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FOCUS: THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE PROFESSION

INFO VIEW
3 Are You Ready for the Future?
CINDY ROMAINE

INSIDE INFO
4 Services to Early-Career Members to Get Boost · Service Project Added to Conference Program · SLA CEO Named Fellow of Association Leadership Group

INFO NEWS
6 Judge Nixes Google Book Deal · Report Offers Best Practices in Managing Info Resources · Library Spending to Level Off in 2011, Study Predicts · Cornell Library Nixes Contracts with Confidentiality Agreements · More Data Being Processed, But Usage Remains Low

SLA MEMBER INTERVIEW
20 10 Questions: Debra Kolah
STUART HALES

EMBEDDED LIBRARIANSHIP
25 Success and the Embedded Librarian
MARY TALLEY, MLS

INFO RIGHTS
29 Analyzing Possible Copyright Infringement
LESLEY ELLEN HARRIS

INFO TECH
32 Concerns about Technological Fragmentation
STEPHEN ABRAM, MLS

36 Coming Events Ad Index
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12 – 15 June 2011
Pennsylvania Convention Center • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA

SLA 2011 Features Keynote Speakers:

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Three-time Pulitzer Prize winner and author of *Hot, Flat and Crowded.*

James Kane
Researcher and consultant on building loyalty and connections.

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Are You Ready for the Future?

On January 1, the Future Ready 365 blog (http://futureready365.sla.org) was launched with the intent of answering a single question: How are you getting ready for the future?

The blog is a key component of my presidential initiative for SLA for 2011, which is to focus our members on becoming “future ready.” You know the old saying that we’re only as strong as our weakest link? That’s how I see it.

Many members are already strongly aligned with the future direction of our profession, but some worry that they might not be able to keep up. Others despair of ever getting the insights, training, and networking opportunities they need. My hope is that by the end of my term, we’ll all be helping each other adopt an attitude of being more adaptable, flexible and confident in utilizing our skills in the new knowledge economy.

With the help of a dedicated team of volunteers, we’re asking all corners of the SLA community—members, vendors, partners, clients, and users—for blog posts. We’re gathering fresh content at a rate of one post a day, for every day of 2011.

Crazy, right? Actually, I prefer the term “audacious.” I want to provide members with the opportunity to learn from each other’s perspectives and successes. I intend to be relentless in sleuthing out positive perspectives. We are a successful profession because of individual victories everywhere, and I want to shine my spotlight on those wins.

Technology is on a relentless upward trajectory, enabling more robust content, expanding capacity, and putting unimagined capabilities within reach. The speed of change will only continue to accelerate, as predictions such as these from the Gartner Group (2010) indicate:

- By 2013, 80 percent of businesses will support a workforce using tablets.
- By 2014, 90 percent of organizations will support corporate applications on personal devices.
- By 2015, companies will generate half of their Web sales through their social presence and mobile applications.
- By 2015, 10 percent of your online “friends” will be non-human.

Roughly 100 posts into the Future Ready 365 project, we’ve heard from seasoned SLA contributors, past presidents, award winners, members who have been laid off, members early in their career, students, and even a few management gurus. Here are some early insights:

1. Change and technology are invariably on people’s mind. To be future ready, you need to embrace technological innovation.

   “Change is inevitable. It didn’t start with computers and it won’t end with the semantic Web.”
   Kendra Lavine, January 22

   “Ignoring any method of reaching our patrons is the opposite of future ready. To do so willfully should constitute malpractice.”
   Kama Siegel, February 17

2. Several posts strongly advise aligning with your company’s values and initiatives.

   “Get involved by attending the meetings, programs, or conferences they attend … basically let them see your commitment to learning as much about their discipline as you can in order to provide the relevant products and services that will meet their needs.”
   Ethel Salonen, March 3

3. To be future ready—and this is advice from two management experts—it’s essential to understand our clients’ perspective.

   “My book is about learning skills to become more enchanting so that you can delight your customers, employees, and bosses.”
   Guy Kawasaki, February 22

   “Being ‘future ready’ is not only about knowing how to go forward, it’s about knowing when to step back. Knowing how to put yourself in the shoes of others and figuring out what they truly need and want. What your boss needs. What your institution and organization need. What your client and customer need. What your industry needs.”
   James Kane, April 6

4. Collaboration is critical to creating value that will make you future ready.

   “Collaboration is a habit that must be extended beyond the usual partners. Think of non-traditional collaborations. Businesses, entrepreneurs, researchers, health practitioners, mechanics, programmers and nearly everyone else relies on information to succeed in their jobs.”
   Jason Kramer, February 15

Continued on page 5
Services to Early-Career Members to Get Boost

The First Five Years Advisory Council is asking members of SLA chapters and divisions to help reach out to early-career librarians and students and inform them of the council’s new programs and services.

The council is seeking volunteer “ambassadors” to promote its 2011 initiatives, which include the following:

- Recording and disseminating a variety of professional development presentations;
- Interviewing and profiling notable early-career professionals in SLA;
- Building a supportive and informative dialogue with early-career professionals through the council’s social media sites on Facebook and LinkedIn;
- Reaching out to members through the Future Ready initiative; and
- Helping promote the 2011 Annual Conference.

“If each of you can recommend to us a unit-based FFY ambassador, preferably someone in the first five years of their career or a student leader, we can build a strong communication channel to SLA’s future,” wrote Reece Dano, chair of the council, to SLA’s leaders.

According to a recent SLA survey, early-career information professionals struggle to build skills they didn’t learn during their degree programs and find it difficult to develop professional connections and supportive networks. They also have trouble articulating the value of their skills to their employers.

The council hopes to assemble a network of ambassadors to spread word of its efforts at meetings and networking events and through online media. In return, the council will assist units in attracting and retaining new members.

The council, which consists of six association members, is charged with developing learning and networking opportunities to attract and retain new information professionals. Its other responsibilities are to—

- Interface with SLA units and other advisory councils and committees to consolidate information, mentoring opportunities, and educational opportunities for new information professionals;
- Identify emerging leaders in the profession;
- Oversee the funding for the Early Career Awards, which are monetary awards presented by chapters and divisions to provide financial support for conference attendance to those outside of North America; and
- Develop content in social media forums (Facebook, Second Life) to support and offer services to new information professionals.

Recommendations for ambassadors should be sent to Reece Dano at reecedano@gmail.com.

Service Project Added to Conference Program

SLA is partnering with the Philadelphia office of Dress for Success, an organization that accepts clothing donations to help unemployed women obtain jobs in a down economy, to offer a local service project at the 2011 Annual Conference & INFO-EXPO.

To participate in the project, conference attendees need only bring an interview-appropriate piece of women’s clothing with them to Philadelphia. While a good-quality business suit that is no longer being worn would be welcome, any article of clothing that could be used in an interview—a scarf or blouse, dress shoes, jewelry, or even unopened cosmetics—is acceptable as long as it is in good condition.

Attendees should look for the “Dress for Success” sign at the conference when they arrive and drop off their item(s). Donations are tax-deductible, and donation forms will be available at the conference. Donations will be accepted starting Sunday, 12 June, and continuing until 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, 15 June.

Two service projects were offered last year in New Orleans. One involved sorting food at a Second Harvest food bank; the other assigned SLA members to paint houses and mow and clear neighborhood lots damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

SLA CEO Named Fellow of Association Leadership Group

Janice Lachance, chief executive officer of SLA since 2003, has been named to the 2011 class of Fellows of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE).

ASAE is a membership organization of more than 22,000 association executives and industry partners representing 11,000-plus organizations. ASAE members manage trade associations, individual membership societies and voluntary organizations in nearly 50 countries around the world.

ASAE’s Fellows Program recognizes individual accomplishments and con-
HONOR FOR CEO

Tributions to ASAE and the association community. The Fellows selection process includes endorsement by a peer, an in-depth application describing the individual’s innovation, leadership and commitment to the profession, and an interview with a member of the selection committee.

The goals of the ASAE Fellows Program are to—
- Create and expand on both knowledge and insight into the strategic issues of the profession and industry;
- Identify and develop future leaders;
- Help ASAE identify future trends and issues and mentor Diversity Executive Leadership Program (DELP) scholars and Future Leaders Conference participants; and
- Lead and support ASAE and Fellows activities and programs.

Lachance joins approximately 230 other association professionals who have been named ASAE Fellows since the program’s inception in 1986. For more information about the ASAE Fellows program, visit www.asaecenter.org/fellows. SLA

INFO VIEW  Continued from page 3

5. Thinking, writing and talking about becoming future ready are inspirational!

“I get it. You’re the busiest person on the planet. But take advantage of meetings, networking and partnering—it will broaden your perspective. Your to-do list will still be there tomorrow.” Robin Dodge, January 30

“The best advice I can imagine is to stop waiting to be picked. And DO something. Any little next action is sufficient as a start…. When you become proactive, you begin the journey of making your own future. This, of course, is the best way to be ‘future ready.’” Dale Stanley, April 8

You can see we’ve already collected valuable insights and strong advice. There’s plenty more to come, if you and your network will get involved with me. You have a voice, a perspective, and a success story to share, or you wouldn’t be here. So, please, join me in the conversation in any way that you can:
- Visit futureready365.sla.org;
- “Like” it from Facebook;
- Tweet from your Twitter account;
- Link to your own blog; or
- Submit a post at futureready@sla.org.

Most of all, have some fun with this. Look for the joy, and that’s what you’ll see. SLA

REFERENCES


Info File

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Judge Nixes Google Book Deal
A U.S. judge rejected a deal between Google and several authors and publishers to digitally copy millions of books and put them online, though he left open the possibility of approving an agreement that would allow book owners to opt in to Google’s library rather than be required to quit it.

Circuit Judge Denny Chin said the creation of a universal library would “simply go too far” because it would give Google “a significant advantage over competitors, rewarding it for engaging in wholesale copying of copyrighted works without permission.” He also objected to Google being granted access to out-of-print books whose writers could not be located, saying it would give the company “a de facto monopoly over unclaimed works.”

Chin admitted that the deal offered many benefits to society, noting that it would provide libraries, schools, researchers and disadvantaged populations with access to many more books, especially older books and those out of print. He also said it would help authors and publishers find new audiences and new sources of income.

The Open Book Alliance, of which SLA is a member, called the ruling “a victory for the public interest and for competition in the literary and Internet ecosystems.” The group was joined in opposition by consumer watchdogs, academic experts, literary agents and even foreign governments.

The court decision stems from a 2004 agreement between Google and several major research libraries to digitally copy books and other writings in their collections. In response, several authors and publishers filed suit after Google failed to obtain copyright permission to scan the books. The groups reached a deal in 2008 to settle the claims, but the U.S. Justice Department concluded that it probably violated antitrust law and could decrease competition among U.S. publishers and drive up prices for consumers if Google gained a monopoly on out-of-print books.

For more information, see SLA’s Public Policy Connections.

Report Offers Best Practices in Managing Info Resources
Information professionals should develop content management strategies that maximize use, control costs, and reduce usage restrictions and that are aligned with their organization’s strategic direction, according to a recent report from the Conference Board.

The report, based on discussions and interviews with senior information professionals from leading organizations, outlines a set of best practices in acquiring and managing licensed information resources. These practices include the following:
- Run the portfolio with an overall strategy in mind;
- Evaluate the content in the information portfolio to increase efficiency;
- Use metrics to determine the portfolio’s value;
- Manage contracts through a tracking system and standardize those contracts to streamline budgeting; and
- Develop a strategy to obtain desired cost reductions and get the best deal possible.

To support these and other practices, the report includes information about developing a comprehensive information needs assessment, creating a strategic accounting process, conducting periodic content reviews, collecting and analyzing data to determine the return on investment (ROI) of the portfolio, and honing tactics to use in competitive bidding, negotiating terms, and knowing the competition.

“An investment in vendor resources and services that is based on strategy is becoming increasingly important,” says Barbara Hirsh, an SLA member and chair of the Conference Board’s Information Research and Management Council, a group of nearly 30 information professionals from leading organizations. “Senior managers want to know how each major contract connects to the company’s strategic objectives, and they expect information professionals to employ best practices in managing vendor portfolios.”


Library Spending to Level Off in 2011, Study Predicts
Libraries will register strong increases in spending and support for online subscriptions, e-books, and digital content collections and information services during 2011, according to a study report on library spending released by Information Today, Inc. (ITI).

The study findings and predictions are based on responses from more than 1,200 directors, administrators, librarians, and other library professionals in public, academic, government and special libraries across North America. In addition to spending plans, the report addresses budgets and funding priorities, library management issues, and trends in digital and electronic resource utilization.

The study found that although many libraries cut their budgets in 2010, expenditures on technology held steady thanks in part to a significant increase in demand for digital services by library users. This demand is expected to remain strong in 2011, making it a top concern for libraries this year.

The report presents patterns of spending by library type and library size. It provides line-by-line comparisons of spending for personnel/staffing, content acquisition, operations, and library systems as well as detailed analyses of the actions libraries are taking to manage budgets or respond to budget constraints. Spending growth areas are also discussed.

The report notes that keeping abreast of changes in information technology (64 percent) and implementing or creating strategic plans that establish a roadmap for the future (62 percent)
INFO NEWS

L I B R A R Y  S P E N D I N G  ·  E T C.

dominate the long-term thinking at North America’s libraries.

The 40-page final report may be downloaded at no charge following registration. To download the report, visit libraryresource.onlineinc.com/Downloads/ResearchReports.

Cornell Library Nixes Contracts with Confidentiality Agreements

The Cornell University Library has announced that it will no longer sign contracts with vendors that include confidentiality agreements, also known as nondisclosure agreements (NDAs).

Under the terms of a typical NDA, a library cannot reveal the price or terms of its purchases of licensed resources, such as journal subscriptions and databases. Some NDAs also govern the way content can be used and how it can be accessed.

Leaders of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), to which the Cornell Library belongs, voted in May 2009 to “strongly encourage” its member libraries to refrain from signing agreements with publishers or vendors that contain nondisclosure clauses. They also urged ARL members to share, upon request from other libraries, information contained in these agreements (except for trade secrets or proprietary technical details).

“Libraries should be able to talk to each other about the details of these contracts,” said Anne R. Kenney, Carl A. Kroch University Librarian at Cornell. “When contracts are kept secret, institutions cannot negotiate effectively.”

More Data Being Processed, But Usage Remains Low

The amount of business-related information processed each year by the world’s computer servers would fill enough books to reach from Earth to Neptune and back 20 times over, according to a recent study.

Based on server-processing performance standards, server-industry reports, interviews with information technology experts, sales figures from server manufacturers and other sources, three researchers at the University of California San Diego estimated that the world’s roughly 27 million computer servers processed 9.57 zettabytes of information in 2008. One zettabyte is 10 to the 21st power, or a million million gigabytes.

The study concluded that enterprise server workloads are doubling about every two years, which means that by 2024 they will annually process the digital equivalent of a stack of books extending more than 4.37 light years, to Alpha Centauri, our closest neighboring star system in the Milky Way Galaxy. Each book is assumed to be 4.8 centimeters thick and contain 2.5 megabytes of information.

The increase in the amount of information being processed is not being matched by a commensurate rise in the use of that information. A 2008 study by NetApp, a provider of data management and storage services, found that more than 90 percent of the data that flowed through the company’s servers during a three-month period was never accessed. Among the files that were opened, 65 percent were only opened once and most of the rest were opened five or fewer times.

The report’s authors note that the estimated workload of the world’s servers may be low because server-industry sales figures don’t fully include the millions of servers built in-house from component parts by Google, Microsoft, Yahoo! and others.

“Corporations and organizations that have huge and growing databases are compelled to rethink how they accomplish economies of scale,” said Chaitanya K. Baru, one of the report’s co-authors. “In addition, a corporation’s competitiveness will increasingly hinge on its ability to employ innovative search techniques that help users discover data and obtain useful results, and automatically offer recommendations for subsequent searches.”

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United We Stand, Divided We Fall?

WHY DON'T MEMBERS OF THE INFORMATION PROFESSIONS SEE THEMSELVES AS PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER, AND WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?

BY DENNIE HEYE

S
ocial media such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are becoming strong platforms for like-minded people to meet and pursue change. Last year, a seed for change was planted in the minds of many people when Mark Field, principal knowledge manager at the Department for Education in the United Kingdom, posted a note on the LinkedIn discussion group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). He started off by offering his opinion of the state of our profession:

“The information professions are highly networked but poorly integrated. As a result, they lack influence in government policy-making and traction in business.”

Under the term information professions, Mark included information scientists, librarians, records managers, archivists, and information architects. Others, such as knowledge managers, intranet content managers or business information researchers, could be added as well.

Mark’s post sparked a long discussion with others in the information professions about whether we are indeed fragmented and, if so, the root causes of this situation and what can be done about it. These conversations also made me wonder why we are so divided. For example, when I look at our peers in information technology (IT), which covers a wide range of professions, I find that all of them—application developers, system architects, support staff, infrastructure managers, database administrators, and more—feel they are part of the overall IT profession. When I compare that to the information professions, I see knowledge managers, records managers, competitive intelligence researcher, librarians, and catalogers, but most of the time they don’t recognize each other as being part of the same, bigger information profession.

These divisions are reflected in the wide range of professional associations representing bits of the information profession, each one trying to create an identity, lobby for influence and define competencies. This fragmentation makes it hard for others to recognize an information profession and hard for us within the various professions to work toward a common future.

The theme articles in this issue of Information Outlook address different aspects of that wider discussion on the fragmentation of the information profession. The first article, by Nicola

DENNIE HEYE is global knowledge manager at Shell International. He is the international relations chair for the SLA Petroleum and Energy Resources division and the host of the SLA Europe podcast. He is also a member of the Information Outlook Advisory Council.
Franklin, provides an overview of the aforementioned LinkedIn forum discussion and highlights some of the arguments made during that discussion. It then describes a couple of meetings that were held between various information organizations that are trying to channel the debate into actionable plans. It concludes with Nicola’s thoughts about what all of this means for information professionals.

The second article approaches the topic from a different angle, describing some of the “fragments” within the information profession and the definitional, philosophical and territorial issues that have cropped up among them. The author, Conrad Taylor, also discusses how technology contributed to the fragmentation and how various information organizations have responded to it, and calls for a cohesive theory and view of the role of information in society.

The third article, by Elizabeth Nelson, discusses what special librarians can learn from public and school librarians and highlights areas where they can gain new ideas and knowledge from each other, such as developing customer service models and serving patron needs, understanding the library community and targeting specific audiences, cultivating friends (of the library), and educating information users. This article made me realize the value of staying connected to peers in other parts of our profession—despite our differences, we can learn from each other.

I hope these articles make you think about the fragmentation of our profession. Is it, indeed, an issue? If it is, what role can we play, as individuals and in groups, to tackle the problems it causes? Contact me at dennieheye@gmail.com or @obnoxiouslibrn and let’s start a conversation. SLA
The Collaboration of the Information Professions

THE VARIOUS INFORMATION PROFESSIONS APPEAR TO BE FRAGMENTED. ARE EFFORTS TO BRING THEM TOGETHER MISGUIDED, OR LONG OVERDUE?

BY NICOLA FRANKLIN, MBA

THE Fragmentation of the Information Professions” was certainly a title designed to grab people’s attention, and it did. This thread on the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals’ (CILIP) LinkedIn group discussion forum, started by my colleague Mark Field as a response to various other conversations about the future of the information professions, soon attracted more than 180 contributions.

Mark began his post with these words:

“The information professions are highly networked but poorly integrated. As a result, they lack influence in government policy-making and traction in business.”

He then suggested that the information professions’ failure to exploit the emergence of the Internet was symptomatic of their structural weakness, and stated that “no professional body [currently] exists which is capable of providing a professional framework for specialist information workers of all types.”

How to define specialist information workers has long been a stumbling block in the industry. Within this category, Mark included information scientists, librarians, records managers, archivists, and information architects, but many others could be added, such as knowledge managers, intranet content managers, and business information researchers. Mark suggested that the information professions look to the Engineering Council (a U.K. regulatory body for the engineering profession) and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors as models of professional bodies that have more successfully embraced “several professional ‘tribes’” under an “umbrella framework.”

As people began to comment on Mark’s post, a few predominant themes emerged:

• The need for a definition of professionalism;
• Whether CILIP is fit to be such an umbrella organization (there is a concern that it is only for public librarians and does not properly represent or provide services for other types of information professionals);

NICOLA FRANKLIN has worked with the information profession for 13-plus years as a recruitment consultant helping librarians, knowledge managers and records managers find the next best step in their career. At Sue Hill Recruitment, Nicola was responsible for a team of consultants and administrators; last year, she moved to Fabric Recruitment and is currently head of its Information Division. Nicola regularly writes for information trade journals and speaks at seminars and conferences. She can be reached at nicola.franklin@fabricrecruitment.com.
The “turf wars” that have been fought between different parts of the profession in the past; and

The range of skills held, used and needed by information professionals.

By this point, the general tenor of the thread reflected a concern that time is running out, and that what is needed now is action. Mark then re-entered the discussion to make this comment:

“There are important professional and technical debates happening in many places. They need to be better connected: information science has moved largely to excellent bodies like ISKO [the International Society for Knowledge Organization], and their ownership of that must be recognised and respected; public sector development of the profession has a powerful centre of gravity in The National Archive, and I believe that CILIP has recently enjoyed a better relationship with the organisation that is led by the Head of Profession for Knowledge and Information Professionals in central government. There are many others to locate and connect: connect with humility and intelligence and a clear idea of the way forward, and that needs a lot of minds and good leadership.”

In response to this post, momentum for organizing a physical meeting of representatives from as many information groups and associations as possible began to take hold. As the wheels were put in motion to start organizing such a meeting, the discussion continued on LinkedIn. Other pertinent comments were made, including these:

“… rather than trying to carve up the opportunities, each discipline grabbing bits—all of which has resulted in the fragmentation we now see, not to mention petty jealousies and point scoring—surely we should be acknowledging the skill base of each discipline and the areas of overlap. That way we can start conversations as equal professionals.”
(Noeleen Schenk)

“Reflecting on what social-professional networking offers me in 2010, I feel it’s good to find a virtual professional home by linking/engaging and following interests in a mix and match approach. It’s the ultimate in professional personalisation.”
(Christine Fowler)

Some of the participants in this conversation, myself included, volunteered their time and ideas to help organize a meeting or take any other actions stemming from the discussion. We worked with Mark to suggest and contact attendees, find a venue, develop the agenda, and make other necessary meeting preparations.

**First Meeting: December 2010**

An initial meeting of representatives from seven information groups plus interested individuals took place in London on 14 December 2010. The information groups represented at the meeting were as follows:

- British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL);
- British Computer Society (BCS), an association of IT professionals;
- CILIP;
- Government Information Group (GIG), an association of government librarians;
- Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), an association of records managers;
- SLA Europe; and
- UK eInformation Group (UKeIG) a society of electronic information managers.

Although the meeting took place at CILIP’s headquarters, it was not a CILIP meeting per se but rather a coming together of interested parties to discuss issues of relevance, advocacy and professionalism and the future for information specialists of all types. Each group represented at the meeting presented a status report on its current situation and priorities, after which a roundtable discussion ensued to search for areas of commonality and identify joint actions that could be taken.

Annie Mauger, the new chief executive officer of CILIP, led off the meeting by saying that the two key threads facing her organization at the moment are financial risk and relevancy, which are intertwined to some extent. She referenced CILIP’s “Defining our Professional Future” project and said it revealed that stakeholders currently see the organization as old fashioned, lumbering and lacking a strategic approach to representation. Going forward, she said, CILIP has to focus its efforts if it hopes to unite the profession.

Mauger described her agenda as incoming CEO as not “another review” but a blank sheet of paper, a change management program, and an opportunity to take a fresh look at CILIP’s customers—who they are, what their needs are, and how the organization can meet those needs.

Guy Daines, CILIP’s director of policy and advocacy, then briefly discussed the three policy areas that are priorities for CILIP in 2011: advocacy around values, information literacy, and information management.

A common thread running through the meeting, encompassing not only Annie Mauger’s presentation but those of others, was one of relevance. Many attendees said the key question facing them was, “How is CILIP relevant to me?” The answer, in most cases, was, “I don’t know.” They also alluded to feelings that CILIP has, in the past, been somewhat blind and deaf to its own members as well as to ex-members and potential members elsewhere in the profession.

The attendees acknowledged that it may not be possible for one organization to successfully encompass the needs of professionals in all of the many and varied strands of information work. There was widespread agreement, however, that the “silo approach” of the past needs to be overcome and communication among the groups representing the different information specialties must be greatly improved. Communication with those outside the information profession is also vital—it has been lacking and needs to be reinvigorated.

The meeting participants agreed that the main thrust of work has to focus on...
connecting the profession to enhance communication between and among groups and sectors. The discussion turned to how this could be achieved, resulting in several suggestions, including the following:

- Producing an information charter;
- Developing definitions of profession- alism and information profession that all interested organizations can agree to use;
- Compiling a list of all the information qualifications and courses available in the United Kingdom; and
- Creating a forum in which group members can speedily comment on upcoming issues so that joint statements can be made.

The discussion then turned to how new technologies, and social networking in particular, have led to the growth of virtual, “mash-up” types of groupings that emerge to meet a particular need or respond to an issue and then either dissolve or go on to become a more organized, permanent grouping. Perhaps this could be a way for groups to work together, rather than forming a large, potentially cumbersome, permanent “super body.”

**Future Progress**

The attendees at the second meeting agreed to attend a third meeting to continue their important work. An online, wiki-based resource site is being prepared so that people can view and contribute to some of the outputs being produced, such as the information charter suggested at the first meeting and the definition of information profession discussed at the second.

There is also still a desire among many librarians and other information professionals to hold an open-invitation meeting or workshop where everyone interested in this topic can come and air their views and suggest ideas. Questions to be addressed at such a meeting could include the following:

- Why do information professionals need, in Mark Fields’ words, “influence in government policy-making and traction in business”?
- Is fragmentation a cause or symptom of these needs?
- Is fragmentation a sign of a healthy profession and, thus, not something to worry about?
- Is it possible (or desirable) for one professional body to unite the fragments into a cohesive group? If so, how could that best be achieved?
- What roles do professional bodies play generally, and which organizational model best suits information professionals’ needs?

Conducting this larger, open-invitation meeting depends upon securing a suitable venue at low or no cost. Live-streaming the meeting to reach those outside London or who cannot attend it has been suggested. This might prove technically difficult for an event based on a discussion in the round, but live tweeting is certainly being considered as a way to amplify the event and draw in other contributions.

In advance of a wider public debate about these issues, here are some of my own thoughts. First, there is a danger of buying too easily into some of the “urban myths” about how information management is viewed—for example, that organizations and employers don’t understand information or why it is important. In fact, there is evidence to the contrary: the U.K. government was prepared to engage with information workers to form a knowledge and information management (KIM) profession within the civil service, parallel to an IT profession and others. British Telecommunications’ Knowledge Management and Collaboration (KMC) Program has formal approval from the organization’s board of directors and is transferring its intranet content to a Sharepoint 2010 platform.

Instead of bemoaning that employers “just don’t get it,” it might be more productive to think about why organizations turn to IT, public relations/communications, general counsel, or other groups to find solutions to their issues of information overload, information security, internal communication, and so on. Perhaps if there were a coherent voice consistently promoting the value (and values) of the information profession, getting a seat at the decision-making table might be easier for those working within the organization. It might even be possible to have a more informed, less stereotype-led debate over the need for, and future of, libraries and librarians.

This is too important a topic, with too wide a constituency, for the views of a few people to predominate. What do you think? Should the information groups collaborate more closely, work together more coherently, and strive for more influence? Or are the differences between the information professions to be valued and celebrated? SLA
Whose Information Profession Is It, Anyway?

People who work with information—whether they create it, organize and manage it, or provide the technological infrastructure for it—need to agree on a philosophy of what it is and the role it plays if they are to become a professional community.

By Conrad Taylor

In the preceding article, Nicola Franklin presented a good account of the main points made in the “Fragmentation Death” LinkedIn group discussion thread and the meetings that arose from it. For my part, I’ll focus on some definitional, philosophical and territorial issues that have cropped up in related discussions. I’ll also attempt to characterize some of the “fragments” in this conversation: on the one hand, the two heavyweight institutes operating under royal charter, CILIP (the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals) and BCS (the British Computer Society, formally known as BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT); on the other, some smaller groups that seem to operate more comfortably and knowledgeably in the new world of information and knowledge management, but don’t have the same institutional clout.

I was one of the non-CILIP contributors to the “Fragmentation Death” discussion thread. I’m a writer, publication designer and multimedia producer, long interested in how computers can be used to create, manage and provide access to information resources. That’s why, in the early 1990s, I joined BCS through membership in its Electronic Publishing Specialist Group. I also participate in the U.K. chapter of the International Society for Knowledge Organization (ISKO-UK), the Network for Information and Knowledge Exchange (NetIKX), and the Information Design Association.

On reading the first 75 contributions to the discussion thread, I found the term information professions to be undefined, but it appeared to connote librarians, records managers, archivists and others who manage information resources. I think this artificially excludes people who work with information as creators, such as writers, designers and media producers. The discussion also seemed to ignore those who bring their skills in computing to the service of information creation and management. Even the call for defragmentation seemed, ironically, to erect new boundaries.
Disruption by Technology

Over the last three decades, digital technology has transformed the way information and cultural media are authored, published, managed, distributed, and accessed. The 1980s brought electronic publishing; the 1990s brought the Web; post-millennium, we have online multimedia, Web 2.0, collaboration, social media, and content management systems. How have these developments affected information work and the skills sets appropriate to it?

Compared to media folk, who embraced the new technologies with enthusiasm, librarians reacted ambivalently. Their training had focused on the management and classification, not of information itself, but of the containers in which it was published—books, journals and, in the modern library, CDs, DVDs, and so on. Information was classified according to unchallengeable predefined schemes, and librarians viewed themselves as guides and gatekeepers.

The Internet culture of today, with its self-service approach to information discovery and skepticism about classification, disrupts this paradigm. Meanwhile, in public libraries, half the space looks like an Internet café, and the job of librarian isn’t what it used to be.

But let me introduce what I'll call the modern information professional (MIP), the kind of person engaged in organizing and managing the information and knowledge resources that are the lifeblood of modern business and government. The work of MIPs is very different from that of traditional librarianship. The resources they manage are overwhelmingly digital and include databases as well as documents. For MIPs, information content is more important than the information container. They are unlikely to act as intermediaries, more likely to invent access mechanisms. They don’t use Dewey; they create new business-focused taxonomies. And they are either comfortable with technology or work with specialists who are.

CILIP and the MIPs

These days, everyone seems to claim the talismanic word information. We are told we live in an information age and an information society.

CILIP incorporated the word information at its birth in 2002, when the 125-year-old Library Association merged with the smaller Institute of Information Scientists. Recently, CILIP grabbed the K-word, too—the membership focus is now said to be on librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers. (Another buzzphrase is the knowledge and information domain, which appears no fewer than 61 times in the 2010 CILIP report Defining our Professional Future.)

So, is CILIP transforming into a natural home for the MIPs? Alas, many contributors to the LinkedIn discussion thread suggested not. Several remarked that they had left the Library Association in the 1990s to join the Institute of Information Scientists, feeling that the latter organization was better focused on this new kind of information work. They were not pleased by the merger, especially when CILIP subsequently sidelined the information science perspective.

Meanwhile, the non-chartered, smaller, independent, U.K.-based groups and networks such as IRMS, ISKO-UK, NetIKX and LIKE (the Library, Information & Knowledge Professionals’ Exchange) are said to provide a more nourishing intellectual climate for the new style of information and knowledge managers and, with them, the inventors, scholars and consultants who are constructing the necessary tools, skill sets and theoretical underpinnings for advancing this kind of work. (Arguably, this is true also of some semi-autonomous CILIP special interest groups, such as UKeIG and CILSIG.)

CILIP, which is undergoing financial difficulties, seems caught in a cleft stick. Many of its members are public sector librarians, whose livelihoods are currently under threat, so CILIP must defend them and reflect their concerns. But this mission comes at a cost—putting off efforts to engage with the concerns of MIPs. Perhaps CILIP can square the circle for now by building alliances, not only with the other librarians’ groups but also with the smaller MIP-focused groups.

The IT Brigade: Interlopers, Plumbers or Allies?

Unlike CILIP, BCS was not institutionally aware of the “Fragmentation Death” online discussion until I brought it to the attention of the organization’s trustees. Nevertheless, the presence of BCS (and the IT profession) weighed uneasily on the conversation from an early stage.

Bear in mind that some information management experts resent the tendency of organizational leaders to misconstrue information and knowledge management projects as IT projects. This confusion probably occurs because bosses don’t understand the information professional skills required for this sort of work but see a lot of money spent on the related computer systems. Whatever the reason, information management is increasingly seen (mistakenly) as an IT function and given to the wrong people to manage. Information management and knowledge management people can, therefore, be hostile toward IT people, regarding them as (at worst) interlopers who have eaten their lunch or (at best) as “digital plumbers” whose only role is to set up the infrastructure within which information and knowledge management projects operate.

I find these tensions and misunderstandings potentially very unhelpful. Fashioning a good IM or KM solution requires clear, integrated thinking plus tight collaboration between management, subject matter specialists, information specialists and computing technologists. Though projects can and often do fail for lack of such collaboration, there are plenty of positive case studies, too. One such example is the museum sector, whose management has a sound grasp of information as an asset. Another example is the U.K. government sector, where issues of freedom of information and data security
have put the right kind of management in the driving seat.

Finding a Role for BCS

One of my personal goals in this and other discussions is to bring my BCS colleagues into the conversation, and in the right way. This often means dealing with some BCS-CILIP history—it seems that twice in the last decade there have been “flirtations” between BCS and CILIP, which the latter interpreted as takeover bids and backed away from.

Throughout my involvement with BCS, I’ve sensed that, on the whole, the organization has a weak theoretical appreciation of the nature of information. BCS has spent most of its life focusing on engineering—machines, cables and application software—and has never quite adjusted to a world in which computers and networks are used primarily to access and share linguistic and cultural resources. I think this institutional blind spot has been magnified by the organization’s recent membership drives, which have targeted business IT implementation staff.

On the other hand, BCS, like CILIP, is host to special interest groups, and a dozen of these have a serious and well-informed interest in how data, information and knowledge are managed using computer technology. In 2006, a group of us within BCS set up an informal discussion community called KIDMM (short for knowledge, information, data and metadata management) to explore these themes and bridge the gap between IP work—information management and knowledge management—and IT work.

A key component of a better understanding of how IP work interfaces with IT work must be an appreciation of the role of the “soft technologies” that are essential pieces of the modern toolkit for managing information and knowledge. These technologies range from markup languages like XML and HTML to character encoding schemes like UTF-8 to formal systems for knowledge organization and machine-assisted reasoning (such as OWL and SKOS and RDF) to the various standard file formats, search algorithms, and software systems that apply all of these to information resources.

More Theory, Please!

In reviewing the more than 190 contributions to the “Fragmentation Death” LinkedIn discussion, I found that I am not alone in my desire for a theoretical underpinning for information work. One comment I valued particularly highly was contributed by Susan Myburgh, an academic and author of The New Information Professional (Chandos 2005). In supporting the call for an “information metacommunity,” she insisted that it “must be predicated on a cohesive theory and view of the information world.”

I’ve since been reading her 2008 doctoral thesis, Defining Information: The Site of Struggle, which expands on these ideas. In essence, she argues that without a shared philosophy of what information is, the role it plays in society, and the kind of work information professionals do with it, we can’t have a shared discourse on the parts we should each play in building a metacommunity of information professionals. She also believes the LIS sector has long been weak on theory. She quotes James Thompson, who, in his book Library Power (1974), declared the following:

*The library profession must establish a philosophy or philosophies. It must cast off to a large extent the all-pervading emphasis on technical matters... From Dewey onwards we have had a succession of American experts on cataloguing, on library buildings, on storage methods, on circulation systems... This kind of ‘professionalism’ has its place, but it becomes absurd when it is employed in a philosophical vacuum...* 

I fear the shortcomings of library and information science that Thompson identified almost 40 years ago are becoming evident today in the IT profession. A mistake that both librarians and information technologists often make is to obsess about managing *containers* of information, be they books, e-journals, PDFs, or files within Sharepoint. We need to equip ourselves with a philosophical framework that helps us pay closer attention to information content and its meaning in society, especially the role it plays in helping people acquire knowledge. To this end, I am investigating what Luciano Floridi’s proposed Philosophy of Information may offer.

In her doctoral thesis, Myburgh suggests that the intellectual effort that unifies the field will be strenuous but worthwhile, that it will be “multi-paradigmatic” with a constructivist agenda, and that it should draw on such fields as semiotics, linguistics, cultural studies, and epistemology. The information professions, she suggests, will focus on information that (1) is in embedded or material form (physical or digital), (2) carries “knowledge that can be represented in a form that someone can understand,” and (3) people voluntarily access to fulfill their personal, business, and societal ends.

In the context of the discussions Nicola Franklin describes, I firmly believe that part of the work should progress on this theoretical plane. The question of the IP/IT interface needs definition; the proposal for a manifesto also requires clarity in our thinking. As an independent worker, I shall be focusing on this part of the task while also helping build communication and collaboration platforms (a wiki at first, perhaps an online community later) where these ideas can be worked out convivially. **SLA**
Learning from Public and School Librarians

IN AREAS SUCH AS CULTIVATING SUPPORT AND GETTING INVOLVED IN THEIR ‘COMMUNITY,’ SPECIAL LIBRARIANS CAN LEARN MUCH FROM THEIR PUBLIC AND SCHOOL COUNTERPARTS.

BY ELIZABETH NELSON, MLIS

According to the SLA Website (2009), an information professional is anyone who “strategically uses information in his/her job to advance the mission of the organization … through the development, deployment, and management of information resources and services.” This is a broad definition, and at any meeting or discussion involving special librarians and information professionals, you will find a very diverse group of people with different backgrounds, perspectives, and needs. Some information professionals are more traditional librarians who provide reference services and maintain print or electronic collections in corporations, museums, and law firms or specialized collections in public or academic libraries. Others have taken a non-traditional but increasingly common path, pursuing areas such as knowledge management, Web development, and consulting.

Coming to any sort of consensus within such a diverse group of people—even among those who self-identify as information professionals or special librarians—can be a formidable challenge in and of itself. Imagine what would happen if we expanded the group to include those working outside our core field—say, in public and school libraries. What can we hope to learn from them?

The answer to that question takes us back to the core of librarianship and library education. The MLS (or MLIS) is still the de facto degree for information professionals, even though it does not specifically target specialized environments. As Matarazzo and Pearlstein (2011) note, “With only a couple of exceptions, most MLS programs focus on the core library science skills.” Given this dearth of education focused on special librarianship, it is up to students and professionals to learn from experience and to share the lessons they learn with others.

Finding Common Ground

Although finding common ground in such a fragmented industry may not appear to be easy (especially to those who do not work in a traditional environment), the path to success becomes clearer by looking at the development of the different types of libraries. Each type of library was formed with a particular mission in mind. Public libraries were intended to “(1) support the education and socialization needs of society, (2) meet the informational needs of a broad spectrum of citizens, (3) promote self-
education, and (4) satisfy the popular tastes of the public” (Rubin 2004), while school libraries are designed to further the goals of educational institutions by supporting their curriculum and research needs. The term special library has traditionally been a catch-all for libraries and information centers that do not fit into one of the other categories, but these types of libraries tend to put an “emphasis on providing reference services to the organization” (Rubin 2004).

Following the arc of this history to the present shows a common tradition of adapting services to fit the community in which the librarian or information professional operates. Using this framework, libraries are more alike than different, “providing resources in different forms, reference to help users find what they need, and education to better use the tools that the library offers. The depth of the resources may differ, but a school librarian helping a third grader with a science fair project needs a very similar skill set as a librarian working with scientists researching their next innovation” (Nelson 2010).

If all information professionals, including those in public and school libraries, are trying to find the best way to serve their users (be they called patrons, customers, or any other term that describes those who use their services), there is a lot they can learn from each other, not only in spite of their differences but because of them. Each specialty has certain strengths. Steve Casburn (2005) of the University of Houston wrote several years ago about what public and school librarians can learn from special librarians. His key points fall into the category of what he calls “survival skills” and include things like getting out of the library and into where the users live, being part of the decision-making process, collaborating, and having an elevator speech ready when you need to explain what you do and why it has value to the community or organization (Casburn 2005).

So, while public and school librarians are learning these valuable lessons and applying them to their institutions, it’s time to turn to what we special librarians can learn from them. A recent article in Online talks about information professionals repositioning themselves. This is hardly a new message, and the article itself focuses on librarians as programmers, but it is a good reminder nonetheless that information professionals need to adapt continuously. We need to update our skills to provide value to the organization and “enable users to recognize that the library and information professional has valuable skills that benefit users” (Stuart 2011). This is not to say that we all need to become programmers, but it does point to the trend of looking outside our comfort zones to find ideas or services that could be applied in our environments.

Cultivating friends (of the library). In times of shrinking budgets and staffs, one can never make or have too many friends. This is a skill at which public libraries have excelled, by creating groups of supporters among their users. These “friends” groups have a long history in libraries and do everything from raise money to organize events.

More than anything else, however, they demonstrate the community’s commitment to the library. Much like corporate or other special libraries, a public library can simply disappear once it becomes irrelevant to the community. Having friends or champions can help ensure that this does not happen. While it may not be possible for special libraries to use champions or sponsors to obtain additional funding for the library, there is still an advantage to having friends or an advisory group to ensure library services are addressing the needs of the organization.

Information literacy and assessment. Information literacy refers to the ability to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (American Library Association 1989). Information literacy is a term that is not used much outside of academia, but it is becoming increasingly important to information professionals of all types as more resources become self-service in nature.

Historically, information professionals have located, compiled, and even analyzed information before delivering the final product to the user. However, as more and more resources become accessible from users’ desktops and databases compete with free online sources for users’ attention, more education is becoming necessary. And what goes better with learning than assessment?

Assessment is used liberally in education and is spilling over into libraries as well. Sometimes it is nothing more than an exercise, but after taking the time to teach people a skill, it makes a lot of sense to assess their knowledge and their ability to apply what they learned.

Working on a (shoestring) budget. Library budgets have tightened over time through the loss of tax dollars, reallocations of resources, and rising costs. Instead of offering less, however, libraries now offer more services than ever and have the ability to reach more people than ever before. Special librarians, for example, have discovered ways to reach their increasingly global audiences through online access to resources and research assistance. While public librarians do not have to reach such a widespread audience, they have found innovative ways to use technology that enable them to provide
The Fragmentation of the Profession

Take the opportunity to get out of the office and expand your influence beyond the information and knowledge sphere.

24/7 service on a budget.

Open source technology and new ways of communicating have been harnessed to reach users where they are. For those with some IT expertise, open source solutions have been shown to offer the same level of access and customized features (in library catalogs, for instance) without the high cost of maintenance agreements.

Adapting to the changing needs of users has also been beneficial for smaller libraries. It is not the number of staff in the library building itself that matters to users, but how accessible those people are to users through text and chat reference and even mobile applications and Web pages that can address basic questions.

Another trend that translates well to the world of special libraries is the use of tutorials or point-of-need self-serve instruction. There are several reasons why these tools seem to work well. A librarian is not always available to answer a question, and not everyone is comfortable asking questions about resources or how to use technology. By posting videos, narrated PowerPoint slides, and the like, all of the tools are put into the hands of users any time they are needed. One demonstration by a librarian can be viewed over and over by different users, freeing the librarian to perform other value-added tasks.

Becoming one with the community. A professor of mine at Dominican University said that those who want to be library directors should plan to live and attend church in the community where their library is located and become involved in local community organizations. The reasoning behind this advice is that the director has to be a part of the community in order to understand its needs and the role the library plays in it.

Academic librarians do this as well, through their involvement in committees and as faculty, with the same expectations—publishing, the tenure process, etc.—as the other faculty in their community. For those outside public and academic environments, becoming part of the community is not as straightforward, but there are ways to get involved. For example, if committees or cross-functional teams are working on a project, join them. Show that your value is not limited just to the library or information center. Take the opportunity to get out of the office and expand your influence beyond the information and knowledge sphere. By so doing, you’ll become an integral part of your community.

Charting the Future

Creating the library of the future will take a group effort and the experiences of many. This year, SLA is focusing on helping its members become “future ready” through collaboration, having an adaptable skill set, alignment and building a community (SLA 2011). Reaching beyond the comfort zone of SLA into the wider world of libraries and information will help create innovative solutions for how to become and remain future ready.

But beginning the dialogue is only the first step. Building bridges between different types of librarians and information professionals will allow all of us to tap into the knowledge and experience of a much larger group of people. Within SLA, the academic librarians have taken the first step, forming a division in which they are part of academic library discussions but also part of the larger SLA conversation. There are also opportunities for special librarians to become involved in ALA so they are part of the larger discussion of library issues.

In the future, it may not be enough to just be one SLA. Instead, we may need to be one information and knowledge community.

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Linette Koren, Librarian, RIT
THE FOUNDING CHAIR OF SLA’S NEW USER EXPERIENCE CAUCUS TALKS ABOUT BOOKLESS LIBRARIES, CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS, AND WHY SHE NEEDS A TRIBE.

BY STUART HALE

Q: You’re the founding chair of the SLA User Experience Caucus, and your title at Rice University is user experience librarian. What does the term user experience mean within the context of library and information science?

It’s a relatively new term. It all started at Georgia Tech and at a library in Canada, and now it’s gathering steam. Here at Fondren, UX is the primary department for considering the ways that a user experiences the library, from both the physical and digital perspectives. My job is to think about how users interact with the library, and we’re conducting research to discover how we can create a more successful experience for all users.

UX combines usability studies—which come out of computer science—with ethnographic studies and focus groups and other types of assessments to learn about how library users work and what they need. Nancy Foster, with her ethnographic studies, has been very influential in this area. I think UX is just a matter of libraries realizing that we need qualitative data to go along
with our quantitative data if we’re going to make data-driven decisions.

Q: How and why did you get interested in user experience?
I’m married to an architect, Darayus Kolah, and that has influenced my general thinking about user-centered, participatory design. But within the library realm, I don’t think UX was really on my radar in the beginning. Luckily, my boss, Leah Krevit, who’s our assistant university librarian for public services, heard about it and gave it some thought, and one day she asked me if I wanted to try it. I said yes, and that started a wild adventure.

I immediately started thinking about what I needed to do. I was smart enough to e-mail Steven Bell, who writes a blog called Designing Better Libraries, and ask him for some advice. The first thing he recommended I do was start a caucus. I had already had that feeling—that I needed a tribe, a group to think with me about these things. And for me, SLA was the natural place to do this.

Last fall, I was lucky enough to meet our president, Cindy Romaine, at an SLA Texas Chapter meeting. That started the wheels turning. The SLA board was very helpful in getting my petition for the caucus developed and approved. So I’ve had a lot of support thus far.

I think this is something that will continue to grow within SLA and within the larger library community. We really only started seeing the first user experience job descriptions a couple of years ago, but now we’re starting to see more UX titles and more UX work in libraries.

Q: What does the User Experience Caucus hope to accomplish in its first year?
The goal of the caucus is primarily to be a tribe that can share and discuss ideas around UX. Because the range of users served by SLA members is so vast, I think there’s a huge opportunity to think about users in all types of organizations, from academic to corporate to government.

Q: We’re holding our first meeting at the SLA 2011 Annual Conference, on Tuesday, June 14. I envision publishers and academics and information professionals coming together to talk about how we can get the best feedback from our users so we can create compelling experiences for them and learn from different components of the SLA membership.

Q: I’m intrigued by your use of the term compelling experiences. If I’m a student at the Fondren Library at Rice, what’s a compelling experience for me?
A compelling library experience is one that exceeds your personal needs as a user. Maybe you need a quiet space to think and reflect; maybe you need a noisy space to be with others to collaborate. Greg Lambert, a law librarian who writes a great law blog, recently wrote a blog post titled “The Shhh Factor.” His thinking was that some library users need a place to go where they can hear someone say “Shhh.”

The bottom line is that libraries mean different things to different people, and that’s why we need to get out and talk to our users, sometimes in ways that we haven’t in the past. We need to use research instruments, occasionally in a more formal way. I really do believe that libraries and librarians are a fundamental part of any institution, and if we get out there and become an ear and gather information, we can drive crucial services that meet the needs of our users and create the ultimate library experience. That experience is going to be different in India than it would be in the United States, but if we learn from each other, maybe we can bring some great experiences from other libraries to our locations.

Q: What have you learned from others that has changed what you do at Fondren to create the ultimate user experience?
We’re still very much in an information gathering phase right now; in fact, I’m starting two UX research projects as we speak. These two studies will drive the process of creating a tool or learning space that will address all of the things researchers need to know and do to conduct research efficiently.

One of the projects will be a large ethnographic study to find out how research takes place at Rice. We’ve code-named this project Research Flow, and it will probably encompass the initial step of gathering information as well as communicating with partners, organizing information, compiling citations—the whole process.

There’s also a small-scale study that
we’re using to help determine whether to move to a new discovery tool for our online catalogs and our library databases. We’re interested in finding out how our users feel about using our unified indexes. We have a discovery tool now—do they use it, or do they prefer searching in individual discipline databases?

Last summer, I worked on a multi-institutional project that looked at Sakai, which is a classroom management tool that professors use. That was an exciting project because it studied 10 institutions that use Sakai and developed a meta-analysis of why and how instructors use scholarly resources in preparing and conducting their courses. With 10 institutions using the same research instrument, we were able to gather a lot of information. Of course, each institution will use the project data that best serve its local needs, but I think this sort of large-scale meta-analysis is something we’ll see more of in the future.

In addition to these projects, I’m also starting to design what I call the “K-12 Experience.” We’re getting more and more visitors from local schools, so I’ve been talking to the people on campus who organize these tours and really beginning to think about what the Fondren Library experience looks like to a K-12 educator or student. I want to know how we can deliver a consistently positive experience for everyone involved. If we can create a good experience for these groups, who are at a stage where they’re thinking about the future, we’ll continue to have value as an institution.

Q: While we’re still on the subject of user experience, let’s discuss the merits of bookless libraries. Some libraries are already bookless; others are working toward that goal. What’s your perspective on this?

I think moving past the concept of a library dedicated to stacks is a necessary evolutionary phase in the world of academic libraries. These days, I’m even thinking about—and this is a hard thing for people in academia to think about—bringing our diminishing periodical collections up to the stacks, to be housed near the books that still remain. By doing this, I would essentially create little branch libraries within the stacks. I would also be able to get Wi-Fi access—right now, I can’t get Wi-Fi in my stacks, but if I break up those stacks, I could get Wi-Fi.

But go bookless? I think it will be a long time before we get there. Perhaps for new universities or for libraries that are just forming, a bookless design could succeed.

I remember working for an SLA librarian during my internship while I was in college, and she used to say the only thing she needed to run a library was a telephone. I believe in that model—I think that one special librarian with a telephone can run a whole library. A librarian or information professional is, at heart, the library, whether that person is in the library or not. But if our users need books, we need to have them available.

Q: Bookless libraries are the latest of many trends and developments that have affected librarians and information professionals in recent years. What changes have you seen that may not have seemed important to you at the time but that, looking back, have made a significant difference to your career?

After I finished my internship, I moved directly into public libraries. When I came to Rice in 2001, I brought with me a working knowledge of marketing concepts and skills. At that time, I really didn’t understand—and I don’t think most academic libraries understood at that time—how important marketing is. Since then, there’s been a huge spike in the role of marketing among academic libraries. Public libraries had known about marketing for a long time, but it took awhile for academic libraries to grasp the importance of it.

Also, while I was working in public libraries, I was leasing collections—for example, I was leasing popular fiction. I brought that experience with me to Rice. As e-books become more readily available, I think we’re going to see more and more leasing of content—not just journals, but books and textbooks as well.

Another change dates back to 2004, when I conducted a focus group with a colleague, Lisa Spiro, on a tool called Red Light Green. That same year, I started a relationship with the American Physical Society as a librarian consultant to their Publications Oversight Committee. As part of my consulting
work, I was able to help organize and participate in some focus groups. Focus groups have certainly driven some of the recent research on user experience, but at the time I was consulting with APS, I certainly wasn’t thinking that learning how to run a focus group would prove to be so crucial to my professional development or that, six years down the road, it would be my primary job role.

Q: You’ve served as both a public librarian and an academic librarian. How did you get interested in librarianship, and what twists and turns has your career taken?

I went to library school straight from college, but that’s a little misleading. I started college in 1986 in hotel and restaurant management, with a minor in anthropology. But in 1989 I stopped taking college courses for awhile. I worked in restaurants and as a bartender for the next few years.

By the time I finally went back to college in 1994, I knew I wanted to be a librarian. So when I graduated in 1995, I went immediately into library school at the University of Texas and finished in a year and a half. I was really motivated—I had identified this as my career, and I just immersed myself in the program.

Q: How did you learn about SLA, and what prompted you to join?

I attended my first SLA midwinter meeting in 1995, while I was a graduate student at the University of Texas. My advisor, Julie Hallmark, was the representative for the local SLA chapter, so she was a great window into SLA. Quite honestly, I didn’t know there were any other library associations, because Julie made such a huge fuss about SLA.

I completed a library school internship at SemaTech, which had a couple of strong SLA members on staff, but because I went immediately into public libraries after graduation, I didn’t stay with SLA. When I came to Rice in 2001 to become a science librarian, I practically ran back to SLA, largely because I was going to be supporting physics, math and astronomy. I knew the PAM Division would be helpful to me, and it has been.

Q: In addition to the UX Caucus, what other SLA groups are you involved with, and how have they contributed to your career?

I’ve just been appointed to the Research and Development Committee, and I’m looking forward to serving with the members of that group. I’m currently the co-chair of public relations for the PAM Division, and I have to say that my heart belongs to PAM. I’ve been a PAM member since 2002, when I attended my first SLA Annual Conference. The professionalism and warmth and brilliance of people like Molly White and Carol Hutchins and Dana Roth—I couldn’t do my job without them and their support.

I served for a few years as chair of PAM’s International Relations Committee, and in that capacity, on my own personal time, I traveled to Turkey and India to meet the winners of the PAM International Membership Award. That’s one of the things I like best about SLA and also the PAM Division—we are a global community of supportive members. SLA
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What does it mean to be successful? How should success be measured and defined?

These questions were at the heart of the “Models of Embedded Librarianship” project that my colleague, Dave Shumaker, and I began in 2008. Our research culminated in a model for successful programs, which we published in our final research report in 2009 and in an article in Information Outlook (Shumaker and Talley 2010).

Given the volume of rich data produced by our research, we knew that we had only scratched the surface of the practices that lead to successful embedded programs. A year after publishing the final research report,
Those who rate their embedded programs most highly are also the most firmly aligned with, and receive the most support from, their customer segments.

The practices associated with each theme formed the basis for our model of successful embedded programs.

Exploring Other Measures
In the second phase of our analysis, we focused on two other potential success measures: longevity and self-reported success. We surmised that information professionals in long-lived embedded roles and those with a very high self-assessment would behave differently than their shorter-lived and less highly-rated counterparts. We further speculated that the differences between them would be similar to the characteristics that separate the Successful Group from the Less-Successful Group.

To test these hypotheses, we first defined the factors for these two additional success measures. We agreed that those working in embedded roles established 10 or more years ago would constitute the Long-lived Group, while those in roles established within the past 10 years would constitute the Short-lived Group. We further agreed that those who rated the delivery of embedded information services to their customer segments as “very successful” would comprise the High Self-Assessment Group, while those who rated the delivery of these services as “successful” (or less satisfactory) would comprise the Other Self-Assessment Group.

We then re-analyzed the survey data for each measure, applying the same statistical technique (small-sample discrete inference based on mid-p-value) used in the original analysis, to look for statistically significant differences between the constituent groups. (Differences cited in the text are statistically significant at the a=0.05 level, unless otherwise noted.)

What we found was somewhat surprising. Although the Long-lived Group did behave differently from the Short-lived Group, its characteristics more closely resembled those of the Less Successful Group than those of either the Successful or High Self-Assessment Groups. In contrast, the High Self-Assessment Group was more closely aligned with the Successful Group and even surpassed it in several significant areas.

When we compared similarities and differences among the three groups, we discovered fresh insights into how to be successful in embedded roles. Specifically, we identified two practices that matter: (1) relationship building and (2) work product, promotion and evaluation.

Relationship Building
Our research revealed that strong, reciprocal engagement between the embedded professional and all levels of the customer group was a significant feature of the Successful Group. We also found that 5 of the 22 practices we identified with the Successful Group related to management support and customer interaction. These practices include the following:

- Written work agreements with customer segments;
- Customer feedback in performance reviews;
- Customer manager support through integration of the embedded professional into the group; and
- A continuing education requirement related to the customer group’s area of specialization.

Another characteristic of the Successful Group is that library management supports and encourages collaborative customer relationships. For instance, library managers in the Successful Group were more apt than the organization’s executives to give the go-ahead to initiate specialized services. When we analyzed the High Self-Assessment Group and the Long-lived Group for characteristics related to management support and interaction,
we found the former group to have the most (both shared and unique), while the latter had the fewest.

The High Self-Assessment Group and the Successful Group shared all of the characteristics mentioned thus far, except written work agreements. Embedded professionals in the High Self-Assessment Group had several additional characteristics that pointed to their relationship-building skills. These characteristics were as follows:

- Meeting with customer segment management to discuss their information needs;
- Attending the same in-house subject courses as their customers; and
- Receiving reimbursement for the costs of attending conferences in the customer segment’s field or subject area.

The Successful Group, on the other hand, exhibited only one relationship-building characteristic: providing training outside the library.

The High Self-Assessment Group surpassed the Successful Group in characteristics related to customer group interaction and management support, suggesting exceptionally strong ties to the customer group. For instance, among the members of the High Self-Assessment Group, the customer group was more likely than library management to have made the first move toward the embedded relationship and to have conducted the embedded librarian’s performance review (not just provide feedback to it). In addition, the embedded professional typically submitted written or verbal reports to customer management.

We found less evidence of these connections between the Long-lived Group and its customer base. At the embedded professional level, the group had no attributes corresponding to relationship-building activities. At the management support level, the group’s few related attributes were primarily in the form of support for formal education to expand domain knowledge, including a requirement for continuing education (shared with the other two groups) and tuition reimbursement (unique to this group).

The Long-lived Group’s interactions with customer management also appeared to be more formal than those of other groups. These interactions included the following:

- Customer management authorizes the initiation of embedded services;
- Customer management does not support embedded professionals by integrating them into the team; and
- Embedded professionals are brought into the customer group at a lower level by a designated liaison or contact within the group.

We found that other attributes related to management support indicate that the Long-lived Group may be more strongly connected to library management than to its customer segments. For example, the group is more likely to provide reports to library management than to its customers, more likely to receive a performance review from a library manager than from the customer segment, and less likely to have the customer segment share any responsibility for performance review.

As a whole, these characteristics suggest that the Long-lived Group may have retained more of the traits of a traditional, library-centric role than either of the two other groups. In contrast, the management support and customer interaction characteristics of the Successful and High Self-Assessment Groups describe multiple pathways for communication and continuous, reciprocal engagement with the customer group. In the case of the High Self-Assessment Group, the presence of additional characteristics indicates that those who rate their embedded programs most highly are also the most firmly aligned with, and receive the most support from, their customer segments.

**Work Product, Promotion, and Evaluation**

A complex, value-added work product is a hallmark of embedded roles and arises from the collaborative relationships formed between the embedded information professional and the customer segment. It is not surprising, then, that five of the six work products associated with the Successful Group and all seven of those associated with the High Self-Assessment Group emphasize expert analysis and good judgment. Both groups deliver competitive intelligence and in-depth research work, and both groups’ services include a training/educational component (the Successful Group also provides data analysis).

In contrast, the Long-lived Group had only two work products of any kind associated with it. One was a low-level service, the other a value-added service—shared instructional responsibility, which reflects the traditional librarian’s role of instruction. The Long-lived Group also was significantly less likely to provide a number of high-level services, such as in-depth topical research, evaluating and synthesizing the literature, and data analysis.

The High Self-Assessment Group’s work products stand out from those of the Successful and Long-lived Groups in several ways. First, this was the only group to have no low-level tasks associ-
Endurance is admirable, but it may not always be enough to qualify an embedded program as completely successful.

...
Analyzing Possible Copyright Infringement

Ascertaining the copyright status of an article or other work is best done before you make plans to reproduce the work.

BY LESLEY ELLEN HARRIS

You posted an article on your library’s blog, and now your supervisor is asking whether you needed permission (which you did not obtain) to post that article. Unfortunately, you posted the article six months ago, and now you cannot remember the details about the article and its source. You will need to investigate the legality of the posting, and there are many perspectives you must consider and research.

First, you will need to determine whether it was an original article written by a colleague in your organization. If so, there is a good chance the article was written in the course of employment and, thus, belongs to the organization. In this situation, you can post the article without obtaining further permissions.

If the article was written by someone other than a fellow employee, such as a consultant to your organization, the copyright situation can be quite different. For example, the works of consultants generally belong to those consultants, even when the consultants have been paid. Your organization may have a license to use the article in certain circumstances, but you probably cannot use it in all circumstances unless the copyright in the article was assigned to your organization.

If the author’s name is on the article, you can more easily determine if the author is a fellow employee, a consultant, or perhaps a freelance writer. You can also determine whether the article is still protected by copyright. In the United States, an article owned by an employer is protected for 120 years from the date of creation, as is a work in which a pseudonym (fictional name) is used. If the article belongs to its author, the duration of copyright is the life of the author plus 70 years. Once copyright expires, you can use the article in any manner you wish.

You may need to search for the author online to determine if he or she is still alive. If the author has died, you need to determine the date of death and contact any relevant authors’ associations and, if necessary, heirs. You should also check your database of permissions (if you do not have such a database, you now have the incentive to create one) and all of your negotiated licenses to see whether you have permission to use the article. Keep in mind that even if you have permission to use the article in a certain manner, you should not assume that you can use it in other ways. For example, you may be able to share a PDF copy of the article with co-workers, but not publish it in your organization’s newsletter or on your intranet.

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As you can see, obtaining permission to use a work may not be an easy or quick process. It is best, of course, to make this determination prior to reproducing a work so you can make alternative arrangements if the circumstances dictate. For example, if you cannot locate the copyright holder or the licensing fee is beyond your budget, you may choose to summarize the article or write your own version of it rather than go through a lengthy permission research process that may or may not obtain the desired results.

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Concerns about Technological Fragmentation

Librarians must be alert to the potential divides in information access that can result from restrictive licensing and lax regulation of technological advancements.

BY STEPHEN ABRAM, MLS

This issue’s theme is the fragmentation of the profession. That word, fragmentation, always makes me think of the old “defrag” command in DOS. It was a magical thing—whenever you defragged your computer, it ran faster. In the early, slower, PC days, it was sort of fun to watch the defrag happen on the screen (and enjoy the little break it provided). I felt like I was in an endless loop of fragmenting and defragging my hard drive.

So, in semi-keeping with the theme, I am considering facets of the concept of fragmentation. On the professional side, I love the idea of fragmentation. I think that growing the concept of librarianship beyond the classical four-sided “box” of public, academic, school, and special librarianship is a fabulous notion.

In special librarianship, we’re seeing opportunities for special librarians as information professionals who practice our art of librarianship without the support of a traditional physical library. Some are seeing a divide that I don’t believe exists, between those who practice in libraries and those who practice as embedded or independent librarians or consultants. I’ve always believed in a big tent for information professionals.

We all depend on each other’s skills and support and, indeed, embedded or independent librarianship is a very natural progression for special librarians when there is no clear, standard route to success.

I am concerned, however, about fragmentation and defragmentation in technology. I think the potential exists to create divides in access to information that will have far-reaching consequences. Let me give you a few examples.

Communication Devices
Should the manufacturers of the devices we use have a legal say in how we use them? For example, should telephone handset manufacturers have a say in who we call? Should television manufacturers have a say in what we watch? Should our refrigerator manufacturer get to say what we can eat? Except within the bounds of common law, of course not!

Then why are some device manufacturers, under a number of guises, playing a role in what we can read and access? Sometimes, when this is discovered, the device manufacturers pull back, probably out of fear of attracting regulatory attention. But the number of instances where this is happening is becoming a concern to me and should concern every information professional and, indeed, every citizen.

One example of this trend is Apple’s approach to approving applications (apps). Steve Jobs famously said that if you don’t like his policies, get an Android phone. That’s not the solution. It’s the equivalent of saying that if you don’t like a dictatorship, you should go somewhere where your freedoms are respected instead of trying to change, or enforce, the laws and societal conventions from within.

I doubt very many of you have read the Apple click-through license agreements. That’s understandable, since they’re huge—the iTunes agreement alone is more than 50 pages long. I worry about the limits such agreements put on user behaviors that are normally allowed under standard legal frameworks.

Lately, worldwide capacity for manufacturing the special glass that is required to make touchscreens has been disrupted, with nearly all of the capacity being pre-ordered by Apple. This obviously ices out emerging competitors and disrupts the process of market innovation.

If mobile devices are becoming a worldwide platform for information access, communication and collaboration, do we want one vendor’s wealth and early advantage to preclude competition? I worry that Apple’s position is the tip of the iceberg and that we are risking the free and unfettered access to information that is the foundation of our professional efforts.

App Culture
Every new technology environment has
required some kind of regulation or oversight to ensure that balance is maintained and new market distortions don’t override the public good. We saw that with transcontinental trains, industrialization, the telegraph, the telephone, radio, television, and more. The emerging dominance of smartphones may require some oversight or we could see an increasing imbalance between the activities of commercial interests and end users’ needs and rights.

Again, I doubt many of you have read the approval rules and guidelines for Apple apps. They contain what I perceive as draconian restrictions on my rights as a reader and thinker. The guidelines are Apple-centric and contain such ticking time bombs as the prohibition of criticizing anyone in an app. This rule was used to forbid politicians from using apps in U.S. elections; it was also used initially to disallow a Pulitzer Prize-winning work of satirical commentary, since it was critical. The ensuing uproar caused some apps to be approved for use, but the provision remains in place.

I think this rule is clearly unconstitutional in most Western jurisdictions, and Apple has pulled back in most cases. However, license provisions such as this one appear to be a clear affront to our shared value system of librarianship. I ask you, should a device manufacturer or patent holder have the right to abrogate what you can say, read or hear? Does it have the right to create a walled space, where the underpinnings of democracy and freedom are granted by commercial interests at their personal whim?

There are fewer rules pertaining to the Google-endorsed Android apps, which remain fairly open. Given current programmer culture, we’re seeing a migration of effort to Android app development. That’s a good thing, in my opinion.

Research in Motion (RIM), the manufacturer of the Blackberry, has seen its share of licensing challenges, too. RIM has negotiated compromises with some national governments to allow tracking or oversight of electronic conversa-

**We have a vested interest in ensuring that the information ecology is healthy for all players—users, creators, vendors, technologists, librarians, and society.**

...tions through its devices, and it has kept these agreements largely private. Unfortunately for RIM, its own app strategy has pushed away the nascent RIM Blackberry developer community—RIM sued one of its own developers, causing many of them to stick with Android.

Clearly, the developments in the app space are worthy of our attention. Is that space open to robust market competition, or are we watching a lack of regulation and oversight create an archipelago of differing frameworks and access points that don’t allow for a level playing field for access to information and fair and balanced use of same? Whatever happened to open standards? Can you imagine if this had happened in the early days of telephone systems? Perhaps today we’d have three walled networks that couldn’t interoperate!

**Electronic Books**

The silly plethora of e-book formats is of concern to information professionals in the near term. Due to early placement and the power of Amazon’s standard (but best in class) Web store, the Kindle became a major device in the e-reader market. This was all well and good until librarians noticed that their Kindles could not actually load books provided by other vendors or, indeed, most libraries.

Should the owner of one store be able to use its market position to dominate the market space for reading books? In the past, anyone who could read could purchase or borrow a book. Does the advent of e-books change that ability? Is there a need to commercialize reading to this extent? Personally, I don’t think so.

Will we see Apple’s practice of censoring app policies extend to its iBook store? Will one company’s value system limit access to all books on its device(s)? At this point, the iPad and iPhone aren’t icing out libraries. Most major e-readers—those without the market share held by the Kindle—allow libraries and other formats on their devices. That’s not to say this couldn’t change in the future if profits or commercial interests trump or avoid regulation of the market for information.

Lastly, we are seeing Google enter the e-book market through Google Books. Google’s book digitization efforts, and its content licenses with tens of thousands of major publishers worldwide, are admirable on many fronts. Google is now proposing, in its copyright case before the courts, to provide institutional libraries (mostly public and academic) with one free access point to its huge vault of digitized books (currently numbering more than 15 million).

This proposal, of course, would only allow viewing on that single computer and would not permit downloading, printing or e-mailing. From one perspective, this “free” access could be construed as a Trojan horse to create demand inside libraries for more access points and further usage rights. Can our budgets sustain the end-user onslaught?

Recently, we’ve seen at least one e-book publisher introduce a new policy whereby e-books can only be circulated 26 times before they self-destruct. In response, librarians across the United States have mobilized, and the American Library Association has initiated a study group. It will be interesting to see the results.

Of greater concern is that this same policy suggests that the publisher should have access to patron borrowing records as part of the sale. After years of refusing to supply these records to...
the FBI unless accompanied by a court order, are we going to let our principles be brought down by commercial interests?

Are we about to see a major fragmentation of the market for books? Should e-books be treated differently? Personally, I don’t think so.

Too Much Power?

All in all, has too much power been concentrated in too few technology companies? Are there too few dominant players in the new information ecology? For example, does Google have too much impact on the search and advertising space? Is Amazon too dominant in the retail book space? Are there too few hardware and software companies competing and innovating?

Siva Vaidhyanathan, in his best-selling book *The Googlization of Everything (and Why We Should Worry)*, argues that it is time for major changes to our regulatory structures. I recommend his book as a thoughtful read and a real counterweight to the mainstream media viewpoints. These are important issues that special librarians should care about.

On the other hand, we are seeing some conditions that are militating for defragmentation of access. There is potential in open standards such as HTML5 and Android to level the playing field so that access is uniform. Free repositories built by libraries and collaboratives such as the Internet Archive provide some balance. The promise of cheaper devices that can extend access to all on a global basis is exciting. And I continue to be excited by the potential of free whitespace broadband in North America to balance the access rights in commercial networks.

It behooves us, as concerned information professionals, to follow what is happening in the public policy sphere that affects our concerns and our users. Can we stand by as a legal divide is created that disrupts access to information? Can we remain silent when the balance is disrupted between the rights and interests of end users, citizens, society, commercial entities, and creators? Do we stand by as the rights of business users are limited and monetized and other citizens are given more rights? Is it in the interest of special librarians to support issues that primarily affect the other key domains of librarianship when they are under threat?

I say yes. We stand with our users, not in self interest. We stand with our colleagues in the big tent of librarianship. One part of librarianship cannot look at another part of the information world and say, “Your side of the boat is sinking!” We have a vested interest in ensuring that the information ecology is healthy for all players—users, creators, vendors, technologists, librarians, and society. SLA
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24-27
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29 May-1 June
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12-15
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15-17
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Poznan, Poland

JULY 2011

4-8
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ACS ............................................. C3
Annual Reviews .......................... C2
IEEE ........................................... 31
The MIT Press ............................. 27
SPIE .......................................... 19
Wiley ......................................... 7

SLA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

SLA 2011 Annual Conference .... 2
SLA Career Center ..................... 34
Click U Certificate Programs ...... 30
SLA Membership ..................... 35
Virtual Worlds ........................... 24
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