Online Education Task Force Members
Diane Rasmussen Neal, Chair, The University of Western Ontario
Jacob Ratliff, New Leader (Diane’s mentee), National Fire Protection Association
Linda Smith, ASIS&T Past President, University of Illinois
Kathy Burnett, Education Committee Co-chair, Florida State University
KT Vaughan, Member, University of North Carolina
Ian Henry Burke, Student Member, University of Denver

Background and Charge
President Diane Sonnenwald formed the ASIS&T Online Education Task Force during the FY 2012 Board of Directors meeting in New Orleans. She accepted the recommendation of Diane Rasmussen Neal, who served as the Chair of the Webinar Task Force in 2011 under President Linda Smith’s mandate. While the Webinar Task Force’s charge was to investigate needs and preferences of potential webinar participants, the purpose of the Online Education Task Force was to continue overseeing the implementation of the webinar program, as well as to consider new virtual formats and modalities for education and networking opportunities that ASIS&T members could benefit from throughout the year.

Activities

Meta-webinar

In January 2012, Diane presented a meta-webinar called “The ASIS&T Webinar on Webinars: How to Propose, Organize, and Present a Webinar.” It was free, well-attended, and well-received. It is available at http://www.asis.org/Conferences/webinars/2012/webinar-on-webinars.php; the highlights were advertised as follows:

- A summary of the fact-finding results of the Webinar Task Force, and how these results are informing the direction of the new Online Education Task Force and the Education Committee,
- How to suggest webinar topics for continuing education purposes,
- Innovative ways in which SIGs, chapters, or other ASIS&T entities can take advantage of the webinar software for programs and business meetings,
- How to work with ASIS&T headquarters when scheduling a webinar,
- How easy it is to use ASIS&T’s webinar software as a webinar organizer and presenter.

Panel

Karen Miller, SIG ED Program Coordinator, contacted Diane to see whether she would lead a panel on the Online Education Task Force at the Annual Meeting. The panel was accepted with very strong reviews; the panel description and the reviews are included in the Appendix to this
report. The panel will be held at 3:30 Sunday; the first breakout session time slot of the conference.

**Task Force Discussion**

The task force members communicated through email, ASIS&T-sponsored teleconferences, and a Google Hangout. The group contemplated various purposes and formats for online education provision.

**Recommendations**

The many webinars that have been held over the past year are testaments to the success of the program and the desire for webinars. Most have been educational in nature, but others have taken new forms, such as the “ASIS&T Student Chapter Leaders and Advisors: A Virtual Meeting” governance-based webinar led by Naresh Agarwal (Student Chapter Representative to the Chapter Assembly, ASIS&T Student Chapter Advisors). We feel that while these are all steps in the right direction, we would like to see ASIS&T advance to the next stage in the program’s evolution. The Task Force strongly recommends to the Board of Directors that ASIS&T should move beyond the current webinar model to further exploit technology to support ongoing engagement and professional development.

The next stage in our technology adoption could take a number of forms and serve many purposes. For example, there is a need for networking, collaborative engagement among the membership. Many members are not able to attend the Annual Meeting, and other members question the value of their membership because they feel that nothing useful happens between Annual Meetings. Providing opportunities for members to communicate and learn outside of the Annual Meeting is a way to address these concerns; this has implications for membership recruitment and retention.

The Task Force believes that the best approach to accomplishing these goals is to create a single unified platform that can connect all members and all activities – networking or educational, synchronous or asynchronous. Many isolated online presences have been attempted over time, but these are not united. For example, we have had wikis specific to individual Annual Meetings, Facebook pages created by individual SIGs, and various presences on Twitter. It is difficult to maintain (and remember to visit) these individual but well-meaning attempts at online conversation. If we had a unified platform, we could use it for the following (presented for brainstorming and discussion purposes only):

- To conduct conversations about webinar topics before and after webinars.
- To conduct conversations about Annual Meeting topics before and after the Annual Meeting.
- To provide a “coffee shop” area for members to chat.
- To provide links to recorded webinars, recorded or live streamed regional and chapter events, and so on.
We see two ways to work toward breaking down the silos that exist within the Society: use an already established platform, or develop our own. These options are explored below.

**Already established platform**

Existing social media-based platforms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, wiki software, or Google+, are one option. These sources have an established community (i.e. many of us already have accounts on them), migration would be relatively simple, and it would be easy to advertise topics, events, and discussions to many people at once. On the other hand, privacy concerns exist around these tools, some people like to keep their personal and professional online identities separate, and there is the potential for a loss of control over the platform; what if Facebook goes away or takes our content away?

**ASIS&T-only platform**

Another option would be for ASIS&T to develop its own platform. This could involve completely new development, the implementation of an open source CMS such as Drupal, or take other forms. This would allow us to have control over the content and the platform, and would provide static landing of the membership over time. However, it could be expensive or time-consuming to develop, as well as to migrate members.

**Conclusions**

The Task Force greatly appreciates the opportunity afforded by President Sonnenwald to develop recommendations for the future of ASIS&T’s online membership interaction. We hope that the Board is pleased with our recommendation, and that it will lead to productive discussion at the Board meeting as well as concrete direction for the Society’s next move in these new and exciting opportunities for meaningful membership engagement and professional development.

**Suggested Commendation**

Diane would like to recommend to the Board that New Leader Jacob Ratliff be commended for his invaluable work on the Task Force. Despite his busy schedule as a practitioner and multiple involvements in ASIS&T during his first year of active membership in the Society, he was responsive, involved, engaged, and visionary in his work – including the presentation of a very successful webinar on taxonomies. In the mind of his mentor, Jacob exemplifies the enthusiastic involvement that we should see in our New Leaders.
ASIS&T Online Education Initiatives: Driving the Future

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ABSTRACT
This panel provides an update for ASIS&T members on the activities of the Webinar Task Force and the Online Education Task Force to increase online communication and education efforts within the Society. Both task forces were formed by presidential appointment in 2011 with the goal of expanding the involvement of ASIS&T in the provision of online educational offerings. In addition to expanding webinar offerings, an organizational emphasis on online communication and education drives increased networking opportunities and ensures that members remain connected to the Society between annual meetings. Panel presentations include comments on the context of online education generally, insight into the background and context of the ASIS&T online education initiative, updates on the results and ongoing efforts of the task forces, and a perspective on the future and potential of online education within ASIS&T.

Sponsors
SIG/ED and the ASIS&T Online Education Task Force

Conference Track
TRACK 3, Innovation

Keywords
Webinar, online education, online education task force.

INTRODUCTION
During her year as president of ASIS&T, Linda Smith focused on expanding the involvement of ASIS&T in the provision of online educational offerings, including the appointment of the ASIS&T Webinar Task Force made up of various stakeholders (representing SIGs, chapters, student chapters and relevant committees) to offer guidance on how to develop webinar programs as benefits to current members and as a means of raising the visibility of ASIS&T and attracting new members. This panel provides ASIS&T members with an update on the activities of the Webinar Task Force and the Online Education Task Force. Panel presentations include an overview of recent trends and current state of online education, a review of learning and communication technologies that have been shown to effectively support collaborative learning and knowledge building, insight into the background and context of the ASIS&T online education initiative, and updates on the results and ongoing efforts of the task forces. The presentation will end with a thoughtful perspective on the future and potential of online education within ASIS&T.

FORMAT
The event will take place during a single ASIS&T paper session time slot. The moderator will introduce each panelist, followed by the panelist presentations. Julia Khanova will provide a context for online education generally. Linda Smith will discuss the background and context for the webinar program, formation of the Webinar Task Force, and formation of the Online Education Task Force. Diane Rasmussen Neal will report on the results of the Task Force on Webinars and the current efforts of the Online Education Task Force. Jacob Ratliff will close the presentations with thoughts for the future and potential of online communication and education within ASIS&T. A question and answer period will follow the panelists’ presentations, including opportunities for those attending to offer input on ASIS&T online education initiatives.
BENEFITS
The panel will update the ASIS&T membership on the important work of the Webinar Task Force and the Online Education Task Force. The event will emphasize online communication and education within ASIS&T as a strategic direction for the Society.

PROMOTION
This panel will be heavily promoted using ASIS&T listersrvs, as well as SIG/ED Facebook and Twitter accounts.

PANELISTS
Diane Rasmussen Neal, Moderator
Diane Rasmussen Neal is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at The University of Western Ontario. She has been teaching library and information science courses online since 2004, and has published papers on online education in journals such as the Journal of Online Learning & Teaching. She is an ASIS&T Director-at-Large, the chair of last year's ASIS&T Webinar Task Force, and the current chair of the ASIS&T Online Education Task Force.

Diane will first present the results of 2011’s Task Force on Webinars. Members included June Abbas, Daniel Alemehe, Remlee Green, and Alex Garnett. As noted in the final report, “the charge of this task force involved making recommendations to the Board and to Headquarters on a variety of issues surrounding ASIS&T's new webinar program. Data sources included task force conference calls and emails, a Membership Survey, a Non-Member Survey, a Competitive Intelligence Scan of Professional and Scholarly Associations, post-webinar feedback from attendees, web statistics, and in-depth qualitative consultation with stakeholders.”

She will then report on the ongoing efforts of the current Online Education Task Force, created by President Diane Sonnenwald in October 2011. Membership consists of Linda Smith, Jacob Ratliff, KT Vaughan, Ian Burke, and Kathleen Burnett.

Linda C. Smith
Linda C. Smith is Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Programs at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has been a member of the faculty at Illinois since 1977 and has taught online in the LEEP option of the MS program since 1997. With support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, she collaborated in development of the Web-based Information Science Education consortium that now includes 15 universities in four countries (http://www.wiseducation.org/). She has been a member of ASIS&T since 1972 and has served in many roles including ASIS&T President in 2010-2011.

Linda will provide background on her efforts to expand the involvement of ASIS&T in the provision of online educational offerings through the appointment of the ASIS&T Webinar Task Force, with the goal of enhancing opportunities for continuing professional development throughout the year between annual ASIS&T conferences. Through such an initiative (http://www.asis.org/Conferences/webinars/), ASIS&T joins other professional associations, vendors and organizations like the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) in reaching out to individuals who can benefit from access to this mode of learning.

Julia Khanova
Julia Khanova is a PhD candidate at the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research interests include various aspects of online education from general trends to specific technologies, primarily from the teaching perspective. She has presented on online education trends and technologies at iConference and ASIS&T, as well as authored papers and a book chapter on the faculty experience of online teaching. Over the past two years, Julia has designed and taught an online course and is presently conducting dissertation research focused on online pedagogy in Library and Information Science education.

Julia will provide the overview of recent trends and current state of online education as a general context for discussion of online education efforts within ASIS&T. She will also present a brief review of learning and communication technologies that have been shown to effectively support collaborative learning and knowledge building. Her contribution to the panel will provide foundation for discussion of ways these technologies can be leveraged to enable and sustain an ongoing learning community within ASIS&T.

Jacob Ratliff
Jacob Ratliff is the Archivist/Taxonomy Librarian at the National Fire Protection Association, and in charge of creating and maintaining controlled vocabularies throughout the Association. He previously worked at the University of Denver and the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries doing digital project management and metadata support after graduating with his MLIS from the University of Denver with a concentration in Knowledge Management and a specialization in Information Science and Technology. He is also a recipient of an ASIS&T New Leaders Award, and is a member of the ASIS&T Online Education Task Force. During his free time, he enjoys video games and co-edits a blog with Diane Rasmussen Neal on gaming and information.

What is the future of online education for ASIS&T? The Society has built the groundwork for solid educational opportunities with the Webinar Task Force and the
Online Education Task Force, but the Society should keep looking to the future and how to improve online education for the information professions. Jacob will give some ideas and try to expand the conversation to how ASIS&T can build a global platform to greatly encourage online education and community within the information communities and professions.
### Panel Reviews

**REVIEWER #1**

Reviewer's Scores

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<td>ALL - Presentation quality</td>
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<td>PANELS - Perceived impact</td>
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<td>PANELS - Quality of Submission</td>
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<td>PANELS - Interest and timeliness</td>
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<td>PANELS - Panelists/Presenters</td>
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Overall assessment (Panels and workshops): 5

ALL - Recommendation: 5

**REVIEWER #2**

Reviewer's Scores

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Overall assessment (Panels and workshops): 4

ALL - Recommendation: 4
Reviewer's Scores

ALL - Scope: 5
ALL - Presentation quality: 5
PANELS - Perceived impact: 5
PANELS - Quality of Submission: 5
PANELS - Interest and timeliness: 5
PANELS - Panelists/Presenters: 5
Overall assessment (Panels and workshops): 5
ALL - Recommendation: 5

Comments

Given that this work is endorsed by a SIG and an ASIST task force, this panel is needed.

Specific comments / clarification

Introduction section
.. relevant committees ... “
>>> such as ???