits to the asist.org website are lower than those from U.S. visitors. All of the sampled countries are listed in the top 25 (excluding the United States) who visited the website. Again, as data about visitor membership status is not collected, it is not possible to say with certainty that visits are from members. However, these regional snapshots might suggest countries that should be targeted with increased efforts to recruit new members or to encourage increased involvement within ASIS&T.

TABLE 1. Website visits by country (February 16-March 18, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>TOTAL VISITS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>NEW VISITS</th>
<th>PERCENT NEW VISITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>10,411</td>
<td>48.31%</td>
<td>7,868</td>
<td>75.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,246</td>
<td>5.78%</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>88.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>75.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>3.90%</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>81.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>70.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>75.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1.86%</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>78.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>1.54%</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>55.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>1.52%</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>82.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>1.23%</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>91.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>1.17%</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>87.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>1.16%</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>80.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>0.98%</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>81.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>0.92%</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>84.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>90.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>0.86%</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>80.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>84.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>0.71%</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>85.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>74.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>77.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Webinar Attendance

Webinars are another ASIS&T benefit extended to members and non-members of ASIS&T. ASIS&T has been offering webinars since November 2010. ASIS&T has conducted 55 webinars over the last 3.5 years. Nine of the total webinars have PASIG (Preservation and Archiving Special Interest Group) sponsorship and six are sponsored by ASIS&T special interest groups (SIGs). Only six of the offerings were not free for ASIS&T members. (See www.asist.org/Conferences/webinars/ for a complete list of the webinars).
A total of 1,825 participants have enrolled in the webinars. Of this total 1,393 (or 76.32%) are from the United States and 147 (or 8.05%) from Canada. The remainder of the participants are from non-North American countries, comprising 432 (23.67%) of total webinar registrations. These data indicate that while the United States and Canada registrations are higher than other countries, international registrations are almost a quarter of all webinar registrations. A count of webinar registrants in 2013 shows the majority of registrations are from the United States (979 registrations or 83.60%), which indicates that non-U.S. webinar registration remains low but that international members/non-members are taking advantage of this online educational offering. See Table 2 for the top 10 countries with webinar participants.

**TABLE 2. Webinar registrations by country (2012-2014)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Webinar Registrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1,393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommen dations**

As the above website visits and webinar registration figures show, assist.org and webinars are important resources for international visitors. The analysis also points out countries with strong visitor or webinar registration history that could be further targeted in recruitment efforts. We offer the following recommendations for increasing international participation or membership.

1. Extend our outreach to our international members to determine
   a. types of educational offerings (current and new) they would participate in
   b. programming or topic ideas of this audience
   c. reasons for participating in educational offerings
   d. reasons for not participating in educational offerings
   e. social media outlets they use or would like to use for Association communication
2. Develop a larger international social media presence by inviting international members to participate in the new Presidential Social Media Initiative
3. Explore the idea of developing alternative modes for including more international members in Annual Meetings through hosting meetings in international venues or providing virtual conference sessions to Annual Meetings but also to international chapter events
4. Explore mentoring opportunities such as pairing senior international ASIS&T members with new members, with collaboration from SIG/III
5. Explore possible funding for more support for international members to attend Annual Meetings through competitive or other programs
6. Use the Google Analytics of the website to track visits to determine countries to target in membership recruitment efforts

**Conclusion**

ASIS&T already has an active international presence that can be seen through the SIG/III-sponsored International Reception at the Annual Meetings, exciting events organized by our international chapters and so on. The Board’s goal of increasing internationalization of its membership and its activities calls for participation from all sides. The Association must foster this aspiration by enhancing its online presence through providing webinars and other modes of virtual professional development, interactive social media outlets and an updated website with enhanced functionality. At the same time, it is hoped our international members will provide the Task Force and the Board with their ideas for improving virtual networking and professional development possibilities. We look forward to the conversation.
Some Points about ASIS&T Global Initiatives
by Diane H. Sonnenwald

EDITOR’S SUMMARY
ASIS&T has long been open to members and collaborations beyond North American borders but is intensifying efforts to strengthen and expand its global influence. Special Interest Group/International Information Issues (SIG/III) serves as a foundation for awareness and outreach, and the Association name change is a meaningful reflection and reinforcement of a broader perspective. It is hoped that the European and the newly established Asia Pacific chapters will be the first of many more groups outside the United States and Canada to support international networking. ASIS&T has committed to link membership fees to national ranking on the United Nations Human Development Index, locate the 2016 Annual Meeting in Europe and delete language in websites, honors and policies that implies any national limitations. With ongoing diligence and support, an active international membership and global collaborations will be the norm.

KEYWORDS
information associations
international aspects
globalization
collaboration
Association for Information Science and Technology

Presently at the University of Copenhagen, Diane H. Sonnenwald is a past president of ASIS&T. She is professor and chair of information and library studies at University College Dublin (UCD) in Dublin, Ireland. She can be reached at diane.sonnenwald<at>ucd.ie.

The recent global initiatives undertaken by ASIS&T are in many ways a continuation of past activities and efforts by many members over the years. For example, at the 1958 International Conference on Scientific Information co-sponsored by the American Documentation Institute (the predecessor of ASIS&T) 50% of the papers had authors from outside the United States [1]. Discussions regarding omitting the word American from the name of the association began in the late 1970s [1]. In 1982 ASIS and the Institute of Information Scientists (which is now the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals or CILIP) held a joint conference in Dublin, Ireland. Toni Carbo, who currently serves on the SIG/III Advisory Board, was a member of the conference organizing committee (see Figure 1). In 1982 the Taipei Chapter was the first chapter established outside North America [2]. And as discussed elsewhere in this issue, SIG/III was established in 1982. Thus, if the recent global initiatives within ASIS&T have gone a little further it is

FIGURE 1. Excerpts from the brochure for the 1982 conference held in Dublin, Ireland

Organising Committee
Chairman: Gerry P. Brownsey
IS (Irish Branch)
Toni Carbo Beaumont
Council Member, ASIS
Michael Casey
Chairman, IS (Irish branch)
Tim Kelly
Treasurer, IS (Irish Branch)
Val Reilly
Hanging Secretary, IS (Irish Branch)
Jim O'Reilly
IS (Irish Branch)
Christine Smith
Chairman, Meetings Committee, IS
Rita Broder
Conference Officer
because there has been an excellent foundation on which to build. In addition to selecting a more global name for our association, recent global initiatives include membership fees linked to a country’s status on the UN Human Development Index; decision to hold an Annual Meeting outside North America; review of social media and awards for national biases; and formation of a new chapter located in the Asia-Pacific region. This article recaps and comments on those initiatives and invites members to propose additional initiatives.

It has been my great pleasure over the past two years to see that our members remain united in their resolve to increase ASIS&T’s global perspective. Of members who voted, 89.7% supported the selection of ASIS&T’s new name in 2012 – and more members voted in that election than typically vote in our annual elections for officers. SIG/III, under the leadership of Daniel Alemneh in 2011-2012, put together an excellent proposal regarding linking membership fees to a country’s rank on the annual United Nations (UN) Human Development Index. This policy was approved by the Board and subsequently extended following the suggestion of the International Relations Committee (IRC) to include other membership categories. Thus current students, early/transitional professionals and professionals who reside in countries categorized as having “medium” or “low” human development in the most recent UN Human Development Index can join for $20, $30 or $40 per year, respectively. (See www.asist.org/developingnationsmember.html for details.) Reduced fees also extend to retired members and members facing hardship. Maintaining equitable fees makes it possible for more individuals to contribute to ASIS&T and all members to benefit from their contributions.

The International Relations Committee (IRC) conducted an extensive survey and balanced report discussing members’ perspectives regarding geographic options for future Annual Meetings. Mei-Mei Wu, IRC chair at the time, led this effort, and Vivienne Houghton, a 2011 ASIS&T New Leaders Award recipient, worked diligently to create the survey instrument and help analyze data (see [3] for a summary of the report). As a result the Board decided to hold the 2016 Annual Meeting in Europe. An ad hoc committee of Harry Bruce, Dick Hill, Jens-Erik Mai, Katriina Bystrøm, Sanda Erdelez and me are working with others to identify locations in Europe for the 2016 Annual Meeting. We are also investigating the possibility of holding a co-located conference with a “sister” scholarly and professional organization in Europe and/or information science school.

Sometimes there are implicit barriers to participation for others that we overlook because those barriers are not barriers for us. For example, the word national was dropped from the title of the ASIS&T social media pages because “national” has no relevance in an international association. I also reviewed text describing ASIS&T awards for inherent biases toward North American practices. Consultations with the Information Science Education Committee, the Awards & Honors Committee, the IRC and the Board led to new wording that allows for submissions from students whose Ph.D. programs do not include a formal proposal stage. Of course, more can be done, such as renaming the award and changing its wording to allow students whose dissertation research is not a single study and monograph but a collection of studies and publications to compete.

Forming new chapters that can facilitate information sharing among members in a geographic area is another ASIS&T global initiative. In 2013 we saw the formation of a new chapter, the Asia Pacific Chapter [4]. The chapter was formed through the efforts of Yin Leng Theng (a 2012 ASIS&T New Leaders Award recipient), Makiko Miwa, Songphan Choemprayong and colleagues along with support from the European and Taipei Chapters and the ASIS&T Chapter Assembly. Makiko commented, “The birth of the Asia Pacific Chapter should contribute to the formation of a truly international community of information and library science professionals. We hope members of the region will help each other to attain this goal.” Yin Leng further noted, “Although some of us may know about the ASIAS&T Annual Meeting, it remains a conference that is expensive to attend and/or difficult to get work accepted and published. A regional presence can help to provide a platform for collaborations between established scholars and upcoming researchers in the region, raising scholarship and participation in ASIS&T events and activities.”

The European and Asia Pacific chapters encompass larger geographic areas than typically found in other chapters. However, members in these
chapters organize regional workshops and virtual activities and meet whenever possible at conferences, including the ASIS&T Annual Meeting. The European Chapter won the Chapter-of-the-Year Award in 2012 and 2013, demonstrating that it is indeed possible to have an active chapter that includes members that live in different countries or geographic areas. When discussing the benefits of belonging to a chapter, Isabella Peters, a member of the European Chapter, said, “Since I’ve been participating in the European Chapter I can feel what it means to be part of a globally connected and engaged community. I especially enjoy meeting members face-to-face for the first time (e.g., at ASIS&T conferences) and experiencing the connection between each other although we had only worked and corresponded via email before.” Interacting with colleagues face-to-face and virtually provides enjoyable opportunities to learn about and discuss innovations, educational programs, organizational structures and practices, and emerging research that would otherwise not be possible.

I would like to encourage members living and working in areas that do not have an active chapter to consider establishing one. Model chapter bylaws and a chapter officers manual are available to assist members. Members can also apply for chapter development funds to help finance chapter activities. For details, see www.asist.org/Chapters/chapters.html.

From 2012 to 2013 the number of ASIS&T members from outside the United States increased approximately 18%. To continue this trend, the current ASIS&T president Harry Bruce has asked the IRC to develop recommendations regarding policies and activities to support and encourage global membership. The committee has generated a preliminary list of recommendations. As acting chair of the IRC, I would like to ask all members to send suggestions to me (at Diane.Sonnenwald<at>gmail.com) regarding ways to further support and increase global membership.

In conclusion, the ultimate goal is for ASIS&T practices to be inclusive and flexible such that no one geopolitical or sociocultural set of practices inherently has precedent over others and all members benefit from sharing insights and solutions, collaborating to create new knowledge and in general assisting each other. This goal is not necessarily a new one. However, achieving this goal requires consistent and constant vigilance; our practices should be reviewed and open to improvements on an ongoing basis. By actively listening to and learning from each other, apologizing and accepting apologies when mistakes are made and embracing differences, we can enrich our association and our work and personal lives. While there should always be a place for local initiatives, I hope that “ASIS&T global initiatives” over time will become known simply as “ASIS&T initiatives.” That is, in the future global initiatives will not be special events or activities that occasionally occur but rather events and activities that frequently and usually occur.

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**Resources Mentioned in the Article**


MOOCs – International Information and Education Phenomenon?

by Lee Wilson and Anatoliy Gruzd

A MOOC (massive open online course) is a large scale, open-access re-imagining of the more traditional forms of e-learning that came into their own during the mid-1990s. Rather than catering to the needs of a few hundred tuition-paying students, each MOOC is designed to be taken simultaneously by thousands of distance learners at little or no cost. To better understand the MOOC landscape, we will briefly review the top three most visited MOOC providers (based on the Alexa Internet Global Ranking): Udemy, Coursera and edX. For a more detailed review of MOOCs and their business models, see [1], [2].

Udemy (www.udemy.com) functions as a marketplace for educators who may wish to monetize their skills through MOOCs. It was launched in 2010 by founders Eren Bali, Oktay Caglar and Gagan Biyani and has raised $16 million (USD) in funding from venture capitalists [3]. Since it is a for-profit venture, many of the MOOCs promoted on the website have a price ranging from $29 to $99 (USD) for potential students. All of the MOOC courses are created independently on Udemy’s free-to-use platform by instructors who then receive a percentage of the revenue [4]. There is a lot of freedom in terms of course design, but content creators must satisfy a set of minimum requirements [5]. Udemy also provides a course-building MOOC for potential instructors. It does not have an integrated learning analytics tool, but it does allow instructors to download student data for use in other analytic tools.

Coursera (www.coursera.org) partners with 85 institutions of higher learning worldwide and offers university-level learning material free of charge [6]. It also boasts the most users of all MOOC providers, which means that Coursera can offer content creators a high degree of exposure. While potential instructors must be a representative of a partner university and have permission to host a MOOC using their university brand, Coursera...
does provide detailed information about the robust set of features available to instructors [7]. This includes integrated learning analytics features. Official quizzes and short answer assignments are auto-graded, while longer assignments are peer evaluated (see for example [8], [9]). Peer evaluation enables individual feedback in the large-scale MOOC environment and also gives students the chance to learn by taking on the role of a teacher. To encourage consistency, Coursera suggests that instructors provide a clear grading rubric for assignments and also perform a “ground truth” assessment that acts as a benchmark grade to measure the accuracy of peer grading [7].

edX (edx.org) is a small MOOC provider with powerful parents. It is a non-profit created by Harvard and MIT that offers courses from a variety of institutions. edX Edge is a separate site that functions like a testing ground for prototype MOOCs. This encourages developers to become familiar with Studio, edX’s course building tool. Like Coursera, access to Studio is restricted to instructors from a university that is part of the xConsortium or "selected guests" [10]. However, anyone who has signed up for a free edX Edge account can take part in a MOOC building course that showcases the features available in Studio. edX lessons are grouped into tight, multimedia packages that allow instructors to transition seamlessly from video lecture, slides, quizzes and discussions. For example, a question posed in a video can be answered by the learner, who sees a breakdown of how other learners answered the question, and is then invited to take part in an asynchronous, in-lesson discussion about the response. Such integration helps to simulate the immersive experience of a physical classroom. Another unique feature of edX is the ability to auto-grade long essay questions. While this process remains highly controversial [11], it may be beneficial to instructors teaching social science and humanities courses that tend to favor long writing assignments over short-answer quizzes.

**Issues of Accessibility, Scalability and Quality**

On the surface, many MOOCs share similarities with traditional, online university courses. They are generally hosted on centralized platforms that include standard features like video playback, discussion boards, practice quizzes and course reading materials. Courses are instructor-led and usually conform to a linear, week-by-week learning model. What makes MOOCs such a big deal is that they are both big and a deal. MOOCs enroll thousands of students and are offered for free or at a significant discount compared to other online university counterparts. Thus, MOOCs are distinguished from traditional e-learning university courses by virtue of accessibility and scalability. A large part of the initial excitement surrounding MOOCs stemmed from this idea of accessible, quality education that would be made available across socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds [12].

As MOOCs have matured and more information pertaining to their user base has become available, it is uncertain whether these open education initiatives have been able to live up to the high expectations. One study suggests that “MOOCs seem to be reinforcing the advantages of the 'haves' rather than educating the 'have-nots'” and that “[b]etter access to technology and improved basic education are needed worldwide before MOOCs can genuinely live up to their promise” [13, p. 342]. Conversely, others argue that North American-made MOOCs are on the rise in economically developing countries where the current infrastructure of higher education is inadequate to meet the demands of their burgeoning university-aged populations [14].

Available data about web traffic trends for the major MOOC providers has shown that while interest in these MOOCs is predominantly from the United States, there is evidence that economically developing countries are also seeking to benefit from this accessible education. According to Alexa.com (see Figure 1), most visitors to the top three MOOCs are from the United States, followed by visitors from India. Further, Coursera and edX both have a number of economically developing countries within their top five visitor-groups by country. This suggests that while there is a tangible international interest in MOOCs, they might not yet be accessible to those who are incapable of receiving traditional higher education. As suggested by Emanuel [13], this under-representation is likely a product of a complex host of issues that includes a lack of basic education and access to technology in general.
Another potential barrier to the internationalization of MOOCs is the prevalence of courses taught in English. Although many of the major MOOC providers do offer courses in a variety of languages, the majority are only available in English. An examination of the distribution of languages in Coursera and Udemy MOOCs shows that only 12% are offered in a language other than English. While an increase of MOOC offerings in a variety of languages will likely incite a larger international appeal, another response would be for countries to develop their own MOOCs. To this end, a number of MOOC providers have emerged outside of North America [18]. Some popular examples include Schoo (Japan), Open2Study (Australia), Veduca (Brazil), FutureLearn (Britain) andiversity (Germany). As these initiatives are still developing, it remains to be seen whether this approach can help to spread the influence of MOOCs outside of countries where access to post-secondary education is not already widely available.

In addition to the problem of accessibility, MOOCs also offer unique pedagogical challenges arising from their inherently massive structure. Coursera reports a median of 33,000 registrants per MOOC [19]. Scalability has given rise to a number of pressing issues, including extremely high rates of attrition [20]. While the contributing factors are still not fully understood, non-completion has been associated with an absence of a social environment that is conducive to learning, a lack of traditional university support structures, a low barrier to entry and little to no financial stake or drop-out penalties (2013). In a 2013 partner’s report, Coursera argues that attrition rates for MOOCs should not carry the same weight as in traditional university settings because the structure is essentially different [19]. Unlike tuition-fueled university courses, MOOC students are not tethered to their course choices. Rather, the no-cost education offers the freedom to browse and sample a variety of courses before finding one that aligns with academic interests or educational goals. While this line of reasoning has much common-sense value, it does not whitewash the litany of pedagogical challenges arising from such massive course sizes.

Another chief concern surrounding MOOCs is how to maintain a high standard of quality for education when interacting with such a large student base. A series of case studies undertaken by the Society for Learning Analytics Research (SoLAR) suggests that “[t]he inherent challenge is to meld what has often been seen to be the mutually exclusive variables of either quality or scale” [21], p. 3). The report goes on to posit that MOOC quality will rely on extending both the use and the sophistication of online
technologies like learning analytics (LAs). Essentially, LAs are concerned with “the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for the purpose of understanding and optimizing learning and the environments in which it occurs” [22, p. 34]. Many of the major MOOC providers already offer instructors integrated LAs that can help measure student progress on a massive scale. As opposed to more traditional forms of evaluation, LAs examine patterns of student behavior in aggregate for the purposes of identifying areas of concern before they evolve into significant problems [23]. In this way, LAs seek to provide a more active and targeted form of instructor feedback. The development of such technologies will be integral to achieving consistent and high quality educational standards in MOOC environments. However, in [3] Siemens, Dawson and Lynch also warn that the challenges posed by MOOCs cannot be overcome solely through the mere adoption of new technologies. They argue that a thorough re-examination of the “historical pedagogical, sociocultural and economic assumptions that can stifle education practice” (p. 5) must occur.

MOOCs and Information Professionals

Recently MOOCs have been the focus of a growing number of studies primarily in the educational field [24]. However, the relevance of MOOCs as teaching and learning platforms goes beyond the educational arena. In particular, we argue that the library and information science (LIS) field should begin to consider how MOOCs will affect the profession as well as how they might be used to augment public awareness and perception of the ever-changing LIS field. In a recent study, Wright and Reuters [25] address the need for librarians to consider their role in facilitating learning and information discovery within a MOOC context. They identify how MOOCs differ from traditional online learning and how the current model requires that instructors provide all relevant learning materials since many MOOCs enroll students who do not have access to the university’s library resources. Finding a way to integrate university library services within MOOCs at this early stage would cement the role of librarians in the massive, distance education courses of the future. Additionally, MOOCs can serve as promotional tools within an evolving field that is sometimes misunderstood. Often, LIS programs remain perceptually intertwined with the more antiquated designation of “library school.” The development of MOOCs related specifically to the LIS field will allow for a much wider audience to gain a sense of how the field has changed to incorporate a wide variety of information science topics beyond the walls of public and academic libraries, including big data, cloud computing, computer-supported collaborative work, data security and privacy, information visualization, social computing, web mining, just to name a few. In turn, this could serve to attract students who would not otherwise have considered a career as an information professional.

Conclusion

MOOCs enjoyed a sudden rise to prominence and were heralded as the vehicles that would usher in a new age in education wherein anyone, anywhere (so long as they have a stable Internet connection) would have access to free, high quality education. However, it is still unclear whether MOOCs are singularly capable of revolutionizing academia and enabling open education on a truly massive scale. Like it or not, Pandora’s box has been opened and MOOCs are proving to be more substantial than a mere passing fad. It is therefore essential that an effort be made to understand the unique challenges posed by these emerging educational platforms, particularly in the realm of learning analytics, as such tools can help measure student achievement on a massive scale and in real time. While MOOCs present a number of challenges, the potential that fueled the excitement surrounding their introduction remains. Finally, MOOCs offer a unique opportunity for the LIS field to attract a wider and more diverse student base to this ever-changing and interdisciplinary field.
Resources Mentioned in the Article


Continued on following page
Resources Mentioned in the Article, cont.


http://dlib.org/dlib/march13/wright/03wright.html
Indigenous Knowledge in a Post-Apology Era: Steps Toward Healing and Bridge Building
by Jamila Ghaddar and Nadia Caidi

EDITOR’S SUMMARY
An important aspect of ASIS&T’s international outreach is service to indigenous populations, a need that has received greater recognition since Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s public apology in 2008 for past disruption of Native families. The emerging field of indigenous librarianship can contribute significantly to the process of reconciliation in Canada and other countries with similar colonial legacies. Indigenous librarianship requires reconsidering the organization, classification and representation of library materials from a perspective free of culture- and language-based assumptions. Key themes in indigenous librarianship include removing barriers to access, providing culturally relevant materials and services and departing from widely used knowledge organization systems such as the Dewey Decimal System to create classifications that reflect the Native worldview and epistemology. Successful examples include Australia’s Pathways thesaurus project, the Māori Subject Headings from Aotearoa/New Zealand and the British Columbia First Nations Names Authority. Increased involvement by Indigenous people in information studies will enhance accurate representation of their cultures.

KEYWORDS
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knowledge organization systems underserved users
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S IG/III has been providing a forum for discussing international information issues for the past 30 years. As if to highlight further its global mission in an increasingly interconnected world, in 2013 ASIS&T formally changed its name to reflect its members’ “commitment to international cooperation and global efforts to increase the influence of information science education, research and applications” [1, p. 5]. The theme of connections is even central to the upcoming 2014 ASIS&T Annual Meeting (Connecting Collections, Cultures and Communities). We take advantage of these opportunities to reflect on the plethora of issues faced by information professionals and researchers, especially those whose work is concerned with community building, outreach, advocacy and social inclusion.

Specifically, we consider the role that the predominantly non-indigenous library community in Canada – and other countries with parallel histories – can play in realizing visions of equality and redress in a post-apology era. On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered a public apology on behalf of the government of Canada for the Indian Residential School system, which led to the forcible removal of over 150,000 Native children from their families and communities. In other countries with parallel colonial histories and legacies, such as Australia and the United States, similar apologies have been made for assimilationist policies. For many across the country, Harper’s apology encouraged visions of a new reality of national reconciliation and equal partnership in a post-apology Canada. Canada’s Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) called on Canadians to engage in reconciliation and healing work outside of the TRC, in workplaces, communities and neighborhoods [2]. The library community can make important contributions in this arena, drawing on the frameworks and approaches of the emerging field of indigenous librarianship.
Indigenous librarianship is a broad field of practice and scholarship that unites indigenous knowledge systems with the discipline of library and information science (LIS). Indigenous librarianship challenges the library community to take a fresh look at the ways materials by or about indigenous peoples are organized, classified and represented to library users. It acknowledges the critical role of indigenous cultural principles and the distinctiveness and value of indigenous knowledge systems. As a relatively recent field, scholars and professionals are currently in the midst of asking new questions of research and practice in order to further articulate critical and indigenous theoretical frameworks within LIS. They are developing scholarship and practice that speak to the need for new solutions to address the legacies of cultural and language disruption left by colonial policies and education systems.

Indigenous librarianship as a field of practice and scholarship emerged slowly in the 1960s and 1970s. In that period of decolonization and liberation movements indigenous peoples made great strides in affirming their rights. Indigenous individuals and their allies began advocating for and launching initiatives to address their concerns about the relative lack of appropriate library materials and services for indigenous people. Hence, the history of indigenous librarianship is inextricably tied to indigenous peoples’ social, cultural and political reassertion globally in the latter parts of the 20th century. In the United States, for example, library services to indigenous reservations were not available until the 1970s, when tribal libraries slowly began to emerge fostered by a convergence of indigenous-driven political and legal changes and the increased receptivity to self-determination efforts [3]. There is now more than ever international recognition of the value, vulnerability, distinctiveness and legitimacy of indigenous knowledge systems.

In Australia, key developments began after the 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy was established outside Parliament, signaling the revitalization of indigenous movements for sovereignty and self-determination [4]. By the 1990s, landmark initiatives were underway in that country. In 2002 the State Library of Queensland implemented a strategy that eventually led to the establishment in 2008 of 17 indigenous knowledge centers (IKCs). In Aotearoa/New Zealand [5], a permanent commission of enquiry known as the Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975 to address ongoing infringements on Treaty of Waitangi provisions. Against this legal background, where access to documentary materials held in libraries and other institutions is crucial for settlement of Māori claims, a series of initiatives was launched. The Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) initiated a landmark national research project, whose 1997 report played a key role in informing the development of programs and policies across the country. In 2003, the government passed a new National Library Act that acknowledged Māori library interests and views. Since then, further important work in this arena has taken place in the country.

In Canada, the emergence of indigenous librarianship is best contextualized within the history and ongoing legacy of the residential school system, which operated until the 1990s to forcibly assimilate indigenous peoples and dislocate indigenous families, communities, nations and cultures. The closing of the schools started in the 1960s, which, along with other landmark legal and political developments, led to new possibilities. Indigenous librarianship in Canada varies greatly from one province to another and between rural and urban areas. It tends to lag behind developments in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia. An important early initiative took place in 1966 when the education division of the federal Indian Affairs Branch developed a plan for indigenous bandsto join in existing public library services. Since the 1980s, progress in the development of library services for indigenous people in Canada has accelerated steadily. Some important recent initiatives include the work of the Saskatchewan Ministry’s Advisory Committee on Library Service for Aboriginal people. This committee issued a 2001 report, Information Is for Everyone [6], which highlights universal access to library services for all indigenous peoples, including on-reserve and off-reserve services. In 2002, Library and Archives Canada (LAS) hired for the first time a coordinator of aboriginal resources and services, whose work is focused on developing, promoting and facilitating access to indigenous resources with indigenous partners. The LAS then held national consultations on library materials and services, and the subsequent report included important recommendations.
Yet to this day, in Canada and across North America, universal access to the public library is still not a reality for indigenous people. Even those who reside within library service catchment areas face a host of visible and invisible barriers presented through library practices, collections and services. Overall, whether in Canada or elsewhere, much work still has to be done to build on past successes in providing culturally appropriate and relevant library materials and services to indigenous people.

Several overarching themes that recur in indigenous librarianship pertain to establishing best practices in library development; removing barriers to access; providing culturally relevant materials and services; developing accurate knowledge organization and representation tools; protecting indigenous intellectual and cultural property rights; and developing local and national policies around literacy education, virtual or physical repatriation, or professional ethics and competencies. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) are also creating opportunities and challenges for indigenous services librarians. For example, the digitization of information for virtual repatriation allows indigenous peoples without sufficient infrastructure for physical repatriation to have access to their materials. Yet such digitization involves a range of issues, including conundrums regarding knowledge representation and issues of access. Below we briefly elaborate on knowledge organization as a means to illustrate what it means to bring an indigenous services librarian lens to such questions.

Within indigenous librarianship frameworks, the problem at a basic level is one of language and cultural bias, which makes it difficult to correctly incorporate most indigenous languages and epistemologies into the confines of any given schema. Librarians also often lack the required baseline of knowledge about indigenous topics, realities, histories, cultures and scholarship. Inaccuracies can also occur through lack of specificity, lack of relevance, lack of recognition of sovereign nations and the omission of the historical realities of colonization [8]. Scholar Nancy Carter provides an illustrative example in her discussion of the fact that U.S. librarians are often uninformed about the legal status and governmental powers of Native tribal governments, which she terms the third sovereign [9]. Methods for the classification of legal materials fail to reflect the sovereignty of tribal governments, with dire consequences for Native people looking to identify and access relevant library resources.

Omissions of the historical realities of colonialism are also an issue, since libraries and their knowledge organization systems play a crucial role in controlling interpretations of history. They do so through their selection of resources, their choice of language to provide access points (as with thesauri) and their approach to and use of subject headings. Through their practices in these arenas, critics contend, libraries have contributed to the “self-serving forgetfulness” that constructs a pervasive silence regarding the experiences of indigenous people in the history of any given area [10]. For this reason, incorporation of an indigenous perspective into the knowledge organization approaches of libraries is fundamental in fostering dialogue between Native and non-Native populations as part of national reconciliation and indigenous empowerment. On an international level, the development of indigenous knowledge organization approaches can be considered part of the ever increasing reassertion of indigenous self-determination globally and attendant efforts to realize the repatriation of indigenous cultural and intellectual property. Culturally relevant knowledge organization can also contribute to capacity building within local communities, and extend foundations for cross-cultural understandings between Native and non-Native populations [11].

In sum, when indigenous perspectives are not incorporated into knowledge organization tools, it creates barriers to access for indigenous peoples while also perpetuating inaccurate and culturally inappropriate representation for the general public. An illustrative example can be found in the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) approach to the organization of materials pertaining to Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Materials about and by the Māori are scattered by the DDC approach: general information about the Māori is located under the General history of other areas – New Zealand (class number 993); information on the Māori language is under Miscellaneous languages (499.442); and Māori writings and literature are classed under Other literatures (899) [12]. This knowledge organization approach severs the possible relationships between historical works, linguistic works and Māori literature, distributing materials throughout the scheme and
classing them under catchall facets lacking in specificity. Māori epistemology emphasizes that relationships are paramount, while the DDC is based on a very different framework that values the singular nature of an item [11]. By separating materials that would not naturally be separated within the Māori epistemological framework, the DDC exerts a very real measure of cultural authority. To some, it constitutes the continued cultural trespass of settler populations on indigenous peoples, who are struggling to realize the cultural autonomy so important to the ability of a group to present its own history and culture independently, without reference to outside forces. Indigenous librarianship challenges us to develop knowledge organization tools that affirm indigenous cultural autonomy, which entails welcoming and incorporating indigenous views and values into our knowledge organization and representation approaches. As researchers and librarians question the feasibility or desirability of a one-size-fits-all solution, in many countries national indigenous thesaurus projects have led to the development of more balanced, less Eurocentric representation tools and paradigms. Such tools also enhance the accessibility of materials to indigenous people, acknowledging and incorporating indigenous knowledge systems for management and access.

Successful examples of ambitious national indigenous thesaurus projects include the Pathways (Thesauri) online project of the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS); the Māori Subject Headings website from Aotearoa/New Zealand (both of which incorporated extensive consultation with the indigenous peoples of their respective countries). The B.C. First Nations Names Authority is another example of a localized thesaurus for describing indigenous library materials. It was developed by the University of British Columbia’s First Nations House of Learning and Xwí7xwa Library and speaks to the latter’s commitment to ensuring that its knowledge organization systems are congruent with indigenous worldviews as part of realizing its mandate to make the university’s vast resources more accessible to indigenous peoples [11]. These three local thesauri initiatives reflect the increasing consensus that cataloging practice for indigenous topics must recognize the names, relationships, places, histories, frameworks and concepts used by indigenous peoples [8]. They also reflect the view that a tool to meet the needs of any specific indigenous group or nation cannot be developed by inserting or incorporating elements of that group’s worldview into a system which approaches knowledge organization in fundamentally different ways. Rather, culturally based approaches along with culturally specific terminology are required.

So what does this all mean for information professionals and organizations? In Canada as elsewhere, there is clearly a lot of work still to be done in indigenous librarianship, which is an exciting challenge for LIS scholars and professionals.

While we are increasingly aware of the need to work with indigenous communities and materials in culturally appropriate ways, another key challenge is in making the information professions – and the field of information studies – attractive to individuals of indigenous backgrounds. Their recruitment into the field and their joining the information professions is critical indeed and well worth more development and attention.

Resources Mentioned in the Article

Resources Mentioned in the Article, cont.


[6] Minister’s Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People (Saskatchewan). (October 2001). *Information is for everyone. Final report of the Minister’s Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal People.* Retrieved from www.lib.sk.ca/INFORMATION-IS-FOR-EVERYONE


Leaders and members of the ASIS&T Special Interest Group/Information Policy (SIG/IFP) were honored with an invitation to edit the December/January 2014 issue of the *Bulletin*. I am equally honored to be asked to contribute to this one. Daily we read about issues related to information policy: whether it is policy surrounding personal information or information policy on a global scale, copyright, digital rights or intellectual property. It is hard to find an issue that does not have some information policy element; think about information sharing in regard to the missing Malaysian plane or the broad email search requests made by the U.S. Justice Department in its ongoing quest to identify potential terrorist threats. With these two examples it is clear that information policies frequently have a global reach and deal with international issues. In this brief article I’d like to talk about the development of information policy and its representation within ASIS&T. I will briefly discuss global information policy issues at the forefront of discussion today and end with a discussion of the revival of SIG/IFP and an outline of our plans for the future.

**Information Policy**

Information policy has held an important place in ASIS&T since the 1980s, in part due to the related work of notable SIG/International Information Issues (SIG/III) members Toni Carbo and Michel Menou. The field continues to mature and its importance to our understanding of the use of information in society is well documented. Over the years there has been an ongoing attempt to define *information policy*. In 1990, Overman and Cahill, drawing on Terry Weingarten’s publication from 1989, defined information policy as “the set of all public laws, regulations and policies that encourage, discourage or regulate the creation, use, storage and...
communication of information” [1, p. 803]. Later, Terrance Maxwell wrote that information policies “are social, political, legal, economic and technological decisions about the role of information in society, and at an instrumental level, as they impact the creation, dissemination, use and preservation of information [2]. Most recently, Sandra Braman has claimed in “Defining Information Policy,” which is among the essays introducing the first issue of the Journal of Information Policy, that “information policy is comprised of laws, regulations and doctrinal positions – and other decision making and practices with society-wide constitutive effects – involving information creation, processing, flows, access, and use [3, p. 3]. Drawing only on these three possible definitions from the past two decades, it is possible to recognize the common features: we can say that an information policy is an instantiation of decisions related to the creation, use, preservation and flow of information. This definition highlights information rather than data. Yet I assert it is important that we expand our definition back to the concept of data, particularly in light of today’s focus on “big data.” It is critical that we have a voice in creating policy that governs collection, use and preservation of data. Massive data stores are maintained in servers around the world – from the Twitter archive obtained by the Library of Congress to the national health records in individual countries. Who has access to this data? Why is it being stored? And do we have any say in its use?

Global Information Policy

The questions above are relevant to people throughout the world. Information policies have a global reach and, as technology has enabled us to reach seamlessly across the world, the data traces we leave along our way present a digital goldmine of information. Since Edward Snowden’s release of classified National Security Agency documents, policies of far-reaching data collection and surveillance have come to light. Talking with a Canadian military officer on my way to the iConference in Berlin, Germany, I asked his opinion of the NSA’s activities. He laughed slightly and said, “The funny thing is that we’re all acting like the NSA is the only organization doing this kind of data gathering. Any country with capabilities to monitor email, social media and cellphone data is going to be leveraging that ability to gather intelligence.” The rest of us can only ever analyze these classified information policies after the practice has been exposed. We have to trust in the judicial process of checks and balances in the United States as well as any other country conducting such activities. In a recent opinion written by Washington, D.C. Magistrate Judge John M. Facciola in relation to a Justice Department request for an email search warrant, he states, “Its [the Justice Department] applications ask for the entire universe of information tied to a particular account, even if it has established probable cause only for certain information” [4]. Understanding how we can engender trust in an environment where nearly all of our actions leave a trace will be difficult. After the public revelation that the NSA had monitored German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s personal cellphone, she was quoted as saying, “Friends don’t spy on each other.” A casualty of secrecy is often trust, and in a global information economy, the question of balancing secrecy with transparency is ever more important.

Expectations and legal protections of privacy are not held universally in the same way. Again, the NSA revelations prompted talks, particularly in Latin America and the European Union, of ways to change information policies to protect the data privacy of EU citizens. On March 12, 2014, the European Parliament voted strongly in favor of extending data protection laws (European Commission MEMO 13/923 and MEMO 14/60):

Data protection is made in Europe. Strong data protection rules must be Europe’s trade mark. Following the U.S. data spying scandals, data protection is more than ever a competitive advantage. … Today’s vote is the strongest signal that it is time to deliver this reform for our citizens and our businesses [5].

What this means for United States-based technology companies such as Google, Facebook and Yahoo is yet to be seen. These policies address one aspect of information policy concerns. At a global level, policies surrounding literacy, digital rights and access to information are also important and demand our attention.
Revising SIG/IFP

In light of this urgency, over the past two years we have worked to revive Special Interest Group/Information Policy Special (SIG/IFP). We have a historically close bond with SIG/III, and one of our goals is to continue developing this relationship while we create a space where information policy-specific issues can be explored and discussed. This is not a bounded category but covers areas of eGovernment, digital rights, information law, international information law and information ethics (to name only a few). Each of these areas could form the basis for its own special interest group, and some do. Our goal with SIG/IFP is to create a space where we can discuss the policy-specific implications in each of these areas. It is important to do so because as information professionals many of us may have the opportunity to participate in policy creation and implementation activities. We need to be at the forefront of participating in making these decisions. Over the years we have jointly sponsored ASIS&T panels, and we hope a workshop is in our future. Most recently we are discussing bringing information ethics under the umbrella of SIG/IFP. A partnership with the special interest group on education (SIG/ED) is also under discussion with an online webinar on how to teach information policy. We know education is the key to addressing concerns of empowerment and trust.

Beyond creating closer bonds with existing SIGs, we hope to develop stronger relationships with practitioners outside of academia who are working in information policy-related areas. Since our association is for information professionals, we believe that we need to make a concerted effort to include individuals who are working in government agencies, think tanks, libraries or as independent contractors to find a voice in SIG/IFP and ASIS&T. One of our sponsored panels last year brought together researchers from the United States, Canada and the Royal Military College of Canada. While all held academic positions the participant from the Royal Military College of Canada was working on the frontlines, creating information and security policies with far reaching influence.

Plans for the Group

As this year’s chair I hope to firmly reestablish SIG/IFP as a group within ASIS&T. There are a number of ASIS&T members doing wonderful work in the area of information policy, and I hope we can come together to develop an influential voice to add to public and government discussions of these issues and many others. We are eager to develop relationships with individual scholars as well as established centers (academic or otherwise). It is exciting to consider our potential impact joining forces through SIG/IFP and ASIS&T. I have already mentioned work in the areas of international and global information policy, but there are additional areas within information policy that I hope to include.

Information ethics. Information policy is deeply rooted in a tradition of sharing and access. These values are important as we consider how to best regulate the flow of information. Values and ethics may be commonly held, but we cannot assume they are held with the same weight universally. We hope that policy decisions are based on a solid ethical foundation, yet this foundation is not necessarily the case. Policies are partisan and written to support and leverage certain stakeholders. Economic drivers may color which aspects of policy are prioritized. National and international information policies need to balance policies that ensure openness and transparency with those that are shrouded in secrecy. The general citizenry and for-profit organizations, as well as political or military leaders, need to be considered important stakeholders in information policy design.

Education and digital rights. Information policy is important to education and educators, whether the policy is about ongoing access to public information, digitization of books and the copyright interests that surround the activity or libraries’ constant fight to protect the privacy of their patrons. Those of us who work in colleges where computer and data science collaborations are possible have the opportunity to incorporate information policy education into data mining projects and software design. At the College of Computing and Informatics at Drexel University I have had the opportunity to design and teach an undergraduate course in information policy and teach an ongoing government information course. Student responses are encouraging and range from, “Thank you. This was one of my favorite classes of college…” to “I wanted to let you know that I had my
very first lobbying success yesterday on Capitol Hill! I attribute most of my understanding and government document navigation skills to you and your class.” Our students are eager to learn about information policy and participate in our political processes.

Government information. In addition to my involvement with ASIS&T some of our members are also involved with the American Library Association’s (ALA) Government Information Roundtable (GODORT). GODORT works closely with the U.S. Depository Library Council and the Government Printing Office to ensure ongoing access to accurate and comprehensive government information. Ongoing access to government information and expanded access to data are two major areas related to information policy, and our SIG is proud to acknowledge experts among our members. Big data repositories fall under the rubric of government information. Under the banner of creating an open government where transparency, participation and collaboration are key, the U.S. government releases massive datasets that are openly available through data.gov [6]. The regulations behind the release of this data are foundational information policies, and the next step is to consider how we, as information professionals, can best use this data for exploration and engagement. This use includes, for those of us who are educators, the opportunity to teach our students how to access and work with this wealth of data.

Plans for the Annual Meeting
While plans for this year’s Annual Meeting are still underway, SIG/IFP will be sponsoring a number of panel submissions to the conference planning committee. Topics include intellectual property issues from academic and practitioner perspectives, an examination of building and rebuilding trust through inclusive information policies and issues of surveillance and privacy. We hope to have a strong presence at the meeting in the form of accepted papers and panels, but also by member participation in a wide variety of conference activities.

Information policies have ever more influence on our lives, particularly as we conduct so much of our lives online and increasingly expect widespread access to accurate and comprehensive information. How this information is managed as well as what or whose data is made available are issues that affect us all. As information professionals many of us are uniquely positioned to take on active roles in this environment. I hope that SIG/IFP can be a place to bring together international, ethics, government, education and other information policy issues.

Resources Mentioned in the Article


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Google has revolutionized how people seek information, making its all-white first page an iconic tool of the Information Age. However, Google does not serve an important category of information need. When we do not know what information we need, we engage in browsing or exploratory search. We explore information when we wish to formulate an idea or a thesis or identify a problem or, indeed, solve a problem. Google does not serve this type of information need effectively. Because searchers do not know what information they need when they commence the search, it is difficult to formulate queries to search engines, and because there are no criteria for judging relevance, it is difficult for searchers to identify needed information if and when they see it in the results list.

Most of us get by utilizing Google as it is, relying on alternative information channels – colleagues, experts, enlightened parents and teachers – to get us started in exploratory search. However, there are many informationally disadvantaged people in our society who have no such informational networks, who cannot get over the information barriers that block them from finding the information they need to construct a better life.

In this short article, I condense a theory of information need and information search presented in my book [1]. In my theory, the searcher’s information need actualizes over a period of time as the searcher connects via frequent interactions with new information to her own knowledge-belief system. Therefore, the theory of information need connects a searcher’s actualization of her information need to the searcher’s formation of new knowledge or new beliefs or the modification of old knowledge or old beliefs.

The formation or modification of the human knowledge-belief system is more difficult than it seems. In the next section, I describe how the human knowledge-belief system is almost a closed system. I then describe a solution...
that forces us to open up the closed system, from evolutionary psychology. In the last section of the article, I model the exploratory search situation of a searcher in Figure 1 and outline an exploratory search engine in Figure 2.

Exploratory Search Is Difficult: An Almost Closed System

We start from the premise that idea formation during exploratory information search is difficult. This is because the state of mind of the searcher conducting an exploratory search is almost a closed system. Information, according to our perspective, is not additive or thing-like. Instead, we define information as a process [2] that, when it manages to enter the human perceptual-cognitive system, ends up modifying the searcher’s knowledge structure. This definition corresponds to Brookes’ [3] fundamental equation of information science. The term knowledge structure has also been referred to as a schema or frame.

According to the frame theory of Minsky [4], humans have frames for every human interaction with their environment, which predict all future similar interactions. There is a specific frame for going to a birthday party that predicts the experience of going to a future party based on past experiences with birthday parties. We have a template or exemplar stored in human memory for all such events that make up our human experience. This method of experiencing the world, based on past experience, creates a somewhat closed perceptual-cognitive system.

The Meno’s paradox of Plato comments on this closed system: “If we can only see what we already know, how can we know what we do not know?” The paradox continues to perplex philosophers and psychologists to this day. However, from the point of view of our survival in a constantly changing physical and social environment, it is essential that new information find its way into our knowledge system. We must come to know about changes in the environment – these include signs of an approaching fire to macro problems like global warming – if we are to adapt our behavior and survive as a species.

Evolution’s Solution: Opening the Closed System

A solution to the Meno paradox is proposed by evolutionary psychology, which places at the center of human existence the necessity of humans being able to ascertain and process new, unfamiliar environmental information into new and adaptive behavior strategies. I will briefly describe two evolutionary psychology theories, one by Donald dealing with human cognitive development in the Paleolithic period [5], the other with the Neolithic period [6].

Donald compares the evolution of human representational strategies to that of the Neanderthals. While humans survived, the Neanderthals, who shared both a temporal and physical space with humans 35,000 years ago in southern Spain and were in many ways more physically fit than humans, did not. The Neanderthal brain evolved in two stages: episodic and mimetic representational structures. Donald conjectures that the human cognitive processing system developed two further representational structures, called the mythic and symbolic representational strategies. According to Donald (5, p. 3): “The key word here is representation. Humans did not simply evolve a larger brain, an expanded memory, a lexicon, or a special speech apparatus; we evolved new systems for representing reality.”

Although the symbolic representational structure of human cognition developed after the mythic representational structure, Donald makes the assumption that in fact all three previous representational structures (episodic, mimetic and mythic) remain as “fully functional vestige[s]” in the present day human cognitive architecture ([5] p. 269). We focus here on the mythic representational strategy for processing and representing reality to ourselves, which Donald believes was the key evolutionary development in the human brain. In fact, Lewis-Williams and Pearce [6] contend that the mythic representational strategy enabled humans to evolve out of the Paleolithic into the Neolithic period.

According to Lewis-Williams and Pearce, it was not the development of agriculture and sedentary life in villages that caused the shift to the Neolithic period, but rather the mythic representational strategy’s quest for meaning and the development of supportive belief systems that led to village living and agriculture. This transition came about because the mythic leaders, the shamans, required the building of permanent tunnels to the dead so that the dead could be consulted about the afterlife and the meaning of life. This requirement necessitated permanent structures supported by agriculture and the symbolic representational strategies that underlie this new way of living.
We emphasize evolutionary psychology and these two theories because they underline the importance of myth and the human quest for existential meaning as levers to symbolic thinking and learning. In other words, there is an existential aspect to exploratory search that can serve as a portal to opening up the closed system of the human perceptual-cognitive system to the new ideas, issues and arguments that make up human symbolic discourse.

**Modeling Idea Formation during Exploratory Information Search**

The searcher sits down at a search engine such as Google with an information need. The information need is a mental state that the searcher must ascertain, then break down into the concepts or keywords that form the searcher’s query to a search engine. This process is straightforward when the searcher knows her information need: she intends to command the search engine to produce the correct answer (or a citation to a website/page with the correct answer). She intends to affect the search engine’s goal-setting levers so that it will produce the form of answer she knows she is seeking.

For exploratory information search on the other hand, the searcher is questioning the search engine so that the search engine will produce information in the results list that will affect the goal settings, the range of state of readiness of the searcher’s brain [7 p. 101], which, hopefully, will make the searcher’s information need clearer to herself. The searcher intends the search engine to open up her own cognitive system to let in the new information. In Figure 1, we label this exploratory search intention “Positive Feedback: Maximize Perturbation.”

In Figure 1, going from left to right, we model the evolution of the mental state of the searcher conducting an exploratory search from the beginning of the existence of the information need to the actualization of her information need after many information searches. The four-pronged symbol represents the evolution of the searcher’s state of mind. The five numbered circles represent the levels of the searcher’s perceptual-cognitive processing system.

The searcher’s information need is initiated by the searcher’s interaction with a new and unfamiliar environmental stimulus, represented by Circle 1. For a 14-year-old, this might be the teacher’s announcement of a history assignment based on a topic of the student’s choice [8]. The new, unfamiliar environmental stimulus “registers” in Circle 2, which is the searcher’s perceptual-conceptual system. We use the word *registration* to indicate the stimulus evokes questions about it in the searcher’s mind. But because Circle 2 is not consciously aware of them, in Figure 1 we give the questions in the Registration Set probabilities of 2%, 3%, 1% and 3%. Circle 2 identifies the questions arising from the stimulus and begins to answer what the stimulus is by, respectively, categorizing and conceptualizing the stimulus. In exploratory search, based on the Registration Set, the searcher creates a query to the search engine and clicks return. The search engine responds by producing output in its results list.

The searcher we are examining in Figure 1 peruses the results list and clicks on a citation or two; she also scans or reads some of the websites/pages
cited in the results list. She has a vague sense of interest in the information she finds there. Let us define this vague sense of interest. Where does it come from? In my theory of information need, it comes from Circle 3, where the searcher’s memory “associates” knowledge and beliefs from the searcher’s prior knowledge, stored in memory, with the new information she has just found. She decides to modify or expand her initial query based on her new mental state of her information need.

Her mental representation of her information need has been altered or, in the language we are using here, her information need has been somewhat actualized. When she types in her modified query into the search engine’s search box, she now has a new Expectation Set of possible questions or aspects of questions, indicated in Figure 1 with a 4-item set each with 25% probability of being the final form of her real information need. She feels directionless — that is, because of the equal probability of the alternatives in the set, she can go in any direction. She leaves the search engine.

Bates’s berrypicking model [9] of information search describes the searcher leaving the information system (that is, the library) and picking up information elsewhere – by talking to colleagues or parents, for example – between the first interaction with the information system, the second interaction and so on.

For a student searcher, perhaps her parent has told her to concentrate on something that interests her, for example, music. “What do you think?” the parent asks the student searcher. “Does suffering produce musical genius?” The searcher changes her query to the search engine in consequence. Circle 5, the searcher’s sense of her existential self vis-a-vis her parent’s question, “Does suffering produce musical genius?” opens up Circle 5, the existential top-level of her cognitive processing system. Circle 5 drains into Circle 4, the searcher’s Belief System — things she believes to be true. And this in turn drains into Circle 3 where the cognitive system “associates” beliefs and knowledge stored in the searcher’s memory with information found in the external world. The searcher’s information need has become more actualized. When one of the questions or issues in the Expectation Set reaches, let’s say, a 50% probability that it will be the final form of her real information need, the searcher now knows what information she needs and she can command the search engine to produce the form-of-answer she expects. Our searcher conducts further searches for evidentiary or proof-of-thesis information, signified in Figure 1 by a man with a top hat and magnifying glass. The searcher in Figure 1 is now out of exploratory search and into command search, which is very well served by the Google search engine the way it is now.

**An Exploratory Information Search Engine**

We visually outline the design of an exploratory search engine in Figure 2. The engine is designed to support idea formation, which requires that the searcher explore information to answer her questions about what it is that she does not know, to actualize her real information need. Such an engine can be designed in many ways. The one we describe here is geared to
students researching a school assignment. In its final form, it is an interactive virtual search environment called the Astrolabe, described slide-form in [1]. The exploratory search engine shown in Figure 2 is divided into five steps:

1. The searcher is asked to list four questions she wishes the search engine output to answer. The four-questions method of verticalizing the searcher’s conceptualization of her information need has been shown to be efficacious in research studies of undergraduates researching a history essay (described in [1], pp. 165-169).

2. The searcher is asked to indicate the probability for each of the four questions that it will be the searcher’s final and real information need. Probabilities must total 100%.

3. The searcher is asked to answer the highest probability question based on her prior knowledge.

4. The searcher is asked why she believes this answer to be true, giving three reasons or “becauses” based on her prior knowledge. These reasons are belief assumptions only and must be justified by seeking evidentiary information in support of these belief assumptions.

5. The searcher is then told by the search engine that these three belief assumptions are her real information need. She must justify her belief in these three belief assumptions by seeking and finding evidentiary information proving/justifying these beliefs. By justifying these beliefs, she therefore proves (to her own satisfaction) that her answer given in step 3 is also true.

The information need of the searcher, when it is fully actualized after using this exploratory search engine, is based on the searcher’s real information need, not a compromised form of the information need [10], which is presently the case with current search engines.

Conclusion

The article gives a brief overview of a theory of information need during exploratory information search which connects the formation of the searcher’s real information need to knowledge-belief formation. Exploratory search is not now adequately served by current search engines. The conception of the searcher’s query to the search engine, after she has utilized the exploratory search engine outlined in Figure 2, is an entirely different conception of the searcher’s information need than the model of information need the Google search engine is based on now.

I ask Google to tear down the searcher’s wall to exploratory search. I suggest a small, discrete exploratory search hyperlink under its first page search box. The searcher clicks on this new exploratory search engine hyperlink and arrives in another world of search, where idea formation, problem identification and solution are facilitated. The addition of an exploratory search engine such as the one outlined in Figure 2 will contribute to Google’s status as the essential search tool of our Information Age.

Resources Mentioned in the Article

Researchers now have numerous options for self-publishing research data. These services range from Silicon Valley startups offering temporary sharing platforms to traditional libraries and archives offering longer-term preservation and curation. This growing array of diverse options available to the research community is a wonderful development, signaling a desire – even if nascent – to increase data sharing and research transparency.

Adding to this mix, the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), a large social and behavioral science data archive based at the University of Michigan, recently launched openICPSR (http://openicpsr.org/). Currently in beta version, openICPSR is a research data-sharing service that allows depositors to rapidly self-publish research data, enabling the public to access the data without charge – or in the case of restricted-use data, for nominal charge. The service was developed to assist researchers meet the requirements for public access to federally funded research data.

ICPSR has a rich 50-year history of archiving and preserving data collections. For standard deposits, professional staff review, curate and distribute data collections in multiple formats. Preservation copies are made to better ensure long-term access. The openICPSR service is an alternative to the standard ICPSR deposit process, providing immediate, self-controlled distribution of data and metadata, albeit without the rich curation and preservation features; data in openICPSR are distributed and preserved as-is. During beta testing, self-publishing with openICPSR is free. After the beta period ends, a fee will be assessed to help recover costs and ensure sustainable preservation and public access.

What Is Unique about openICPSR?

Several features set openICPSR apart from other self-publishing services. The following are among them:

- OpenICPSR is a research data-sharing service that allows depositors to rapidly self-publish research data, enabling the public to access the data without charge – or in the case of restricted-use data, for nominal charge.
- The service was developed to assist researchers meet the requirements for public access to federally funded research data.
- ICPSR has a rich 50-year history of archiving and preserving data collections. For standard deposits, professional staff review, curate and distribute data collections in multiple formats.
- Preservation copies are made to better ensure long-term access. The openICPSR service is an alternative to the standard ICPSR deposit process, providing immediate, self-controlled distribution of data and metadata, albeit without the rich curation and preservation features; data in openICPSR are distributed and preserved as-is. During beta testing, self-publishing with openICPSR is free. After the beta period ends, a fee will be assessed to help recover costs and ensure sustainable preservation and public access.
immediate distribution in ICPSR’s data catalog, with exposure to an established network of over 750 research institutions and over 500,000 unique visitors each year

the reliability of a trusted, sustainable organization that is building on over 50 years of experience archiving research data

an intuitive and clean interface for viewing and organizing files

social and behavioral science-specific metadata, especially covering methodology, indexed by powerful search tools and major search engines

metadata review by professional social and behavioral science librarians

the ability to accept and disseminate sensitive and/or restricted-use data in the public-access environment. Disclosive data can be disseminated via ICPSR’s Virtual Data Enclave, which allows secure access to restricted data through a virtual private network connection to a portal on a desktop computer.

Data self-published on openICPSR may still be selected for standard curation by ICPSR professional staff, either at the depositor’s request or by ICPSR review.

Finding the Right Self-Publishing Provider for Your Data

Each data self-publishing provider has something to offer the research community, but no one provider will be able to meet the needs of all researchers. When faced with choosing a self-publishing data service, there are a few questions to consider: How much descriptive metadata would you like to add? Are you interested in long-term preservation? To which audience do you want your data exposed and distributed? Do your data have disclosure or confidentiality risks? The answers to these questions should help you narrow down the options and choose the service that is the best fit.

The University of Michigan’s openICPSR provides a new self-publishing option, anchored by ICPSR’s 50-years of trusted experience archiving social and behavioral science research data. Interested? Give it a try, and let us know what you think.