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.

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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 listerservs, 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 Alemneh, 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.