

by Linda C. Smith

**LINDA C. SMITH**

2011 ASIS&T President
Associate Dean
Graduate School of Library
and Information Science
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign
[lcsmith<at>illinois.edu](mailto:lcsmith@at>illinois.edu)

EDITOR'S SUMMARY

As ASIS&T president for 2011, Linda Smith is emphasizing the use of webinars to provide educational opportunities that support the Society's purpose of encouraging members' professional growth. A live, interactive, online presentation, a webinar serves well as an educational forum for participants and adds long-term value through recording and archiving. Smith is leading efforts focusing on webinar content development, providers, delivery issues, costs and compensation, and policies to serve further development. A two-part ASIS&T webinar on linked data follows multi-part webinar presentations on information architecture and on taxonomy uses.

KEYWORDS

web conferencing
continuing education
information science education

One focus area during my year as ASIS&T president is expanding the involvement of ASIS&T in the provision of online educational offerings. ASIS&T Headquarters staff have taken the lead in scheduling a series of timely and informative webinars, including a four-part taxonomy webinar series presented by Project Performance Corporation, an introduction to information architecture presented by Donna Spencer, a four-part taxonomy uses series presented by Access Innovations

and a two-part linked data series presented by Karen Coyle (www.asis.org/Conferences/webinars/). While the ASIS&T Annual Meeting and other face-to-face events like the Information Architecture (IA) and Research Data Access and Preservation (RDAP) Summits support research dissemination and continuing education, webinars and other online formats can enhance opportunities for continuing professional development throughout the year. Through such an initiative, 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.

A webinar is “a live online educational presentation during which participating viewers can submit questions and comments” (combining the terms “web + seminar,” www.merriam-webster.com/). Often such live events are recorded and archived, enabling viewing both by those who attended and want to review what was covered as well as those who were not able to attend in real time. Webinars thus remove barriers to participation in professional development, improving accessibility for everyone from students to professionals in many different countries. A webinar can be interactive and participatory, enhancing engagement with the content being presented. Various vendors support delivery of webinars; ASIS&T is currently using GoToWebinar from Citrix Online, LLC (www.gotomeeting.com/fec/webinar).

June Abbas, University of Oklahoma, and Diane Neal, University of Western Ontario, co-chairs of the Information Science Education Committee, are leading the effort to develop

strategies to expand ASIS&T efforts in webinar development and delivery. June's activities include identifying how related professional associations are already making use of webinars and working with SIG/DL to develop webinars. Diane will chair a task force made up of various stakeholders (representing SIGs, chapters, student chapters and relevant committees) to offer guidance on how to develop a webinar program that is a benefit to current members and a means of raising the visibility of ASIS&T and attracting new members. The task force will provide input to the ASIS&T Board and Headquarters staff on potential topics and providers as well as policy considerations

(for example, review of proposals, compensation for presenters, charges for participation, archiving for reuse).

The ASIS&T purpose notes that ASIS&T “encourages and supports personal and professional growth through opportunities for members to extend their knowledge and skills, develop and use professional networks, pursue career development goals and assume leadership roles in the Society and in the information community” (www.asis.org/about.html). Fostering growth of a high-quality webinar program offers a new means for ASIS&T to realize this purpose. I welcome member input on how you would like to contribute to and benefit from this new initiative. ■