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Observations of the American Society for Information Science Los Angeles Chapter

Volume 36, Number 1

Fall 1998

Annual Fall Workshop

Reported by Jason Binford

Ten speakers trekked to the City of Industry on September 18th to address more than a hundred Fall Workshop participants on the topic, "Who's in the Driver's Seat — You or Technology?"

Dr. Ed Hovy began the presentations with a talk on the latest developments in automatic text summarization, clustering, and translation. As director of the Natural Language Group of USC's Information Science Institute, Hovy leads several computer scientists working on ways to control the "information flood" of inaccurate and redundant results for queries on the Web. He noted that one group of drivers for his software research are the funding agencies. For example, his group has been unsuccessful in getting adequate funds for the labor-intensive task of creating ontologies (hierarchical vocabulary classifications), but quickly received resources for work on machine translation between English and Indonesian, soon after economic woes hit Asia.

Two practicing librarians spoke next at the workshop. Nancy O'Neill of Santa Monica Public Library and Ken Pflueger of California Lutheran University addressed libraries' role in promoting information literacy. Both speakers agreed that needs and expectations are changing rapidly. Santa Monica Library's classes on using the Web have become phenomenally popular, while patrons have recently become interested in delivery of library information to their homes or desktops. Pflueger noted that providing formal information literacy programs at a large academic institution is expensive, but that information professionals can leverage their skills by supporting faculty to change their curricula to incorporate new developments in information technology.

Li Hunt explained the project she managed at USC's Information Services Division: the Information System for Los Angeles. ISLA is a digital collection of maps, photographs, statistics, and other information related to Los Angeles. All items in the archive are indexed by space and time, making it possible for a user to focus on a particular area of the city and examine changes to the area over time. Hunt explained that a preliminary version of the software to access the archives is now complete and that an Internet version is anticipated in January 1999.

The first of the day's speakers from industry was Jeff Smith of NTT. His company's project known as "The Living Web" is designed to support

Continued on page 10

News Flash

As this newsletter went to press, we learned that the chapter and its members won several juried awards presented at the ASIS Annual Meeting:

LACASIS
1998 Chapter of the Year Award

OASIS Newsletter
1998 Chapter Publication of the Year Award

University of Hawaii
Student Chapter
1998 Student Chapter of the Year Award

Dr. Marcia Bates, UCLA
1998 Award for Research in Information Science

We've Moved

The LACASIS Web page has moved to a new address, to reflect changes in the Web site of our host, the University of Southern California. The new URL is <http://www.usc.edu/isd/friends/orgs/lacasis/>

Inside This Issue

<i>From the Chair's Desktop</i>	3
<i>Members in the News</i>	3
<i>ASIS Bookstore</i>	5
<i>Lunchtime Discussions</i>	6
<i>Calendar</i>	8
<i>ARIST Review</i>	9
<i>Winning Student Essay</i>	11

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From the Chair's Desktop

by Linda McCann

The first column for this year's issue of the LACASIS newsletter, OASIS, follows quickly after the new year of Rosh Hashanah. I would like to encourage all LACASIS members to be involved in the new year's activities, particularly the ASIS Mid-Year Meeting in Pasadena in Spring 1999.

Our chapter is fortunate to be an active and diverse ASIS chapter that includes Australia and Hawaii, as well as California and Nevada. Our geographical distribution poses challenges as we try to determine how to best serve all of our Los Angeles Chapter ASIS members. Students from our entire geographical area have benefited from the foresight of previous chapter board members who established the Margaret McKinley student scholarship, awarded each year to a student in a regional library and information science program to enable attendance at the ASIS Annual Meeting.

This year I hope to hear from each of you about issues that are of concern to you. When I attend meetings of professional associations, I look to be stimulated by new ideas and exposed to cutting edge research and new applications of technology. This

past year I have heard discussions of such themes as convergence vs. collaboration, intellectual property rights and valued added content, partnerships with emerging multimedia industries along with established broadcasting and publishing industries. Who are the Information Architects of the future? Does venue determine use of technology? How is an extranet different from an intranet and is the Dublin Core compatible with EAD and other standards? Do I need to incorporate metadata into my Website? These are all new questions for us to consider and we can expect many more as the year unfolds. I invite you to submit suggestions for future programs. LACASIS board meetings are open to all members. If you are interested in becoming more involved please contact me at lmccann@usc.edu or give me a call at (213) 740-8382. ■

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Members in the News

Marcia Bates authored "The Role of Publication Type in the Evaluation of LIS Programs," in *Library Information Science Research*, v. 20, n. 2. **Ling Jeng** has been nominated for the position of Director of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) for 1999-2000.

Marcia Bates and **Shaojun Lu** wrote "An Exploratory Profile of Personal Home Pages: Content, Design, Metaphors," in *Online CD-ROM Review*, v. 21, n. 6. **Roslyn Membry** wrote "The Library Enters the Second Millennium" for the Feb. 1997

InCite. **Diane Nahl's** "Ethnography of Novices' First Use of Web Search Engines: Affective Control in Cognitive Processing" appeared in *Internet Reference Services Quarterly* v. 3, n. 2.

Joan Parker and **Hilary Yerbury** wrote "Novice Searchers' Use of Familiar Structures in Searching Bibliographic Information Retrieval Systems," in the *Journal of Information Science*, v. 24 n. 4. **Andrew Treloar** received a travel scholarship from VALA to investigate the role of libraries as facilitators in electronic publishing. ■

The ASIS Bookstore:

*An Interview with Dick Hill, Executive Director of ASIS
by Doroty Fue Wong*

What kind of books does ASIS sell?

HILL: We include all ASIS publications and try to include books by other publishers which are of general interest to members, such as books on HTML or Sherry Turkle's *Live on the Screen* or books which reflect the diversity of the members' interests and are particular to information science. We only include books, however, when we can offer ASIS members a discount off the normal publisher price.

How can books be ordered?

HILL: We can take telephone orders at (301) 495-0810. However, more people are ordering books from our web site (<http://www.asis.org/>). The online bookstore contains a review and table of contents for each book that can be purchased. The books are delivered by UPS in a few days. The delivery charge is \$4.00 per book and then \$3.50 each for additional books.

Do you have book sales?

HILL: We do try to have one or two books on sale every month. It is announced on the front page of the ASIS Web site, which changes on the first of every month. There is no fixed philosophy on which books get "sale" treatment, but we think it is a special service that is appreciated by our members.

What are your best sellers?

HILL: Edward Tufte's series has been a consistent seller since we began making it available. The titles are *Envisioning Information*, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, and *Visual Explorations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narratives*. These normally sell at \$40-\$45 per volume, but ASIS members get a discount.

The ASIS Thesaurus of Information Science and Librarianship by Jessica Milstead, now in its second edition, is a continuing strong seller. Also in demand are *ASIS Annual Proceedings 1997* and *Collaboration Across Boundaries* (May 1998).

New books, of course, sell well. We just recently began offering two books, which are selling quite well, and which we expect to continue to see for some time. They are Ben Schneiderman's *Designing User Interfaces* and Bob Korfhage's *Information Storage and Retrieval*. Ben's work, based on twenty years of experience, is studied by many. Bob Korfhage's book is the 1998 winner of the ASIS Best Information Science Book of the Year Award.

We have also been very satisfied with our books about changes in the publishing world. *Scholarly Publishing*, edited by Greg

Newby and Robin Peck and published for ASIS by MIT Press, and *From Print to Electronic: The Transformation of Scholarly Communication* have both been received and reviewed very favorably.

Design of Library Automation Systems by Michael D. Cooper is another of our best sellers.

What book will be of special interest in the future?

HILL: I think if many people read Peter Drucker's recent articles in *Forbes* magazine, Chun Wei Choo's book, now in a second revised edition, *Information Management for the Intelligent Organization: The Art of Scanning the Environment* should soon attract more attention. ■

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TOPIC

"What advice would you give to a mid-career colleague who feels her job has gone "stale" and her skills and competencies have not kept up with the times? What can she do to rekindle enthusiasm and prepare for future opportunities and challenges?" — Moderated by Karen Howell

Two immediate problems: technology is moving too fast to absorb and training is not consistent or readily available. That said, the group had some general recommendations:

Learning New Skills

Pick something that's relevant to your institution and position. Find opportunities to develop skills in your position. You have to use a technology to really understand and learn it. Accept you can't learn or know everything - pick a few areas on which to concentrate. Develop a general knowledge of trends, so you know which area might solve which problems. Then when a problem arises, know how and where to go to learn it. Take every opportunity to be involved with conferences, workshops, and user groups.

Motivating Others to Learn

Make people responsible for training others so they have an interest in learning it. Tie the learning technology to a personal interest of theirs. Make learning more peer-oriented instead of instructor-driven.

Motivating Yourself

Search the Web for information on a personal interest, for example information on a new car, or vacation planning or a hobby. Go into a training session with a specific problem in mind to solve. Participate in a user group or listserv to ask questions and eventually answer them.

TOPIC

"What kind of training, education, and focus would you recommend to a recent college grad interested in a career in information science (libraries)? Should he/she go to "library school" or become a programmer/systems analyst instead? How would you describe the work environment in this field?" — Moderated by Louisa Toot

The table was about 1/3 library school students, 1/3 new grads, and 1/3 people 1-3 years out of library school so the discussion was about the expectations of people who are hiring in the field of librarianship.

Lunchtime at the LACAS

by Lucy We

*Something new at this year's w
to participate in focused disc
participants were enthusiastic
or break-out opportunity, g
lunchtime was too noisy a
effectively. That said, out of f
question and produced notes w*

What are the expectations and what are the realities? This topic came out of a point that was raised during the panel discussion, namely that established librarians hope that library schools are training the newbie librarians well. It is interesting to note that the panel discussion pointed out a difference between "computer literacy" (specific knowledge of how to use a computer) and "information literacy" (how to find, evaluate and use information) and how these commonly are confused for the same thing. Computer literacy is a very specific type of literacy, but once information literacy skills are taught, they can be applied to many different areas. It appears that in the library world a similar confusion is happening. Jobs focus on and require knowledge of specific software applications and systems but don't look at new graduates' abilities to transfer the skills they have learned in their schooling as information professionals into a wide range of job activities.

Old Knowledge vs. New Knowledge

Depending on what environment you will be working in, there is the expectation that library school grads be well-versed in both the old ways of doing things and the new high-tech methods. For example, knowing how to use a card catalog as well as an online catalog; or knowing how to conduct a reference interview as well as answer reference questions through email.

Rapid change means some knowledge is obsolete by the time you get out of graduate school. Four years ago everyone was

Discussions LACASIS Workshop

gner, USC

workshop was the opportunity
discussions during lunch. While
about the idea of a discussion
general consensus was that
and distracting to do this
five topics, three stuck to the
which are summarized below.

using Windows 3.1, browsing the Internet with Archie, Veronica or Mosaic and sending email with Pine. Now it's Windows 95/NT, Netscape Communicator and MS Outlook. It is unrealistic to think that library schools should be teaching students particular software applications and systems. Depending on where you are working, the systems may be the older versions or the latest version. Different environments require knowledge of different software applications. It is unrealistic to think that library schools can train on every possible application.

Exact vs. General

Many jobs advertise that you need knowledge of a particular system or database. It was the consensus at our table that this is an unfair expectation. If new grads are taught database searching skills, then these skills are transferable to other databases. If a person has learned Web page creation using FontPage, this can be transferred to HotDog or PageMill.

A Current Need In Library Science Education

Library schools need to start teaching more systems librarian-oriented courses for those interested in going into that area of librarianship. Most of the current systems librarians learned their job on-the-job.

What the Current Environment is Like

A lot of libraries are in technological transition, changing from one computer system or platform to another. Be ready for constant upgrading and technological change. Also, be ready to teach others on systems or applications that you may have just learned the day before!

Job-hunting Advice

Look at the job postings for the types of jobs you want to apply for and see what kinds of skills and knowledge they are requiring. Take it upon yourself to learn the applications and databases that most often come up in the job postings. When applying for jobs, concentrate on promoting your transferable skills. Maybe you never used FrontPage but if you know HTML, definitely let that be known!

TOPIC

"Congratulations! Your library/information center has just received a windfall of \$100,000! Where do you spend it?" — Moderated by Chris Ferguson

Those at the table were a good scatter among LACASIS constituencies: graduate student, corporate information centers, public and academic librarians. The topic was loosely interpreted as: a big chunk of money to present a range of possibilities, but not too big to preclude some tough choices. As might be expected, opinions divided roughly evenly between satisfaction of immediate needs and investment in long-term needs.

Immediate Needs

Restore last year's journal budget cuts. Enhance book budget. Hire additional personnel. Purchase ergonomic workstations.

Tomorrow's Needs

Professional development and training. Electronic information resources. R&D for adaptation of intelligent agents for ref/info service through network.

Conclusion

How to decide between yesterday's needs and tomorrow's demands? Responses highly idiosyncratic with respect to each organization, its real and perceived needs and even its culture.



Many thanks to the discussion leaders and to the participants at each table. Would you like to see this discussion idea at future workshops? Do you hate this idea? Let the LACASIS Board know.

Calendar

Need ideas for which meeting to attend next? This is the place for you.

November 10 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. LACASIS Contributions to Information Science Award Dinner. UCLA Faculty Center. (Speaker is Michele Cloonan, honoring Seymour Lubetzky, professor emeritus of UCLA.) Contact: Sally McCoy, (949) 499-4084, smmccoy@earthlink.net. <http://www.usc.edu/isd/friends/orgs/lacasis/>

November 12 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. UCLA Information Studies Seminar. "What's Next for Text?" presented by Richard Lanham. UCLA GSE&IS Room 111. Contact: Phil Agre, pagre@ucla.edu

November 14-17 California Library Association 100th Annual Conference. Oakland. <http://www.cla-net.org/>

December 3 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. UCLA Information Studies Seminar. "21st Century Librarians," presented by Elizabeth Martinez. UCLA GSE&IS Room 111. Contact: Phil Agre, pagre@ucla.edu

December 8-10 Online Information 98. London, United Kingdom. <http://www.online-information.co.uk/>

December 8-11 Cause98. "The Networked Academy." Seattle, WA. <http://www.educase.edu/>

December 9 6:00 - 9:30 p.m. Southern California Online Users Group Holiday Party. "Information: What a Concept!" Altadena Town & Country Club. Contact: Belinda, (213) 489-9800, belinda.aimusa@juno.com

December 10 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. UCLA Information Studies Seminar. "What is the Product of an Internet Cafe? Methodological Thoughts on Cyberspace Research," presented by Nina Wakeford. UCLA GSE&IS Room 111. Contact: Phil Agre, pagre@ucla.edu

December 15 Annual Joint LACASIS/SLA Holiday Dinner. Caltech Athenaeum, Pasadena. (The speaker is writer/performer Sandra Tsing Loh, author of the essay collection, *Depth Takes a Holiday* and the novel, *If You Lived Here, You'd Be Home By Now.*) <http://www.usc.edu/isd/friends/orgs/lacasis/>

January 19-21, 1999 Information Online & On Disc 99. Sydney, Australia. <http://www.csu.edu.au/special/online99/>

January 29 - February 3 American Library Association Midwinter Meeting. Philadelphia, PA. <http://www.ala.org/>

February 5-7 Joint Meeting of the Northern California and Nevada Medical Library Group (NCMLG) and the Medical Library Group of Southern California and Arizona (MLGSCA). Fairmont Hotel, San Jose. <http://www-ncnmlg.stanford.edu:5000/jtmtg/>

February 12 Online Northwest 99. Portland, OR. Sponsored by the Interinstitutional Library Council Online Coordinators Committee of the Oregon University System. <http://www.sou.edu/library/onlinenw/>

March 8-10 Computers in Libraries '99. Arlington VA. <http://www.infotoday.com/>

April 26-28 Intranets '99 ("Strategies and Practices for Content Management") and VirComm '99 ("Conference on Business-Based Virtual Communities"). Hyatt Regency San Francisco. <http://www.onlineinc.com/>

May 14-20 Medical Library Association Annual Meeting. Chicago IL. <http://www.mlanet.org/>

May 18-20 National Online Meeting & IOLS '99. New York, NY. <http://www.infotoday.com/>

May 23-26 Third International Conference on Concepts of Library and Information Science (CoLIS 3). "Digital Libraries: Interdisciplinary Concepts, Challenges and Opportunities." Dubrovnik, Croatia. <http://www.colis3.hr/>

May 24-26 ASIS Mid-Year Meeting. "Evaluating and Using Networked Information Resources and Services." Pasadena Hilton Hotel. <http://www.asis.org/>

June 5-10 Special Libraries Association Annual Conference. "Knowledge Leaders for the New Millennium." Minneapolis, MN. <http://www.sla.org/>

June 9-13 American Society of Indexers Annual Meeting. "Racing into the Millennium." Indianapolis, IN. <http://www.asindexing.org/mtgs.htm>

June 24-July 1 American Library Association Annual Conference. New Orleans, LA. <http://www.ala.org/>

November 1-4 ASIS Annual Meeting. "Knowledge: Creation, Organization and Use." Washington, DC. <http://www.asis.org/>

ARIST Reviewed

by Dorothy Fue Wong

During the last thirty-one years, ASIS has published *The Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*. These publications present the latest developments with extensive bibliographies and an index to all previous volumes. A master plan, grouped by major issues, has been established to give continuity to several decades of research.

This year volume 32 contains these eight topics: Evaluation of Information Retrieval Systems: Approaches, Issues, and Methods; Visualization of Literatures; Indexing Images; Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery; Content Evaluation of Databases; Chemical Structure Handling by Computer; Information Ethics; and Legal Informatics: Application of Information Technology in Law. For most topics, discussions include the latest development relating to the Internet with relevant Web sites.

Here are Some Highlights

Content Evaluation of Databases by Peter Jacso at the University of Hawaii at Manoa discusses content problems with commercial databases; this has created difficulties in retrieving relevant and accurate electronic information. He presents a comprehensive set of criteria that can be used to evaluate database effectiveness. Evaluation techniques will be more important in the future because Internet databases lack the sophistication of those created by commercial online services.

Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery by Walter J. Trybula. Vast storage of data exists because of increased and inexpensive computer power. However, data is collected too often without being structured to yield insights or relationships. At this point of development, data mining consists largely of numerical databases and is business oriented. Web sites are given that contain the latest research and bibliographies in this field.

Indexing Images by Edie M. Rasmussen at the University of Pittsburgh presents a survey of the research on the two indexing methods currently being used to handle the rapid advances in image technology. The first is concept-based indexing that uses words to describe an image, and is limited in its effectiveness. The other is content-based indexing that involves the automatic indexing of the image itself. The research for this approach is the most active. Very little research has been done on user interaction with images.

Visualization of Literatures by Howard D. White and Katherine W. McCain at Drexel University discusses the need to simplify massive amount of literature because it cannot be viewed in its entirety. In print these visualization models are: bibliographic; bibliometric; user oriented; and synthetic (summary, rewriting, or extraction). The most dynamic research is being done in

computerized visualization. This involves mapping multi-facet elements that can be accessed through an interactive interface. The majority of the article discusses the latest research in this area.

Evaluation of Information Retrieval Systems: Approaches, Issues, and Methods by Stephen P. Harter and Carol A. Hert of Indiana University, present a survey of the literature since 1975 on computerized IR systems from a basic research perspective. The authors discuss limitations of the thirty-year-old Cranfield model and the emergence of six major trends that are advancing the research in this area. The authors also present a six point IR research agenda. The section on Internet search engines concludes that there is a lack of systematic research on retrieval performance in this area and the need for new evaluation measurements that go beyond the Cranfield model. This article is a valuable contribution to the field.

The work of several LACASIS members is cited in the volume: Barbara Quint, Christine Borgman, Marcia Bates, and Gregory Leazer. ■

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TEACH YOURSELF WEB PUBLISHING WITH HTML IN A WEEK, 3rd Ed.
Author: Lemay, Laura
Year: 1996 ISBN: 1-57521-102-0 Price: \$29.99

WORKSHOP *from page 1*

intellectual teamwork in an organization. For example, when the National Science Foundation was developing the proposal for the Next Generation Internet, over 200 people collaborated on a 200 page document, and tracing the changes made over time was crucial. The Living Web provides a framework for such collaboration, using HTTP and Java. NTT's software application EColabor, based on the Living Web idea, will be commercially available by the end of 1998.

Lunchtime at this workshop saw a new experiment. Participants were invited to have their meals at certain tables devoted to particular discussion questions. Each topic was moderated by one person at the table who took notes on the discussions. [Please see the separate article in this issue for the topics and notes.]

Immediately after lunch two speakers addressed information agent technology. Craig Knoblock of USC spoke on his work developing tools to integrate information from multiple Web sites on the Internet or on intranets. His Ariadne project is a prototype system that can perform such tasks as combining changing data from different Web sites containing airline schedules, current weather forecasts, and historical weather data, in order to predict delayed flights.

Autonomy, Inc's Adrian Szwarchburg presented his company's agent software designed to automatically extract key concepts

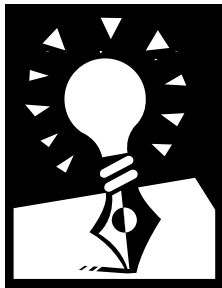
from text documents. Although he didn't go into detail on the method his software uses, its central algorithm recognizes patterns of words and then "learns" which patterns are important through interacting with the human users.

The Millennium Bug was the focus of Karl Geiger's presentation. He gave a case study of his work at the AMGEN corporate library preparing its computer systems for the date change from 1999 to 2000. As a computer professional, he was able to give an interesting perspective on the roots of this problem. Unlike the usual portrayal of this being a mistake of short-sighted programmers, he explained that in the early days of computers, storage costs were so expensive that recording years as two digits rather than four saved an estimated \$1 trillion dollars over the course of several years. In contrast, the cost estimate for fixing the bug over the next couple of years is about \$600 billion.

The final presentation of the day was from Debbie Hansen and Jacqueline Lesch of San Jose State University's Distributed MLS Program. Starting as an experiment in 1989, the Southern California arm of this program, based at Cal State Fullerton, has expanded to over 300 students. Using technology such as interactive video and Web-based online tutorials, the program continues to expand to other cities.

The day-long workshop ended with drawings for door prizes, written evaluations from participants — and everyone snapping on their seatbelts for the drive home. ■

Winning Student Essay



The Los Angeles Chapter awards the Margaret McKinley Memorial Scholarship annually to a student in a library or information science program in our region (which includes Hawaii and Australia in addition to California). Eligible students submit essays which are judged by a panel of LACASIS members who are not informed of the names of the authors.

This year's winner is Holly Korotie Ying. She receives a scholarship of \$1,000 to attend the ASIS Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh. 1998 has been a full year Ms. Ying. In addition to winning the scholarship, she was awarded her MLIS from UCLA, was hired as an Information Resources Specialist at Quarterdeck Corp., and married Tom Ying. Her winning essay is printed below.

1998 Essay by Holly Ying

With the improvement and increasing accessibility of technology, it is vital that information specialists create and maintain a sense of professional and personal identity. Robert Hayes describes the value of humans in an information age:

"The value of the machine lies in its error-free nature. The value of man, on the other hand, is precisely his ability to create, to see new order . . . if we did not try to create order where it did not exist, men, like the machine, would conform to the established paths and never create," (Hayes, page 156).

As humans we use our imaginations and creativity to create the systems and tools to maintain levels of technological development that enhance life. As information professionals we use our experience and skills to connect users with information, thus we empower others.

It follows that librarians and information specialists are at the forefront of technological innovation and development. "In this new future, one in which we really do not know where we will end up, the information professional often takes on the role of expedition guide," (Griffiths, page 8). Libraries and other information agencies are the first to understand and implement new technologies in their collections. Others look to information professionals to set the standards that will ultimately affect other segments of society. With this powerful role, it is imperative that information specialists arm themselves with a message incorporating information access and organization.

Organization of information and information access are interdependent - they rely on one another for structure and support. By providing access to information, it is necessary for the foundations of structure and organization to be in place.

Whether the information retrieval process is manual or automated, it is necessary to provide access to the collection in the clearest, most consistent way. To this end, it is important to incorporate an understanding of the way people look for information based on the tenets of information seeking behavior. Understanding user needs and information seeking behavior

enables professionals to design better systems and implement more valuable services.

As information professionals, we must embrace present and future technologies in order to maintain a place for ourselves in society. We must reframe the way we conceptualize our careers. No longer are they static and lifelong; rather, they fluctuate and transition regularly. Finally, we must equip ourselves with the tools to participate in lifelong learning so that our skills as empowering professionals do not become obsolete.

It is my intent to import my knowledge of the theories and practices of information science and lifelong learning to the users that I serve and empower. I plan to use technology as a tool and as a means to an end. In doing so, I hope to promote a collection of users who are able to locate and decipher the information to fit their needs, regardless of technology or environment. ■

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