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Finding a Home for the Nixon Collections


Precise thinking
requires
precise searching.

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Publisher, Editor in Chief: John T. Adams III ***(jadams@sla.org)***
Editor: Loretta Y. Britten ***(editor@sla.org)***
Columnists:
Stephen Abram
Lesley Ellen Harris
Janice R. Lachance
John R. Latham
Pam Rollo
Debbie Schachter
Carolyn J. Sosnowski
Layout & Design: Nathan Yungkans

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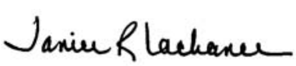
Defining Democracy - SLA Style



This is my first opportunity to communicate with you since we successfully completed SLA 2005 in Toronto. What a great experience that was! For those of you who participated, we at SLA headquarters are sincerely thankful for your involvement. You and the other 5,300 people who joined us in Toronto helped to create a highly productive, inspiring, and motivational atmosphere that was present in just about every meeting room and reception space. I saw it as a marvelous example of a community coming together for common purposes. Congratulations for making it happen!

While we were in Toronto, some very important decisions were made by the SLA membership, including the approval of amendments to the association's bylaws. We have officially changed the SLA governance year from a June-to-June schedule to a January-to-January schedule, which is in line with our fiscal year. Units have already begun changing their governance year and all will be complete by 2007.

This is a welcome change for staff and for volunteer leaders, to be sure. But the other change coming out of Toronto will likely have a greater impact on every member. Coming soon, you will be able to vote online in any future SLA elections or for future bylaws amendments. This is a very important development for the global community of information professionals, as all of us will now have a direct role to play in shaping the future of the profession and SLA.

How will this work? It's quite simple. You will receive notices from SLA via e-mail and regular post that will announce an upcoming vote. Most of you will receive your SLA voting registration information via e-mail as well, and you will be able to cast your vote over a period of several weeks from that point onward. Those of you who have not supplied SLA with an e-mail address will receive your SLA voting registration information via post, but you will have the option of voting online or mailing in your ballot.

The electronic ballot will offer you complete instructions for voting, as well as details on the subject matter. You will have the opportunity to make your selection, review it prior to submission, and then receive confirmation of your vote. Your vote will be private, secure, and counted the moment you make your submission.

This is one significant step towards making SLA a truly democratic community, where we collectively determine our future course. I can't wait to see it all in action, and I know you will be thrilled with the process AND the outcome.

Another great step towards democratization of our community was announced a few weeks ago, when Pam Rollo, our new president, announced the creation of six new task forces designed to assess SLA's future growth, structure, and relationships.

Presidents of SLA often ask members to become involved in ad hoc investigations into subject matter and topics that are highly relevant to the profession and its needs. Typically, these task forces are created to address the strategic implications of challenges and opportunities facing SLA, its members, and the information profession at large.

Are you interested? Pam has asked for your participation, and I encourage you to consider doing so. You can review the details on these new task forces at www.sla.org/content/community/committe/taskforces0506.cfm.

My goal since my arrival at SLA has been to listen to you and your fellow members and make your SLA experience participatory in nature and reflective of your career growth. These steps will expand my ability to hear more voices in our community and shape the association to your needs. Keep watching for future SLA communications about these exciting opportunities, and let us know how we can make your SLA experience better for you.

web sites worth a click

By Cybele Elaine Werts

These legal and education search tools were collected by my sister information specialists in the Regional Resource Network—Cathleen Palmer from NERRC (where I work) and Shauna Crane at the WRRC. They kindly gave me permission to share them with you. There are many general legal links as well as a number focusing on special education as well.

General Legal Resources

Findlaw

http://www.findlaw.com/
Findlaw is an encyclopedic site that has an education law component linking you to resources, attorneys, Web sites, and more.

Legal Information Center
http://www.law.cornell.edu/
The Legal Information Center is maintained by Cornell Law School and includes decisions by topic, journal articles, other resources.

Law, Government Sources

THOMAS

http://thomas.loc.gov/
To get the statute and regulations of IDEA, NCLB, FERPA, and other laws, THOMAS requires that you know the title or number of the law. Acting under the directive of the leadership of the 104th Congress to make federal legislative information freely available to the Internet public, a Library of Congress team brought the THOMAS World Wide Web system online in January 1995, at the inception of the 104th Congress.

Government Printing Office

http://www.gpo.gov/
GPO is the federal government's primary centralized resource for gathering, cataloging, producing, providing, authenticating, and preserving published information in all its forms. For example, GPO made the official government edition of *The 9-11 Commission Report* available to the American public at no cost at the exact time that the 9-11 Commission issued it July 2004.

sla news

Weblog Honors Late SLA President

SLA has created a weblog to honor the memory of former President Frank H. Spaulding, who died July 24, in Fort Myers, Florida. He was 73.

Friends and colleagues are invited to post remembrances of his life, tributes, and personal stories. After the blog has been open for a few weeks, SLA staff will compile the posts into a remembrance for Mr. Spaulding's family.

The blog, Remembering Frank Spaulding, is at www.sla.org/spaulding. To post, scroll past the first entry to the "Comments" link. Click that link and a comment window will open.

You may e-mail photographs to jadams@sla.org, and they will be posted promptly. Include your full name for credit. We also can scan in hard-copy photographic prints. Send them to: Information Outlook, c/o Remembering Frank Spaulding, SLA, 331 S. Patrick St., Alexandria, VA 22314-3501. If you wish to have the prints returned, please include an address.

Funeral services were held in South River, New Jersey.

Mr. Spaulding served as SLA president from 1986 to 1987 and created the Task Force on the Value of the Information Professional.

"The task force is notable in SLA's long history," said Executive Director Janice R. Lachance. "It helped library and information professionals get much-deserved and long-overdue recognition for their key contributions to their employing organizations. All of us join Frank's wife, Eugenia, and his family in honoring his life and mourning his passing."

Among Mr. Spaulding's many accolades are his 1995 installation into the SLA Hall of Fame, 1988 SLA President's Award, and 1990 selection as an SLA Fellow. He served two terms on the SLA Board of Directors between 1982 and 1988; served as New Jersey Chapter President from 1977 to 1978; and he convened the Retired Members Caucus in 2003.

"It was a satisfying and enjoyable 20 years for me being actively involved in SLA (and other information organizations)," Spaulding noted in his SLA memoir. "I remember every event, activity and the members who greatly enriched my professional and personal life."

Mr. Spaulding was also active in the American Society for Information Science, American Library Association, and other professional organizations.

In the photo, Mr. Spaulding is pictured with Kitty Scott at the 1994 SLA awards banquet. It was submitted by Barbara P. Semonche, director, The Park Library, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Long-Time SLA Member Retires from UCLA

Robert Bellanti has retired from the UCLA library. He most recently served as interim associate university librarian for research and instructional services from January 2003 through March 2005.

Bellanti, who joined SLA in 1982, spent the majority of his UCLA career as head of the Management Library and associate director of Anderson Computing and Information Systems.

Among his accomplishments was supervising the library's 1995 move to its new location in the Anderson School of Management complex, when it was renamed in honor of Maxine and Eugene Rosenfeld.

He also oversaw a shift in the library's collections and services, from primarily print publications and in-person assistance in the early 1980s to primarily online resources and services today, and worked closely with the Anderson Computing and Information Systems staff to coordinate library services and resources with the school's technical infrastructure and student and faculty instructional and research needs.

Bellanti was particularly active in SLA's Business and Finance Division and Southern California Chapter. He was named an association Fellow in 1999 and received the Southern California chapter's Billie Connor Award in 1997, the association's Factiva Leadership Award in 2003, and the Business and Finance Division's Distinguished Member Award in 2004. He was also a founding member of Academic Business Library Directors, which he chaired from 1997 to 1999.

Site Focus is Systems Thinking

A new Web site and blog aim to help information professionals use systems, or big-picture, thinking more effectively.

It seeks to heighten awareness of interactions that are at play in what may, on the surface, appear to be fairly straightforward transactions.

The intent of this site is to build on the seminal work of Peter Senge and provide a collection of resources about systems thinking, with a focus on how it can benefit information professionals and help them increase leverage in their interactions with colleagues.

Core elements of the site include a self-assessment to determine behavior that supports or detracts from “systemsness” with an online component to collect benchmarking data to learn where the profession sits on the systems-thinking scale, links to literature and SLA competencies that support systems behavior, and a blog for sharing with stories and experiences between colleagues to better understand and support adoption of this way of thinking.

The project is funded through 2005 by an SLA Endowment Fund Grant and is being coordinated by SLA members Lorri Zipperer, Zipperer Project Management, and Jan Sykes, Information Management Services, Inc. Its organizational sponsor is the Biomedical and Life Sciences Division of SLA.

For more information visit: www.sla.org/division/dbio/Systems or contact Lorri Zipperer (lorri@zpm.com) or Jan Sykes (jansykes@ameritech.net).

web sites worth a click

Code of Federal Regulations

http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/cfr-table-search.html
The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the federal government. It is divided into 50 titles that represent broad areas subject to federal regulation. Each volume of the CFR is updated once each calendar year and is issued on a quarterly basis.

Federal Register

http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html
Published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the Federal Register is the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents.

Wrightslaw

http://www.wrightslaw.com/law.htm
Parents, advocates, educators, and attorneys come to Wrightslaw for accurate, up-to-date information about special education law and advocacy for children with disabilities. You will find articles, cases, newsletters, and resources.

IDEA 2004 Resources

http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html
News and information on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), the nation's law that works to improve results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Case Law

Case Law Finder

http://laws.lp.findlaw.com/
Case Law Finder is organized by circuit court decisions.

Wrightslaw

http://www.wrightslaw.com/caselaw.htm
Wrightslaw has a link to case law and divides them by supreme court, court of appeals, district court, and other noteworthy cases.

Performance Measures for Information Centers

By Debbie Schachter

Recently, I have become more and more interested in and involved in the art of measuring performance outputs and outcomes. This relates to the work I've been doing in the non-profit sector, writing grant proposals for services and program funding, and then writing reports on the effectiveness of these services. Obviously, most corporate libraries and information centers have been grappling with this problem for a long time, but expectations of how to show value continually change in the corporate and non-profit worlds.

In the non-profit world, service evaluation may involve showing investors (the grant providers, stakeholders, or donors) what you're expecting to deliver with the money they provide. The actual outcomes are presented as results measurable to stakeholders through the service you provide. In the corporate world, you should be doing exactly the same thing for executives in your firm— trying to show them how current or proposed services will benefit the organization, and to find ways to appropriately measure their success.

When I went to the business literature to see what I could find that would suit measuring the knowledge-based work of information centers, I found the most relevant information came from the organizational learning profession. The issues and challenges relating to providing meaningful performance measures and return on investment estimates is a concern for learning professionals in the corporate environment, and they are often as hard to measure and as seemingly intangible as the benefits derived from information center services. What these professions discuss is relevant to all service organizations.

Intangibles

The common refrain "you can't manage what you can't measure" brings us back again and again to the reality of managing change, managing expectations, managing costs, and satisfying those who approve and pay our bills. Many organizations are driven on return on investment calculations, including the expectation that all support departments provide evidence that expenses meet these criteria. As most libraries and information centers can attest, this is certainly a simple concept but one that cannot account for the intangible or less tangible benefits provided by library services. Obviously, charging back for activities or services performed is one way of tracking that direct expense versus result ratio per client or project.

This can, however, suppress the creative program and service innovations by the library manager. For example, the library may provide knowledge management expertise or initiatives for the organization as a whole, or update the corporate Web site with information for employees and customers, or promote training and learning initiatives not directly linked to any one project for charge-back purposes. The programs can be evaluated by reasonable methodologies, showing expectations and outcomes (such as attendance figures, hits on the Web site, use of service increase; perceived efficiencies; and possible general expense reductions) but cannot be directly linked to the overall return on investment or, in fact, the corporate profit bottom line.

And the evaluation process itself, depending on how large the program or service is and the rigor of the analysis, can use valuable resources in the way of staff time. How can you ensure you are spending the appropriate time and resources on collecting service data and on the analysis?

Making sure that you are in tune with your stakeholders may be the key. How do they measure the success of their programs or projects? Is it solely through ROI analyses or are other benefits also taken into consideration? Are there particular buzzwords or topics that are in vogue in your industry right now? You may have more than one master in your organization, so take care to know what measures are important to each of them and follow suit.

This doesn't imply that tracking general service usage statistics shouldn't occur, however. Obviously, usage statistics do provide some useful information about the increase or decrease in demand for a particular service or product. Examining usage trends over time, or based on seasonal changes, will give you a sense of how demand is changing and will help you in planning staffing levels in your budget. Plotting usage trends against other initiatives that you undertake, or that are occurring more generally in the organization, give you some concrete support for your services—support that you can leverage against

Debbie Schachter has a master's degree in library science and a master's degree in business administration. She is the associate executive director of the Jewish Family Service Agency in Vancouver, British Columbia, where she is responsible for financial management, human resources, database and IT systems, and grant application management. Schachter has more than 15 years' experience in management and supervision, technology planning and support, in a variety of nonprofit and for-profit settings. She can be reached at dschachter@jfsa.ca.

additional funding or more resources from those who manage the organizational budget.

Linking usage with outcomes, however, is the most powerful argument for continued program support and for additional resources. By surveying users and ensuring the impact of the services is tracked, assessed and responded to, will give your executives clear understanding of what is the real return on investment for the information center. Use these methods to determine value of services and programs:

1. Survey each individual who uses the service. Ask questions that go beyond service usage and satisfaction to determine linkages to project successes, sales, successful proposals developed by other departments, and reduced expenses in different areas of the organization.
2. Track the key internal initiatives at your organization and link your services to these successes (capacity building work, organizational activities, efficiencies)
3. Determine the real cost of each service (on a per-employee basis) and ensure that programs do provide the value they should. You may have to let some nostalgic service go if you can't find a sponsor.

Business value, thus, is more than just a direct revenue line by the department, but is the positive outcomes engendered by the information as cost center. By examining results from your programs and services, you must be as ruthless as any executive in seeing what the real cost of services are, and be able to adjust accordingly. Use common sense and continue to seek feedback on what outcomes you should be basing your program success. It is rewarding to yourself and your staff when you can understand the true success of the information center's services and programs to your organization.

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Finding a Home for the Nixon Collections

Associated Press, AP

Richard M. Nixon waves a final farewell from the helicopter steps as he leaves the White House for the last time after resigning as President on Friday, Aug. 9, 1974. (AP Photo)

By Michael E. Smith

In the fall of 2004, the outgoing president of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), John W. Carlin, noted in an issue of the Organization of American Historians newsletter that although some of the material is still being processed at NARA's College Park, Maryland, facility, efforts are now under way, at the request of President George W. Bush, to at long last transfer the more than 42 million pages and 3,700 hours of taped communications of the Nixon White House document collection to the Nixon Library in Yorba Linda, California. [1] The transfer, expected to be completed sometime in 2008, will perhaps bring to an end a long, complicated, and confusing legal and cultural ordeal that has mixed a destroyed political legacy, political intrigues and espionage, public outrage, and exhaustive legal wrangling in a quagmire of historic (although today little known or understood) proportions.

Although contemporary culture tends to associate Richard Nixon with the Watergate scandal and mishandling of the war in Vietnam, public sentiment at the time (except perhaps on college campuses) seemed more likely to grant Nixon status as one of the better statesmen and presidents in U.S. history. By the start of his second term in office, Richard Milhous Nixon was becoming increasingly concerned with his legacy. Recruiting a number of well-heeled businessmen, he formed the Nixon Foundation to plan for the construction and operation of a modest presidential library that would hold all the documents and archival materials created during his tenure in the White House, as well as a great many other important items. Later, legal testimony revealed that by 1970 he had also authorized the placement of recording devices in the Oval Office of the White House, to record for posterity the conversations that took place there. This act figured centrally in his future and that of the country, and for a time cast doubt on whether a Nixon presidential library would ever come into existence. [2]

In 1970, Whittier College, in Whittier, California, had enthusiastically entered into negotiations to become the location of the future library and repository; by 1973, plans were nearing completion for the project. Land was being procured and architectural plans developed when news of the Watergate break-in and attempted cover-up began to leak. By May 1973, Lawrence Firestone, Ohio tire mogul and head of the Nixon Foundation, had to admit that, although library plans had not been abandoned, they had definitely been "back-burnered." Hopes of opening the library by 1976 lingered, even after public outrage and congressional hearings eventually precipitated the resignation of the 37th president. [3, 4, 5, 6, 7]

With the resignation of Nixon in August 1974, all bets were off. Whittier College had already backed out of the agreement, and although the Nixon Foundation continued to investigate possible sites for the library, few places seemed interested in housing the records and historical documents of a disgraced president. And a second problem had developed that threatened to derail the project entirely: Because of ongoing court battles regarding the Watergate situation, the papers and tapes documenting Nixon's presidency could be considered evidence...evidence that Nixon apparently didn't want anyone in Washington to have access to, as his attempts to remove these materials from the White House into his personal collection seemed to indicate.

The Ford administration, acting quickly in an effort to prevent the disappearance of vital documents, seized all Nixon's papers, both personal and official, forcing a showdown between the new president and his former boss. Nixon contended that the president's papers should be considered his personal property, while the Ford administration took the position that, aside from obviously personal materials, documents concerning administrative processes, including meeting minutes and tape recordings, were the property of the government. After a court battle (United States v. Nixon 7/24/74) in which the court rejected Nixon's claims of absolute executive privilege, a compromise was brokered between Nixon and the administrator of general services, Arthur F. Sampson, in which Nixon agreed to relinquish his claim to control of the documents temporarily, at least until the legal proceedings against members of his administration were settled. According to the agreement, finalized in September 1974, the Nixon files would be transferred to a General (later government) Services Administration (GSA) location in Laguna Niguel, California. It was also agreed that the Nixon tapes would be kept for three years, for use in various ongoing court cases. After this time, Nixon would be free to use or destroy the materials as he saw fit. [8, 9, 10]

Public Concern

There was immediate concern from the public about the storage site and the agreement itself. The Laguna Niguel location was only 10 miles from Nixon's San Clemente office, and some feared that Nixon would have easy access to his materials for presumably nefarious purposes. While the GSA declared that this location would not be the new "Nixon Library," it could not deny that the location had been poorly, if not dangerously, chosen. [11]

Meanwhile, the Ford administration was pushing a bill through Congress that would abrogate the conditions of the Nixon-Sampson agreement. The administration had decided that the best way to prevent destruction of these records was to create a law giving the government sole control over them. A 1976 Federal Court ruling declared that Nixon "might not be a wholly reliable custodian of these materials." [12] In 1977, the Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act (PRMPA) was signed, giving the GSA full custody, with the understanding that it would "determine terms and conditions upon which public access may eventually be had to those materials that are retained." Nixon's challenge to the constitutionality of this law was rejected by the Supreme Court, and the huge collection was now in the sole control of the GSA's National Archives and Records Administration branch, although Nixon continued to mount legal challenges to this ruling throughout the 1980s and until his death in 1994. [13]

Interestingly, plans for creation of a Nixon presidential library had not been completely grounded by the Watergate scandal, nor by the withholding of most of the materials dealing specifically with his presidency. Nixon had been a part of the American political scene for the better part of three decades, in Congress and as Dwight Eisenhower's vice president; the vast collection of archival materials documenting his part in Cold War politics was certainly of interest to scholars and historians. So it was no surprise that the University of Southern California (USC) expressed an interest in the collection in 1975. However, in December 1974, eight trustees of the Nixon Foundation, including Lawrence Firestone, were seeking to dissolve the organization, and this may have played a part in USC's failure to acquire the materials. Eventually the foundation was dissolved, and its assets ended up under the control of Whittier College. [14, 15]

The Nixon Library idea appeared to have died, but suddenly, in 1981, Terry Sanford, president of Duke University in

North Carolina, announced that his school would house the former president's personal documents. Nixon was a notable alumnus of the school, having earned his law degree there in 1937; by Sanford's thinking, the collection would surely be a boon for research. What he had not counted on, however, was the animosity some faculty members held toward the disgraced president. President Sanford had not only misjudged the ability of his faculty to see past their political disgust to the value of the materials, he had acted in what was seen by the faculty as a unilateral way, without vetting the idea with them. As noted in the New York Times, he had failed to "do the faculty rain dance."[16, 17]

In an attempt to stave off criticism and mollify the offended faculty (who, even before his Watergate troubles, had rejected the idea of awarding Nixon, a rather distinguished alumnus by any measure, an honorary doctorate), Sanford offered a compromise. Instead of housing the collection on campus, the university would build a separate off-campus facility of approximately 55,000 square feet. Ultimately, the faculty won out over Sanford, and in April 1982, Duke University officially declined the opportunity to become the site of the Nixon presidential library. The official reasons for rejecting the library included the "poor economy" and an "unfavorable political climate," although the latter reason probably carried more weight than the former. [18, 19, 20, 21]

Proposed Locations

Over the next few years, rumors surfaced periodically about potential locations for Nixon's personal collection, and Nixon continued his attempts to gain control over the White House documents. By the end of 1982, three cities had emerged as possible locations for what was now planned as a privately funded library (the odds of gaining approval for federal funding were poor). Independence, Missouri, rejected the idea because of the close proximity of the Truman Library. Leavenworth, Kansas, and Baker, Oregon, were also vetted as possible locations, but neither city had historical ties to Nixon, and a lack of popular support killed these attempts. [22]

In 1983, the University of California at Irvine seemed to be interested, and a May 1983 report suggested that Chapman College in San Clemente was eager to be the location. [23, 24] However, neither school was able to overcome the legal, logistical, and possibly ethical problems plaguing the project, and although private donations in support of the library continued to grow in the coffers of the Nixon Foundation, indicating that there was support for the project, the difficulty of finding a location that would be acceptable to host and donor continued to hamper its progress. Still, the interest expressed by these California locations, which were near Nixon's home, seemed to indicate the direction in which future efforts were headed.

The City of San Clemente, in fact, was still interested in the Nixon Library project, and community support remained strong for a monument to a local man who was still held in very high esteem. In addition, the tourism value of the library—with an estimated 500,000 to 750,000 visitors per year—was too great for the rapidly growing area to ignore. It seemed at last that the archival collection no one wanted had found a home. During the next three years, architectural plans were finalized for the project; by 1986, donations had risen to over $22 million of the estimated $25 million needed for completion. [25, 26]

Ground was finally broken for the Nixon Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, just north of both San Clemente and Chapman College. The site was located on the land where his father had built his homestead and where the future president was born in 1913. On July 19, 1990, the nine-acre complex making up the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace was officially opened. There was some lingering criticism over museum exhibits that highlighted Nixon's career in politics but, understandably, downplayed the controversies that had driven him from the White House. [27, 28]

Built and operated entirely with private funds, the library was an independent organization, and Nixon himself had the final authority to grant or deny access to the archival materials for research and study. When Hugh Hewitt, director of the library, suggested that no one who was "politically or ideologically unsound" would be allowed to use the materials in the archive, Nixon declared that the collection would be "open to all." [29, 30] But although the collected archives of Nixon's political life had finally found a permanent home, the records of his two terms in the White House were still out of his control. In 1978, a cumulative index of the public papers had been published, and—following a 1986 ruling by the Department of Justice that gave NARA governance over the collection—a very specific and restrictive access policy for scholars was developed. [31, 32, 33, 34] Nixon brought suit in 1987, claiming that he was being deprived of his private property and that the materials had been illegally removed from his control, but in 1991 a lower court ruled that the 42 million pages and 3,700 hours of recordings were not personal papers. On appeal in 1992, the court ruled in favor of compensating Nixon for the loss of his records, a decision upheld by the Supreme Court in Nixon v. United States. [35]

Although he did not win control of the presidential materials, Nixon had successfully prosecuted his claim to compensation for loss of his property. However, this did not mean an end to the legal battles, as NARA simply refused to put a monetary value on the collection, much less actually suggest that it would consider paying for materials it already had in its possession.

After Nixon

Richard Nixon died in 1994, still fighting to regain control of the documents that PRMPA had prevented him from either locking away in an inaccessible archive or possibly destroying. But Nixon's death did not signal an end to the dispute. The Nixon Foundation, which operated the presidential library on behalf of the Nixon family, continued pressuring NARA to offer some kind of monetary compensation for the collection, as per the high court's ruling.

On April 5, 1997, three years after Nixon's death, the Washington Post reported that an agreement was in the works. Picked up by other newspapers, rumors spread quickly that NARA was planning at long last to pay the family for the Nixon papers. The story generated criticism from some quarters, as people unfamiliar with the court rulings but still bearing ill will toward a man they felt had, among other things, betrayed the public trust and bungled a war, suggested that there were probably more constructive ways for "the government" to spend our tax dollars. [36, 37] Criticism aside, NARA was now seemingly willing to cooperate. In exchange for dropping legal claims to the papers, NARA would pay the Nixon family at last, but the details—such as the actual value of the collection—remained to be worked out. While NARA began the process of cutting approximately 820 hours that were deemed sensitive from the roughly 4000 hours of recorded material, the court battle continued with renewed vigor. [38]

In December 1998, a New York Times headline claimed "Nixon Estate Seeks Millions for Material Seized." In February 1999, another Times article gave more detail. The Nixon lawyers were preparing to ask for a financial award equal to the presumed market value of the materials in 1974, plus interest that would have accrued over the intervening 25 years. The total: $213 million. [39, 40]

Of course, NARA didn't consider this a realistic figure. More legal negotiations ensued, until in January 2000 an agreement was finally reached that was satisfactory to all parties. The agreement was unusual in that it addressed a number of issues regarding the collection; most important, how it would be managed in the future, and by whom. NARA, which managed and operated all the other presidential libraries save one, had long sought to wrest control of the Nixon Library from the private Nixon Foundation. Under the terms of the agreement, NARA would pay $26 million dollars to the Nixon estate; far less than the opening offer from the Nixon lawyers, but enough for the Nixon family to pay all the legal fees that had accumulated during decades of legal battles. In addition, the Nixon Library itself would receive $6–$8 million dollars, which would be used to create an additional wing. With the arrival of all the White House documents sometime in 2008, operation and management of the library would be turned over to NARA, which would use the new annex to house the documents it would transfer from the College Park, Maryland, location, thus uniting the entire archival collection at last. [41]

An unfortunate side note to the agreement between NARA and the Nixon Library was the development of a battle between Nixon's two daughters over whether the Nixon Foundation or the Nixon family should have control over the operation of the library in the interim. This disagreement held up dispersal of the award funds temporarily, but ultimately the conflict was resolved. [42]

As the repository for all Nixon's archival collections, the Yorba Linda site is one of the most visited presidential libraries in the country. Although there is much to be gleaned from the archival collection, the site is also a tourist draw and conference center, with over 2.5 million visitors since 1990. [43]

After 30 years, Richard Nixon's reputation with the public has been somewhat rehabilitated. The years between Watergate and Operation Desert Storm were dominated by conservative Republican policies, and Nixon had become a valued advisor to political and economic interest groups. At the same time, there was an increasing recognition that he had inherited many of the problems associated with prosecuting the war in Vietnam from previous administrations; the groundwork for failure having been laid not just by Lyndon Johnson, but also by John F. Kennedy and even Eisenhower. And although some hold a lingering hatred for a president who at one time signified all that was seemingly wrong with America, after his death he was lauded as a great, but flawed, man, who came to power in difficult times. [44]

The unification of the NARA collection with the holdings of the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace will, in one sense, bring to a close the last remaining chapter of the odd history of the 37th president of the United States. Although some skepticism exists among those who don't understand the terms of the agreement, [45] it opens new and greater opportunities for research and debate about the significance of Nixon to American foreign and domestic policy. As additional light is shed on the events of Nixon's administration, new evidence may reshape and rehabilitate the lingering impression of "Tricky Dick" on the American psyche. Or perhaps the evidence will reveal, in greater detail than before, that Nixon's critics were right after all. In either case, having the collection in one place and under NARA control will allow a new generation of scholars to determine for themselves, from source documents, the true legacy of Richard Nixon.

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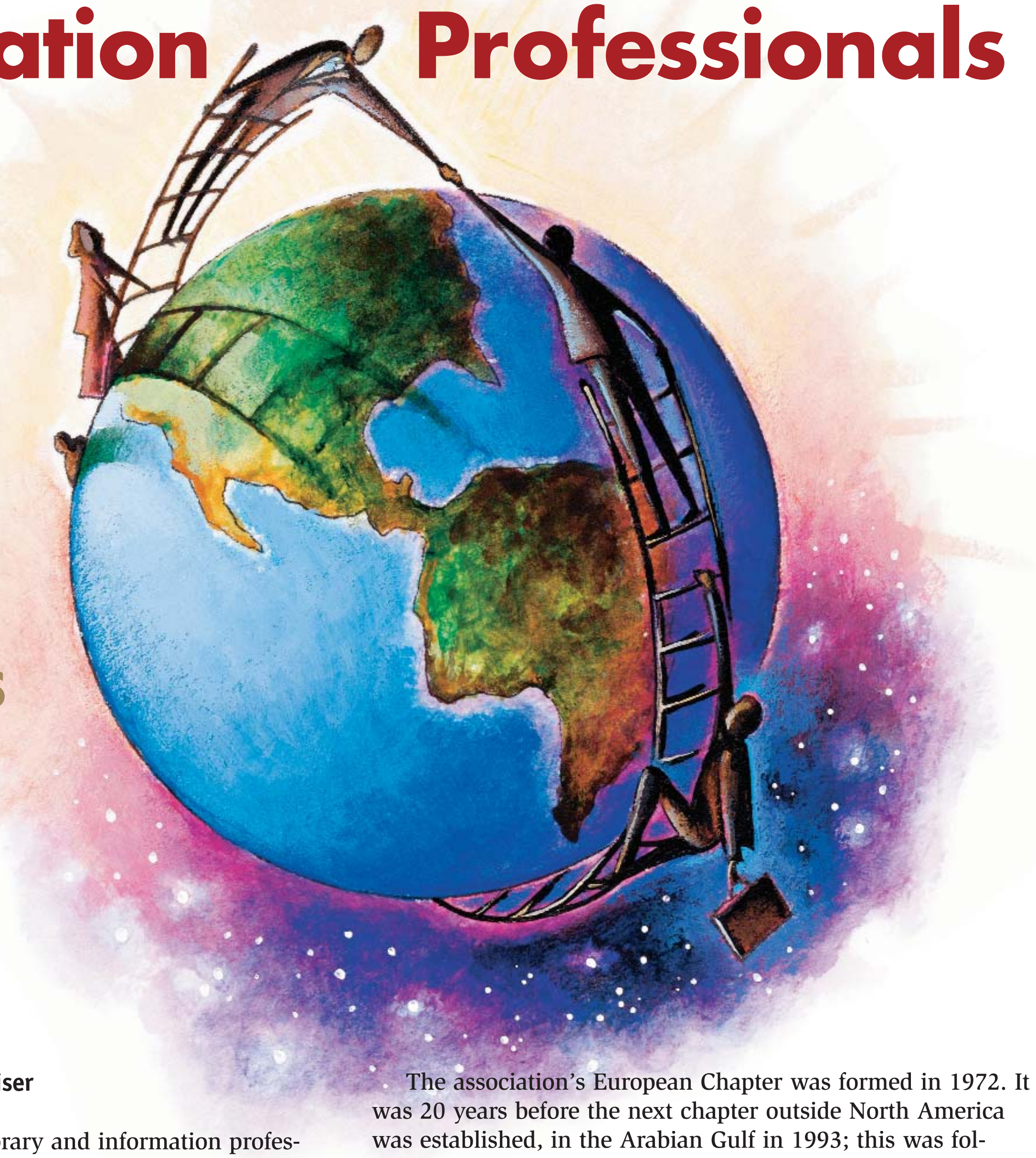
Global Outreach to Information Professionals



SLA's Activities Are an Ongoing Effort

By Giselle Foss and Barbie E. Keiser

SLA's endeavors to reach library and information professionals beyond its traditional market of North America are not new, and they occur on many levels: within chapters and divisions, through the international caucus, and association wide. SLA became a member of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) in 1946; the relationship continues to this day.

Professionals from around the world have chosen to join our association. We can point to two U.S.-based chapters in particular, whose character has been shaped by the international representation among their membership:

- The Hawaiian Pacific Chapter has more than 80 members in Hawaii, mainland United States, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Ecuador, Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore.
- The Florida and Caribbean Chapter has members from seven Caribbean nations.

The association's European Chapter was formed in 1972. It was 20 years before the next chapter outside North America was established, in the Arabian Gulf in 1993; this was followed by Asia (1999), Sub-Saharan Africa (2001), and Australia and New Zealand (2004). Today, SLA has more than 12,000 members in 80 countries.

In 2000, SLA held its first conference outside North America, in Brighton, England. More than $80,000 was raised from individual members, SLA chapters and divisions, vendors, the Danish International Development Agency, and the World Bank to enable 25 librarians from developing countries to attend the conference. As Global 2000 Fellows, they were given a two-year membership in the association. The achievements of these Global 2000 Fellows have been tracked and can be viewed on the International Information Exchange Caucus Web site (www.sla.org/caucus/kiie/FellowsAchiev.htm). The Fellows have maintained contact with their chapters and have been active contributors to chapter bulletins and newsletters.

Many professionals in other countries have difficulty raising the money for SLA membership dues. A virtual membership category was established in 2001, making it possible for those who are unable to participate in association activities because of their distance from the United States/Canada to become members. (In recent years, distance has become less of an issue, as low-cost airfares are available in many areas of the world and technological advances have placed many of the association's benefits at the fingertips of members.) The cost for a virtual membership is a significant discount from the full membership, but the benefits are restricted to online access to the association's publications, including Information Outlook. Virtual members can participate in online seminars at the member rate; participation in discussion lists and Communities of Practice is at the discretion of each group.

One of SLA's most successful global initiatives is the Twinning Project. Established in 2001, the project helps individuals in developing nations participate in SLA activities as full members. It pairs international information professionals ("twins") with SLA chapters, divisions, and caucuses (referred to collectively hereafter as "groups") so that these professionals can become active members, exchanging information and experiences with other SLA members. Having an SLA group as a sponsor means that the individual has mentors who will help him or her with work and professional development and offer advice about SLA resources.

Mechanics of Twinning

Here's how it works: An SLA group decides to sponsor a twin. The group selects a candidate from the twin candidate list, available online at www.sla.org/chapter/cdc/twinning.html. The group contacts the candidate and invites him or her to become its twin. If the person accepts, the group pays for 90 percent of a two-year SLA membership, while the twin pays the remaining 10 percent. It is hoped that having to pay this small portion will encourage the twin's responsible participation in the association, and may help the twin earn or raise funds for continuing membership at the end of the two-year period. (In practice, SLA headquarters must receive the entire payment at once. The group usually pays 100% up front and is reimbursed 10% by the twin.) The twin sends a completed SLA membership form to the group; the group submits the form with payment to SLA.

Benefits of Twinning

Twinning offers benefits to all parties. The twin has new contacts, a professional network, and access to SLA resources. The SLA group learns from the twin, who shares information, experiences, and a different perspective from most SLA members. International ties and sometimes long-lasting personal friendships result.

Successful twinning does not occur in a vacuum. It requires nurturing and is most successful when one person in the group is responsible for maintaining the long-distance relationship and devising mutually beneficial projects on which the twin and the group can work.

Examples of Twinning

Twinning activities vary, depending on the professional interests of the twin and the topical area of the group, if it is an SLA division or caucus. In some cases, groups have donated materials to their twins' libraries or information centers. The following are the experiences of four SLA chapters:

- The Philadelphia Chapter sponsors a twin from Brazil, Marcia Rosetto. Marcia has been in frequent touch with her chapter, updating them on her activities, writing for the chapter bulletin, and sending a gift for the chapter's silent auction. One of the chapter's members had a business trip to Brazil and was able to meet Marcia in person.
- Ludmulla Farafanova of Russia twins with the Indiana Chapter. One of the chapter members, Zoya Golban, helped Ludmulla with grant writing and information gathering on a library program sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Russia.
- Smita Chandra of India twins with the Bay Area Chapter. An article about her background, librarianship in India, and her professional goals was published in the chapter bulletin. It is available online at www.sims.berkeley.edu/sfsla/bulletin/novdec03.pdf.
- The DC Chapter twins with Toshka Borisova of Bulgaria. (Toshka is the second twin for the DC Chapter; the first was Krishna Gopal Tyagi of India.) Toshka wrote an article for the monthly publication Chapter Notes. The article describes changes in libraries and information policy in Bulgaria since the fall of communism and touches on why SLA's international outreach is important. Read Toshka's article at www.sla.org/chapter/cdc/cnotes/nov04.pdf.

Twinning Expands

After four years, it's time to rethink the Twinning Project, to expand its scope and influence. The International Relations Committee of the DC Chapter has undertaken to promote the Twinning Project, encouraging individuals who work in special libraries or information centers to submit their candidacy for twinship. SLA groups are encouraged to suggest countries with which they are most interested in twinning. Our committee has developed a network to help us identify suitable candidates from which SLA groups may choose a twin and we are constantly working to expand the number of twins and the number of countries represented. If you need any guidance or assistance through the process, contact Giselle Foss (gfoss@npr.org).

In addition to this one-to-many approach (twinning an individual to an SLA group), the committee has proposed identifying special libraries and information centers in developing nations whose missions are related to one of the 25 SLA divisions and 11 caucus interests. Twinning a special library in a developing/emerging nation to an SLA group will provide support and encouragement for an entire staff. While only one "membership" will be maintained, the entire staff, and those served by the special library/information center, will benefit. For the group, the twin will provide access to regional collections and knowledge in a particular subject area or specialty. Exactly how these twinned libraries and SLA groups will work together is entirely up to the participants, and we look forward to hearing about innovative collaborative projects.

Finally, the committee is beginning to analyze the effectiveness of the program. One such evaluation measure is the number of twins who continue their membership in SLA after the two-year twinship has expired; another is the number of articles by these twins in association publications. The committee is considering other quantitative and qualitative measures and mechanisms to track the program's effectiveness.

Information Exchange

In supporting international projects, SLA has not limited itself to twinning. The International Information Exchange Caucus "provides a vehicle for SLA members who are involved or interested in efforts to promote networking on the international level through the exchange of ideas, information, and/or people." The caucus Web site (www.sla.org/caucus/kiie/) identifies the international relations chair for each of the chapters and divisions; provides links to international job opportunities and resources for professional education and grant writing; and hosts both the Twinning Project Web pages and the Library Wish List from Developing Nations.

In preparation for a presentation at the 2002 annual conference, Sue O'Neill Johnson (DC Chapter; SOLO Librarians Division) surveyed 18 librarians in 15 countries—all winners of a Global 2000 or 2001 Fellowship or American Society of Information Science and Technology paper competition—to ascertain their "library wishes." Many of these wishes have already been fulfilled, but a few remain unsatisfied today. The International Relations Committee of the DC Chapter recently contacted each of those on the list, confirming that they still have the same wishes. Readers are encouraged to review the wishes and see whether they can think of a way to help fulfill any of them (www.sla.org/caucus/kiie/Wishes.htm).

We are convinced that the Wish List has a place in the new millennium and propose that it be reoriented so that all new wishes fall under one of the four Competencies for Information Professionals as outlined in the 2003 revised edition (www.sla.org/content/learn/comp2003/index.cfm):

- Managing Information Organizations
- Managing Information Resources
- Managing Information Services
- Applying Information Tools and Technologies.

During the coming year, the DC Chapter's International Relations Committee will be promoting the Wish List, describing its new format, and encouraging information professionals around the world to make their wishes known to our membership. Our task then will be to consider each wish and determine how we can help fulfill it.

Group Initiatives

Several chapters and divisions have long-standing programs to support their international counterparts; many of these efforts revolve around the annual conference, including the following:

- The Social Science Division (DSS) hosts an International Reception at each annual conference. The division's International Relations Section provides "an opportunity for members interested in international aspects of librarianship and information exchange to promote activities and develop programs that strengthen ties among librarians and information professionals worldwide."
- This year, the Advertising and Marketing Division (DAM) is offering an International Member Travel Grant of up to $1,500, plus the cost of conference registration and tickets to DAM-sponsored programs in Toronto. The grant is available to DAM members from countries in Africa, Asia and Oceania, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Additional information about the grant can be found in the division's fall bulletin (www.sla.org/division/dam/bulletin/fall04bulletin.htm). [Note: The recipient of the first DAM International Travel Grant is Vijaya Menon, director of knowledge management at Grey Worldwide in Mumbai, India.]
- The International Science and Technology Division Librarian Award enables a librarian outside the United States/Canada to attend the annual conference. The award consists of conference registration and airfare, not to exceed $1,000.
- The Physics-Astronomy-Mathematics (PAM) Division has an active International Relations Committee. Since 1999, PAM has offered an International Membership Award that covers SLA membership for two years as well as conference registration and all travel expenses for the winner (including airfare, hotel, meals, passport fees, visa fees, and other related expenses). The award winner not only attends the conference but also participates in a panel at the International Issues session. This year's winner is Cornelius Awasom Ngang from Cameroon. In addition, the PAM-Asia Pacific Forum for librarians and information specialists with an interest in physics, astronomy, mathematics, and computer science subjects has its own discussion list and has met regionally as a group in the past.
- This is the first year of a continuing commitment by the Leadership Management Division (LMD) to support one SLA Diversity Leadership Development Program award to an individual from a developing country. LMD is supplementing the normal $1,000 award sponsored by EBSCO with a $750 travel award to help an international librarian attend the annual conference in Toronto.

Two of SLA's largest chapters have ongoing global projects. The New York City Chapter's Global Outreach Committee has set up a deposit account with Brodart. At chapter meetings, raffle tickets are sold for $1 (or six for $5). The prizes are inexpensive items such as picture frames, books, calendars, and CDs. The proceeds go to provide special libraries in developing countries with gift certificates for $150 of library supplies from Brodart. Applicants for the award are asked to describe their libraries and how they would use the funding. The committee has found that the applicants have quite realistic project goals, with very basic needs that are easy to fulfill. The recipients receive the certificates and a Brodart catalogue, and Brodart takes care of the shipping and the various forms that are required for sending materials overseas.

For the past few years, the Washington DC Chapter has collected library and information journals from its members and shipped them to library schools in Zimbabwe and Cuba. When SLA moved its offices last year, the association sent 23 boxes of books discarded by the SLA Information Resource Center to

Zimbabwe and Cuba, and to a new library school being established in Croatia.

This year, the DC chapter plans to ship journals it collects at various chapter events to GAMLISA (the Gambia Library and Information Services Association), which has petitioned the government to accredit it to offer a library education/training program in the country. These materials will be part of its expanded resource center.

Student chapters at the Catholic University and University of Maryland library schools also are collecting library texts from their colleagues and alumni for donation to these schools. And publishers have been enormously helpful, providing selected titles at significant discounts.

If your chapter wants to support a library school in another country, you can identify a suitable candidate from the World List of Departments and Schools of Information Studies, Information Management, Information Systems (http://informationr.net/wl/wlist7.html). Simply contact the dean of the school to determine interest in the program. If the response is positive, encourage your members to hold on to library, information, and computer journals they have read and would normally discard. They can bring them to chapter meetings, dropping them in a carton at the registration desk. Cartons can be M-Bagged and shipped via sea by the U.S. postal service; M-Bag tags and customs forms are available at any post office.

On April 14, the DC Chapter held its annual celebration of International Special Librarians' Day (ISLD), as part of National Library Week. In past years, SLA has provided an ISLD kit with various items designed to help members promote ISLD and their services within their organizations. This year, the campaign was suspended, as SLA reconsiders its marketing efforts and determines how the ISLD campaign fits into the association's overall marketing strategy. Individual chapters were encouraged to hold ISLD events.

The DC Chapter has usually celebrated with a reception and presentations on a variety of international themes. In 2003, our attention turned to Africa. Speakers introduced us to Lubuto, a project in Zambia that introduces homeless children, orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS, to books and reading in makeshift libraries crafted out of old shipping containers; efforts to build libraries for children in rural Ghana; and an overview of library education on the continent. In 2004, our focus was on information literacy. Three thought-provoking speakers gave us a global perspective on the subject:

- Hannelore Rader, dean of university libraries at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, spoke on the "Global Significance of Information Literacy" and how teaching information literacy skills differs from country to country.
- Jesus Lau, librarian at the Veracruz Campus of the Universidad Veracruzana and co-chair of the biannual Meeting on Information Competencies in Mexico, discussed the need for information literacy training in Latin America and libraries' role in that process.
- Caroline Stern of Ferris State University (Michigan) inspired the audience with her passion for information literacy, which was evident as she recounted her experiences as a literacy advocate and activist working with other cultures.

This year's event introduced us to the World Computer Exchange (WCE) (www.worldcomputerexchange.org), an international educational nonprofit that helps the world's poorest youth bridge the disturbing global divides in information, technology, and understanding. WCE accepts donated computers that would otherwise end up in landfills and gives them new life, connecting youth to the Internet in developing countries. We are exploring how our two organizations might work together to implement more projects around the world.

Our intent is always to energize the members of our chapter and encourage them to actively participate and support international library and information projects. We hope that this article serves the same purpose for readers of Information Outlook, and we look forward to hearing what you and your colleagues are doing to support library and information activities around the world.

Giselle Foss is a broadcast librarian at National Public Radio (gfoss@npr.org) and heads SLA's Twinning Project.

Barbie Keiser is an information resources management consultant in the Washington, D.C., area. Currently, she chairs the Washington Chapter's International Relations Committee, is the international relations chair for the IT Division, and is the government relations chair for the Leadership and Management Division. She is the recipient of the 2005 President's Award for her efforts in the international arena.

Automatic Indexing

Comparing Rule-based and Statistics-Based Indexing Systems

By Marjorie M. K. Hlava

It's never been more fascinating—or more challenging—to be an information professional.

Surveys show that corporate librarians have more information to manage, and less staff to help manage it than ever before. Not only is the universe of data expanding by the minute, but also we are beset with confusion over the variety of tools and methods for managing and retrieving electronic information.

A striking example of this confusion is automatic indexing—the process of mechanically analyzing concepts and themes in a database's stored and newly added content to create links between keywords and phrases.

This is a critical area. The costs and benefits of how you categorize your information collection will cascade through your organization for years to come. In our increasingly knowledge-based economy, indexing amounts to basic infrastructure.

Why is automatic indexing important? It's the glue that holds your content together. It's the underlying layer of order that makes your database productive, robust, and responsive—and thus best able to serve the needs of your organization.

Without automatic indexing, you may find the precise bit of data that will ignite a new market, but at what cost, if you and your staff have spent hours wading through a river of irrelevant documents called up from an online search? Even more likely are instances of lost opportunities to deliver on requests for research, competitive intelligence, or industry awareness because you don't have the means to put missing or disparate pieces of information together.

So which system for automatic indexing of data is fastest? Easiest to implement and update? Which provides the best return on investment? Which system will "understand" that when you're interested in the REM sleep phase you're not interested in the brainy rock band R.E.M.?

To better grasp the options for categorizing data, we'll be smart librarians and impose some categories here ourselves. We will divide the major systems for automatic indexing into two groups: rule-based and statistics-based.

We'll look at the return on investment, long and short term, for each, as well as how they compare for ease of implementation, user access, and accuracy. Most systems require a thesaurus to start, and we'll assume one here for each system. (The thesaurus is a controlled vocabu-

Marjorie M. K. Hlava is chairperson of Access Innovations in Albuquerque, New Mexico, provider of the Data Harmony line of software used for indexing and data structuring. You can reach her at mhlava@accessinn.com.

lary that lists the main components of the data collection, along with appropriate synonyms and antonyms. It helps the indexer and searcher to select the same terms to describe a particular subject.)

The critical notion for us is that one has to "teach" an automatic indexing system to identify relevant data and how to categorize it. How is this accomplished in each of the two automatic indexing systems?

Rule-Based Indexing

The newest type of automatic indexing system—rule-based—is a leap forward in the science of indexing. It offers greater precision while burning up fewer dollars and hours than previous systems. In a rule-based system, simple categorization rules are automatically generated, matching bits of text ("prompt words") to the thesaurus or taxonomy terms, which tell the software how to categorize the document. Editors may further define the rules by telling the system what words must be present or absent in the text, or giving some other specific instructions that point the document to a particular category. For an organization conducting sleep research, you tell the software that a document with REM and "music" is a "miss," and it doesn't bring up any documents about the band. Think of a rule-based approach as driving a car using specific directions to get to a destination.

Statistics-Based Indexing

The second system—statistics-based—is "trained" by examining a set of 50 or so documents associated with each keyword in the thesaurus. This process creates scenarios from word occurrence and location in the training documents. In this system, the software would deduce that REM is part of the science of sleep and not a rock band, since none of the training documents mention music. Think of this as giving a driver a pile of maps and telling him to figure out the best way to get to the destination.

These are sophisticated systems, and the upfront investment for any automatic indexing system is substantial. For our comparison, let's assume an existing thesaurus (sometimes called the controlled vocabulary) of 6,000 words, which is typical. We'll assume hourly rates and units per hour using industry standards. And we'll assume that 85 percent accuracy is the baseline required for implementation to save personnel time.

Now for a test drive—our experience with two different clients, using the two different systems.

The Rule-Based Approach

A simple rule-based system matches terms in the thesaurus to exact terms and synonyms in the documents to determine the appropriate indexing. With an existing thesaurus or authority file, this is a two-hour process. Rules for synonyms and preferred terms are generated automatically. So, for example, if the thesaurus category is "bush," it might also recognize "shrub" as a synonym. Using the simple rule base alone usually provides 60 percent accuracy.

The editor can add more complex rules. For example, the index, in its search for shrubbery documents, might be trained to ignore a document with the word "bush" used within a few words of "president" or with a capital B. Complex rules such as these typically comprise about 10 percent of the terms in the vocabulary. An index editor can create four to six rules per hour, so it would take 2.5 weeks to create 600 complex rules for a 6,000-term thesaurus. Enhancing the simple rules through editorial rule building offers the potential to achieve 85 percent or higher accuracy.

The rule-based approach places no limit on the number of terms used in the taxonomy or the number of taxonomies held on a server. Our client was up and running with its rule-based index in a month.

So, let's add it up:

- Software is about $60,000, including training and support.
- Conversion of the thesaurus, about two hours at $125 per hour in programming time ($250).
- Loading the thesaurus and creating the rule base, two hours of editorial time at $45 per hour ($90).
- Complex rule building, 100 hours of editorial time at $45 per hour ($4,500). (Could be as much as 150 hours.)
- The total, based on those assumptions, would be $64,840.

The client for whom we prepared the rule-based system reported 92 percent accuracy and a fourfold increase in productivity.

The Statistical Approach

We'll start with the same preexisting 6,000-word thesaurus. The software for this system starts at about $75,000. Usually one week of training is required, at about $10,000.

Now you must address the documents—news articles, for instance—that train the thesaurus. The documents can be collected using software programs, but document sets for each thesaurus term must be reviewed by editors to remove misleading records. If each thesaurus term requires 15 reviews, that's a potential $67,500 for editorial review of a training set.

Next, you run the training documents through the software, with programming time of 40 hours at $125 per hour, or $5,000. The index editor reviews the results, and collects new training sets for thesaurus terms that didn't return good data sets. The second run is reviewed. Editorial time of 40 hours at $45 per hour costs $1,800.

The next step is to collect additional training data for bad sets. If 25 percent of the thesaurus term yields 1,500 terms, multiplied by one hour per term of editorial time is $67,500. The training set is rerun, assuming 20 hours of programming time at $125 per hour, or $2,500. Reviewing the results requires 20 hours of editorial time at $45 per hour, or $900.

In our case study with a client, the accuracy at this point was 60 percent. To achieve reliable improvement in productivity requires 85 percent accuracy. At this point, an editor can write rules in a program language such as SQL. If you train editors to write these rules, you can avoid the higher programmer rates. Still, to write four SQL rules per hour for 1,500 terms (25 percent of the thesaurus terms), requires 375 more editorial hours at $45 per hour, or $16,875.

Again, adding up the costs:

- Total implementation time frame, 33 weeks.
- Total person hours, 6,488, plus 40 hours of editor training.
- Upfront cost, $449,375.
- Maximum accuracy achieved, 72 percent; productivity doubled.

So, what is the return on investment? Assuming that six editors are involved in the process, a rule-based system recoups its value in one month, compared with almost five years under the statistics-based approach. It's not hard to see why we prefer the rule-based index.

Creating a Positive Professional Image

By Mallory Stark

As Harvard Business School professor Laura Morgan Roberts sees it, if you aren't managing your own professional image, others are.

"People are constantly observing your behavior and forming theories about your competence, character, and commitment, which are rapidly disseminated throughout your workplace," she says. "It is only wise to add your voice in framing others' theories about who you are and what you can accomplish."

There are plenty of books telling you how to "dress for success" and control your body language. But keeping on top of your personal traits is only part of the story of managing your professional image, says Roberts. You also belong to a social identity group—African American male, working mother—that brings its own stereotyping from the people you work with, especially in today's diverse workplaces. You can put on a suit and cut your hair to improve your appearance, but how do you manage something like skin color?

Roberts will present her research, called "Changing Faces: Professional Image Construction in Diverse Organizational Settings," in the October issue of the Academy of Management Review.

She discusses her research in this interview.

Q: What is a professional image?

A: Your professional image is the set of qualities and characteristics that represent perceptions of your competence and character as judged by your key constituents (i.e., clients, superiors, subordinates, colleagues).

Q: What is the difference between "desired professional image" and "perceived professional image?"

A: It is important to distinguish between the image you want others to have of you and the image that you think people currently have of you.

Most people want to be described as technically competent, socially skilled, of strong character and integrity, and committed to their work, their team, and their company. Research shows that the most favorably regarded traits are trustworthiness, caring, humility, and capability.

Ask yourself the question: What do I want my key constituents to say about me when I'm not in the room? This description is your desired professional image. Likewise, you might ask yourself the question: What am I concerned that my key constituents might say about me when I'm not in the room? The answer to this question represents your undesired professional image.

You can never know exactly what all of your key constituents think about you, or how they would describe you when you aren't in the room. You can, however, draw inferences about your current professional image based on your interactions with key constituents. People often give you direct feedback about your persona that tells you what they think about your level of competence, character, and commitment. Other times, you may receive indirect signals about your image, through job assignments or referrals and recommendations. Taken together, these direct and indirect signals shape your perceived professional image, your best guess of how you think your key constituents perceive you.

Q: How do stereotypes affect perceived professional image?

A: In the increasingly diverse twenty-first century workplace, people face a number of complex challenges to creating a positive professional image. They often experience a significant incongruence between their desired professional image and their perceived professional image. In short, they are not perceived in the manner they desire; instead, their undesired professional image may be more closely aligned with how their key constituents actually perceive them.

What lies at the source of this incongruence? Three types of identity threats—predicaments, devaluation, and illegitimacy—compromise key constituents' perceptions of technical competence, social competence, character, and commitment. All professionals will experience a "predicament" or event that reflects poorly on their competence, character, or commitment at some point in time, due to mistakes they have made in the past that have become public knowledge, or competency gaps (e.g., shortcomings or limitations in skill set or style).

Members of negatively stereotyped identity groups may experience an additional form of identity threat known as "devaluation." Identity devaluation occurs when negative attributions about your social identity group(s) undermine key constituents' perceptions of your competence, character, or commitment.

For example, African American men are stereotyped as being less intelligent and more likely to engage in criminal behavior than Caucasian men. Asian Americans are stereotyped as technically competent, but lacking in the social skills required to lead effectively. Working mothers are stereotyped as being less committed to their profession and less loyal to their employing organizations. All of these stereotypes pose obstacles for creating a positive professional image.

Even positive stereotypes can pose a challenge for creating a positive professional image if someone is perceived as being unable to live up to favorable expectations of their social identity group(s). For example, clients may question the qualifications of a freshly minted MBA who is representing a prominent strategic consulting firm. Similarly, female medical students and residents are often mistaken for nurses or orderlies and challenged by patients who do not believe they are legitimate physicians.

Q: What is impression management and what are its potential benefits?

A: Despite the added complexity of managing stereotypes while also demonstrating competence, character, and commitment, there is promising news for creating your professional image! Impression management strategies enable you to explain predicaments, counter devaluation, and demonstrate legitimacy. People manage impressions through their non-verbal behavior (appearance, demeanor), verbal cues (vocal pitch, tone, and rate of speech, grammar and diction, disclosures), and demonstrative acts (citizenship, job performance).

My research suggests that in addition to using these traditional impression management strategies, people also use social identity-based impression management (SIM) to create a positive professional image. SIM refers to the process of strategically presenting yourself in a manner that communicates the meaning and significance you associate with your social identities. There are two overarching SIM strategies: positive distinctiveness and social recategorization.

Positive distinctiveness means using verbal and non-verbal cues to claim aspects of your identity that are personally and/or socially valued, in an attempt to create a new, more positive meaning for that identity. Positive distinctiveness usually involves attempts to educate others about the positive qualities of your identity group, advocate on behalf of members of your identity group, and incorporate your background and identity-related experiences into your workplace interactions and innovation.

Social recategorization means using verbal and non-verbal cues to suppress other aspects of your identity that are personally and/or socially devalued, in an attempt to distance yourself from negative stereotypes associated with that group. Social recategorization involves minimization and avoidance strategies, such as physically and mentally conforming to the dominant workplace culture while being careful not to draw attention to identity group differences and one's unique cultural background.

Rather than adopting one strategy wholesale, most people use a variety of strategies for managing impressions of their social identities. In some situations, they choose to draw attention to a social identity, if they think it will benefit them personally or professionally. Even members of devalued social identity groups, such as African American professionals, will draw attention to their race if it creates mutual understanding with colleagues, generates high-quality connections with clients, or enhances their experience of authenticity and fulfillment in their work. In other situations, these same individuals may choose to minimize their race in order to draw attention to an alternate identity, such as gender, profession, or religion, if they feel their race inhibits their ability to connect with colleagues or clients.

Successful impression management can generate a number of important personal and organizational benefits, including career advancement, client satisfaction, better work relationships (trust, intimacy, avoiding offense), group cohesiveness, a more pleasant organizational climate, and a more fulfilling work experience. However, when unsuccessfully employed, impression management attempts can lead to feelings of deception, delusion, preoccupation, distraction, futility, and manipulation.

Q: How do authenticity and credibility influence the positive outcomes of impression management attempts?

A: In order to create a positive professional image, impression management must effectively accomplish two tasks: build credibility and maintain authenticity. When you present yourself in a manner that is both true to self and valued and believed by others, impression management can yield a host of favorable outcomes for you, your team, and your organization. On the other hand, when you present yourself in an inauthentic and non-credible manner, you are likely to undermine your health, relationships, and performance.

Most often, people attempt to build credibility and maintain authenticity simultaneously, but they must negotiate the tension that can arise between the two. Your "true self," or authentic self-portrayal, will not always be consistent with your key constituents' expectations for professional competence and character.

Building credibility can involve being who others want you to be, gaining social approval and professional benefits, and leveraging your strengths. If you suppress or contradict your personal values or identity characteristics for the sake of meeting societal expectations for professionalism, you might receive certain professional benefits, but you might compromise other psychological, relational, and organizational outcomes.

Q: What are the steps individuals should take to manage their professional image?

A: First, you must realize that if you aren't managing your own professional image, someone else is. People are constantly observing your behavior and forming theories about your competence, character, and commitment, which are rapidly disseminated throughout your workplace. It is only wise to add your voice in framing others' theories about who you are and what you can accomplish.

Be the author of your own identity. Take a strategic, proactive approach to managing your image:

- Identify your ideal state.
- What are the core competencies and character traits you want people to associate with you?
- Which of your social identities do you want to emphasize and incorporate into your workplace interactions, and which would you rather minimize?
- Assess your current image, culture, and audience.
- What are the expectations for professionalism?
- How do others currently perceive you?
- Conduct a cost-benefit analysis for image change.
- Do you care about others' perceptions of you?
- Are you capable of changing your image?
- Are the benefits worth the costs? (Cognitive, psychological, emotional, physical effort.)
- Use strategic self-presentation to manage impressions and change your image.
- Employ appropriate traditional and social identity-based impression management strategies.
- Pay attention to the balancing act—build credibility while maintaining authenticity.
- Manage the effort you invest in the process.
- Monitor others' perceptions of you.
- Monitor your own behavior.
- Employ strategic self-disclosure.
- Preoccupation with proving worth and legitimacy.

Mallory Stark is a career information librarian at Harvard Business School's Baker Library. This article is reprinted with permission from HBS Working Knowledge and can be found online at http://hbswk.hbs. edu/item.jhtml?id =4860&t= career_effectiveness.

coming events

September 2005

Hypertext 05
Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)
September 6-9
Salzburg, Germany
http://www.ht05.org

ASIDIC Fall 2005 Meeting
Association of Information and Dissemination Centers
September 11-13
Napa, CA, USA
http://www.asidic.org/meetings/fall05.htm

ARMA '05: 50th Annual Conference & Exposition
September 18-21
Chicago, IL, USA
http://www.arma.org/conference

9th European Conference on Research and Advanced Technology for Digital Libraries (ECDL 2005)
September 18-23
Vienna, Austria
http://www.ecdl2005.org

Your Career: A Straight Shot or a Shot in the Dark?
September 21
http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar

InfoX Conferences
Information Today
September 27-28
New York, NY, USA
http://www.infox-ny.com/

SARC III: Experience a Timeless Information Journey: Revolution and Evolution Continue
September 28
Williamsburg, VA, USA
http://www.sla.org/conf/ conf_sar

2005 LITA National Forum
September 30-October 2, 2005
San Jose, CA, USA
http://www.ala.org/ala/lita

October 2005

EUSIDIC Annual Conference
European Association of Information Services
October 9-11
Innsbruck, Austria
http://www.eusidic.org

Internet Librarian International 2005
Information Today
October 10-11
London, UK
http://www.internet-librarian.com

Part 1: The Principles of Conducting a Library Benchmarking Project
October 12
http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar

3rd International Evidence Based Librarianship Conference
Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)
October 16-19
Brisbane, Australia
http://conferences.alia.org.au/ebl2005

Internet Librarian 2005
Information Today
October 24-26
Monterey, CA, USA
http://www.infotoday.com/il2005

Part 2: Integrating Benchmark Findings Into the Information Product Development Lifecycle
October 26
http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar

ASIS&T 2005 Annual Meeting
October 28-November 2
Charlotte, NC, USA
http://www.asis.org/Conferences

November 2005

Part I: Unlocking Knowledge from Text
November 15
http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar

KMWorld & Intranets 2005
Information Today
November 15-17
San Jose, CA, USA
http://www.kmworld.com/kmw05

Part II: Case Studies and Implemention Roadmap
November 29
http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar

December 2005

Copyright for the Corporate Librarian: The Importance & Consequences of Copyright Issues in the Digital Environment
December 7
http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar

Communicating the Value of Your Service
December 14
http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar

January 2006

SLA Leadership Summit
January 18-21
http://www.sla.org/

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SLA Notices

What If You Can't Locate a Copyright Owner?

How many times have you been unable to locate the copyright owner of a specific manuscript, article, or photograph, and either took the risk of using the work without obtaining permission, or reluctantly (and legally) used alternative material? Researchers, librarians, and corporations around the world have been increasingly facing such issues as we all try to increase our copyright awareness and compliance.

Previous U.S. Copyright Law

Three changes in U.S. copyright law have increased the problem of locating copyright authors and owners. These changes relate to copyright renewals, voluntary registration of works with the U.S. Copyright Office, and an increased duration of copyright protection.

Under the previous U.S. copyright law, copyright owners were required to renew their copyrights with the Copyright Office, which in turn provided a method for users of copyright-protected materials to locate authors and owners of works. When the current U.S. Copyright Act became law, the requirement for a copyright owner to renew his copyright after a 28-year period was removed for works registered after 1978, and by 1992, the renewal period was completely eliminated. Although this is a benefit for copyright owners, not having to deal with the paperwork of renewing copyrights, it also means that copyright owners' "paperwork" in the U.S. Copyright Office is not as up to date and not as helpful to those searching for copyright authors and owners.

In 1989, when the U.S. joined the Berne Convention, copyright in the U.S. became automatic upon the creation of a work, and registration, though still beneficial, is no longer required. Again, this has made it more difficult for those searching for authors and owners of copyright-protected works.

In 1998, the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act extended the duration of copyright in the U.S. from 50 to 70 years after an author's death. Of course, this increased the period of time in which a user of copyright-protected materials must obtain permission to use a work by an additional 20 years, adding to an already problematic situation of locating copyright authors and owners.

Other countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom that have never had copyright renewals and also have voluntary registration have provisions in their laws to address the issue of unlocatable copyright owners (and the problem of trying to use copyright-protected works where permission cannot be obtained.)

Canada

In 1998, a provision for obtaining a license for the use of works by unlocatable copyright owners was added to the Canadian Copyright Act. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis through application to the Copyright Board. Under section 77 of the Canadian Copyright Act, a license can be issued by the Canadian Copyright Board to an applicant where they can prove they made reasonable efforts to locate the owner of the copyright. If the Board is satisfied by the applicant's efforts of e-mails, phone calls, written correspondence, approaches to copyright collectives, Internet searches, etc., then it may issue a non-exclusive license which is valid only in Canada, subject to any terms and conditions it sees fit. To date, 153 licenses have been issued by the Board for various uses such as:

- The mechanical reproduction of musical works.
- The reproduction of architectural plans.
- The reproduction and incorporation of a film clip into another film.
- The reproduction in a book of a cartoon.
- The reproduction, public performance and the communication to the public of sheet music on a Web site.

Further information on these and other licenses may be found at: www.cb-cda.gc.ca.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has a more limited provision relating to orphan works. The U.K. copyright statute (the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act) permits the use of an orphaned work only where it is reasonable to assume the copyright has expired. This law provides that an infringement does not occur where the copyright owner cannot be located by a reasonable inquiry. Also, the date of copyright expiration must be uncertain, and it must be reasonable to assume that the copyright has expired.

Orphan Works in the U.S.

Although there is no current U.S. legislation regard-

Lesley Ellen Harris is a copyright lawyer/consultant who works on legal, business, and strategic issues in the publishing, content, entertainment, Internet, and information industries. She is the editor of the Copyright & New Media Law Newsletter: For Libraries, Archives & Museums, *and the author of several books, including* Licensing Digital Content: A Practical Guide for Librarians. *She often speaks at conferences and teaches online courses on copyright and licensing. For more information, visit http://copyrightlaws.com.*

ing unlocatable copyright owners the U.S. Copyright Office has been soliciting comments on orphan works. The deadline for submitting comments and reply comments has now passed, but these comments and reply comments can be accessed at: http://www.copyright.gov/orphan/index.html. Public roundtable discussions were held in late July 2005 in Washington DC and Berkeley, California. In light of the many challenges resulting from being unable to locate copyright owners, the U.S. government is examining the following issues in its inquiry:

- The nature of the difficulties encountered in getting permission to use works.
- Who is encountering these difficulties.
- What exactly are the barriers to locating copyright owners.
- How should an "orphan work" be defined.
- If an approach like Canada is followed, what should be considered "reasonable." effort to locate a copyright owner.
- What is the role of a registry for owners of possible orphan works.
- Should any new system for orphan works apply to both published and unpublished works.
- How would any proposed system comply with international copyright obligations.

Like all provisions in copyright law, there must be a balance between the rights of the copyright owner and the assurance of fair and reasonable access to copyright-protected materials. This balance may be found in the creation of legislation, increased regulation or in other solutions altogether.

SLA members may enroll in Harris' online courses on copyright and licensing through SLA's Click University at http://www.sla.org/content/learn/clicku.cfm.

Tips to Boost Innovation for You and Your Library: Part 1

By Stephen Abram

There's nothing like the 25th anniversary of your graduation from library school to trigger reflection. I recently attended a 25th anniversary reunion at the Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto, my alma mater. Reconnecting with old friends and colleagues was great and stirred up many memories of being a fairly young, newly married, and very green librarian heading out into the world.

What have I learned in those 25 years, and is any of it useful? Each of the points below has at least one story underpinning the lesson, usually many stories. And, as is always the case, there was some pain and some gain associated with each lesson. As I wrote this column I was surprised at how many little rules and insights drive my perceptions of innovation and product development. Before I knew it, the column had mushroomed into a three-parter. I can't guarantee that each rule will work as well for you as it does for me (as the kids say, YMMV—your mileage may vary). Also, when I look them over I see that some are attitudes more than aptitudes. That's interesting to me, because I believe that attitude is everything. When you're positive, positive things happen. Anyway, I've been collecting this list over a few years and thought it was time to share it with you. So here goes:

1. Iteration is everything.

In this Web-enabled (Web-dominated) world of information service and delivery, we are dealing with a technology that is still in grade school (less than 10 years old), and many of its major players range from preschool to primary grade age. We are not going to get it permanently right in a few development cycles. We are in a continuous development state, and this state will last for many years. Take the book, for example: It required many centuries to standardize what we now consider an intuitive format. So, we must focus on continuous iterative development of our interfaces, Web sites, content, and services. And, every once in awhile, we have to be ready for that forklift upgrade. I see evidence of this in the evolution of the Sirsi OPAC and in Web interfaces such as the evolution from green screens through WebCat/Web2, iBistro/iLink, and now EPS (Enterprise Portal Solution). It seems that every five to seven years you need to rebuild and take advantage of emerging standards and technology innovations. But in that period until the next big thing comes along, we tweak and adjust and add new features to achieve the improvements we need.

2. Good, not perfect.

This point (closely related to the first) is one that many of us have difficulty with. We are, after all, a profession that covets the perfect catalogue record, believes that we can organize all the world's knowledge for universal access, and sits behind desks offering to answer all comers' questions. Pretty nervy! It is a challenge for us to know when to release new products and services; when to decide that something is done, finished, complete. Perfection as an attitude can get in the way. When our stock in trade was mostly uncorrectable hard copy, this attitude served us well. Now that we spend so much time designing malleable interfaces, Web products, and content that is correctable and improvable on the fly, we need to decide when good enough is good enough. A valued colleague brought up the "good, not perfect" aphorism at so many meetings that we finally had a T-shirt made for her. But the phrase often broke through our perfectionist mindset, and we can all benefit from the learning derived from working with the real product instead of the ideal product in our minds.

3. It's not the number of steps that causes delays in development; it's the space between the steps.

Have you ever been frustrated by how long it takes to accomplish projects? Of course you have. I've noticed that it's not the number of steps in your project plan that determines how long the project takes. It's taking a breather after every step that causes delays. I'm not saying that rushing is good, but effective project management minimizes the space between the steps and keeps everyone focused on achieving the milestones and the ultimate goal. Many Web sites benefit from regularly scheduled updates and improvements; others seem to stay the same for years, until they require complete removal and rebuilding. By sticking to a steady pattern of innovation and improvement, you can ensure that things stay dynamic and engaging.

Stephen Abram, MLS, is vice president, innovation for Sirsi Corporation. He is past president of the Ontario Library Association and current president of the Canadian Library Association. In June 2003 he was awarded SLA's John Cotton Dana Award. This column reflects Stephen's personal perspective and does not necessarily represent the opinions or positions of Sirsi Corporation. Products are not endorsed or recommended for your personal situation and are mentioned here as useful ideas or places to investigate or explore. Stephen would love to hear from you at stephen.abram@sirsi.com.

4. Freeze and go!

The model for electronic development is not revolution or evolution, but seasonal change. With services delivered by humans, we can adjust and adapt as we go, but technology-driven products and services are a different matter, because products are usually released in a somewhat fixed state. Changing them too often confuses the user, but not changing them often enough risks stagnation or even fossilization. Choosing the correct cycle is an art. If you do something revolutionary, it may be called "ahead of its time" in retrospect but may not be well accepted in the present. On the other hand, the evolutionary approach can feel like death by a thousand cuts to system administrators and users. I like the seasonal approach, in which changes are collected and released on a simple schedule (quarterly, semi-annually, etc.). This requires some rigor in the process—the release is defined and the specification is respected so that the product can be frozen, tested, and released. Then the development team can "go" (move on to the next step). I've seen too many Web sites and content projects risk failure through random tinkering, second guessing, and poor management of good ideas for improvement. Don't let this happen to you.

5. Prefer action over study.

If you or your team is studying something to death, remember that death was not the original goal! I was recently in a library where the systems folks in the host institution were studying whether to upgrade from Windows 95 to 98—in 2005! Scary. Although we have a great core competency in research and study, we must know when to fish or cut bait. In risk-averse cultures this is particularly difficult. We need to understand that delay can be as big a risk as poorly considered action. Pilots and good process reduce your risk (and provide learning opportunities, too). History is full of enterprises that overvalued their conservative cultures and gradually declined because they did not adapt to new expectations.

6. Brainstorm, mock-up, build, alpha, rebuild, beta, pilot, test, launch, evaluate, re-do.

That's the process. It's pretty simple, but many people make the mistake of trying to skip a step, which almost always causes problems later. Each step can be quite small and contained. You don't need to bet the organization's future on a single initiative writ large in the strategic plan. You do need to have many projects at different stages of development in your funnel. That way you'll build innovation processes into the DNA of your culture. By building teams focused on a few key initiatives—for example, virtual reference, intranets, and Web portals—you can focus attention and run several projects on parallel tracks. This creates excitement and a practical image of action over study.

7. Remember the Rule of Six in usability testing.

You get diminishing returns by asking the same question of similar people. Sometimes we think that we can reduce the risk of implementing innovative product features and functions by testing them with hundreds of users. Some research (and personal experience) leads me to believe that volume testing just increases your costs and delays delivery. For example, if you've designed an intranet application for lawyers to access legal memoranda, you probably need to test it with only six lawyers in your firm to find out enough to iterate an improved version to test again. The Rule of Six will improve your product faster, and you'll learn more. You'll also get closer to your target market's needs and values when you work with them personally rather than reviewing hundreds of pages of click reports. In another example, if you add a blog or a new library calendar to your library portal, test it with six people and integrate what you learn from them into your next iteration.

8. Remember the 15 Percent Rule.

Humans have extreme difficulty seeing a comparative difference of less than 15 percent. For example, if we look at the light from 100 candles, we won't see a brighter light until 15 more candles are lit. Interesting, and I understand that the same is true of sound volume, color variation, and other matters of human perception. Indeed, in job evaluation systems, jobs are not considered sufficiently different until there is a 12.5 percent–15 percent difference in the job's points. So, any innovation needs to be that much different from what was there before for users to see the difference. Some people think that making 100 things 2 percent better will make a perceptible difference. This is likely not true; for our purposes. We should probably attempt to make a much smaller group of initiatives 15 percent or more better. I think this is why single small introductions of new features on library portals are often missed or ignored: They're not sufficiently different to be noticed. Therefore, it might be better to make grander changes to bring attention to new services and products in our virtual space.

9. Use the 70/30 Rule.

"I agree with 70 percent of the plan and can live with the other 30 percent." That's the key to consensus decision making. Lord only knows how much time is wasted trying to achieve 100 percent agreement. If you can lead your team to agree to this principle, you have taken a major step toward breaking the logjam of unmade decisions in almost-complete projects. Of course, you'll still have to work through major stumbling blocks that some team members can't agree on, but don't let the minor ones hold up progress. Remember the iteration rule: There's always another season to make changes based on user experiences.

10. Remember the old 80/20 Rule.

No matter how few or how many users you have, 80 percent of your usage/revenue/statistics will come from 20 percent of your users. If you remove 80 percent of the users who aren't delivering good user numbers, you'll still be getting 80 percent of your use from 20 percent of your users. Don't let some spreadsheet demon lure you into the productivity trap: Among the 80 percent of users who are not using your product or service, a lot are your nonusers and also your future or emerging users, users who are still getting comfortable with the product, users from other demographics where you'll discover new products and services to create, and users who are just at a different point in the adoption curve. If you want to grow, you have to be a big tent to find all your future users. If we only survey folks who come into the physical library, how can we be sure we're meeting the needs of our virtual users? And nonusers are another nut to crack.

11. Remember the 90/10 Rule.

It's true that 90 percent of your costs in both time and money are in implementation, not development. It's a crying shame, but it's true. Never underestimate the amount of time and effort that will be required after you have given birth to your baby products or services. Just like human babies, they will require a lot of effort, expense, care and feeding, training, and support to bring them up to their full potential. But be patient: Like kids, they're marvelous when they're all grown up!

That's the first batch of tips. Watch for the next set in the September issue of Information Outlook.

Forget Loving Thy Neighbor, Love Thy IT Manager

By John R. Latham

When did you last praise the IT department? We information professionals often complain that we do not receive the recognition that we deserve, but have you ever thought how the IT guys feel? Just like your car, which you expect to work when you start the ignition, so you expect your PCs, laptops and networks to work all the time. Just as it pays to build a great relationship with your local garage mechanic, so with your IT manager.

We have moved on a long way from the days of "the computer room" and incomprehensible computer languages, when we held the IT guys in hushed awe. Now we have PCs and laptops on our desks and at home, and we don't need to know COBOL or its ugly friends to be computer literate. We have moved from a time when the IT department was all powerful, and never failed to find an opportunity to let you know it, to a time when it has to be accountable and justify the value of new and ongoing products and services. Just as we have moved out of the "library" and connected with staff to find out what they actually want and need, so IT is becoming part of the team. This was succinctly summarized in a recent Outsell Briefing: "As the world of data, words, and technology have converged, some IM and IT roles have begun to overlap, and it has become increasingly clear that synergy and strength can result when these two groups throw their hats into the same ring." [1]

The technology revolution has enabled us to acquire, access and disseminate information in great volume and at great speed, but it has also forced us to partner with IT to ensure that the software and systems are harnessed to the best advantage of the organization. Forging a great, or workable, relationship with the IT department may not necessarily be easy, depending on past experiences, or the culture of your organization, but it will pay dividends in the end.

Who Are the Players?

Start by checking out how the IT department functions, and who are the "players" within it. By developing a relationship with the "head honcho" you can find out about future plans and developments, but make sure you become good friends with one of the "lesser mortals," who actually set up and maintain the systems. Apart from being extremely useful in helping keep your personal or departments systems up and running, he/she is more likely to tell you what is actually happening, when there are delays and problems with new or current systems. By working together you can help your IT colleague by informing the right people how his/her IT problems impact the effective use of your services. If you can help to have the IT issues be given a higher priority, you will have a friend for life.

One of the little things that came out of a great partnership I forged with one of our IT directors was that we helped each other with "lingo." I would look through his memos or responses to check for use of "techy" words that would only confuse the reader, and likewise he would check mine for misuse of words or the use of colloquialisms that might also confuse the readers. By establishing a rapport, you begin to share experiences and discuss what the user expects from the systems, and what are the limitations of the software. By meeting casually for a coffee or lunch two or three times a week, we discussed immediate problems, which often were easily sorted out. We often found they were only a problem because one of us was not aware of what functions were available, and this could be sorted out with a short "Tips" memo to staff. Sometimes an additional function, which can be added at no, or little, additional cost, makes an enormous difference to the user.

Remember that if you spend most of the time on the sharp end of complaints, you become defensive when asked questions, which may be construed as criticism. I often start my conversation with my IT colleagues by saying that I know that I am technically inept, but I cannot get such and such a system or program to work. This puts them at ease as they become the teacher, and together you find that the instructions were not clear and they agree to sort out the problem. To be honest this approach only really works when you do know what you are talking about, but you may not wish to start the conversation by saying that the instructions are rubbish. By the questions you ask your IT colleagues will soon work out the level of your IT competence, and that you are not technically inept. You need to have a general knowledge of the IT operations within your organization, and have a general understanding of the language of IT, so that you can converse effectively with your IT partners.

In many instances the IT guys are dazzled by the enhanced speed and new functionality of a system, whereas we are more impressed by the effectiveness of the results. How many expensive knowledge management systems fell by the wayside because not enough time was spent on considering the human element of sharing information? The role of the information professional has become so much more important because there is a glut of electronically produced information that someone has to convert into accessible and valuable formats.

There will always have to be compromises between IT and IM when agreeing on new systems, but if there is a good working relationship on an ongoing basis, it is much more likely that the right decisions will be made in the long run. We are all working to the same goal of making information available to the right people, in the right format, at the right time.

1 "Information Management Best Practices: Working With IT." *Info AboutInfo Briefing*, Vol. 8, June 3, 2005: 7. Outsell Inc., www.outsellinc.com.

John R. Latham is the director of the SLA Information Center. He can be reached at jlatham@sla.org.