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Thinking Outside the Box

Hello colleagues,

Let us think outside the box for this column. Many of you know that SLA was formed in 1909 by a number of information professional visionaries who desired affiliation with an association that catered to their unique and specialized delivery of information products and services. Let us now imagine it is September 2009, I am your president, and you are those visionary information professionals. You have asked me to develop plans for a global association of information professionals who connect people and information in the 21st century. What follows is my futuristic vision:

Name: Information Services Association: Connecting People and Information

Vision: The global organization for innovative information professionals and their strategic partners.

Mission: Promote and strengthen our members through learning, advocacy, and networking initiatives.

Core Values: Includes leadership, service, innovation and continuous learning, results and accountability, collaboration and partnering.

Membership: Anyone who provides innovative information products and services and who is interested in learning, advocating, and networking with information professionals.

Association Year: January to December with general member meetings that include leadership summits, innovation symposia, and an annual conference.

Board of Directors: Led by a president and 12 additional directors, with the executive director as a team member. Directors may lead a community or a regional cabinet organization, a committee devoted to fulfilling our mission directives, work with our staff on fulfilling our fiduciary responsibilities, or work with our strategic partners on our core values. Works in teams with members, staff, and strategic partners. Meets throughout the association year.

Staff: Led by a visionary executive director, and a management team with strong mentoring and teamwork abilities. Anticipates and responds to member needs, and works within a budget. Works in teams with members, directors, and strategic partners.

Strategic Partners: Appreciate the role that information professionals occupy in the global community. Are active members in our learning, advocacy, and networking initiatives by their participation and their funding activities. Work in teams with members, directors, and staff.

Communities: Fluid groups of individuals who wish to network, learn, and advocate for their specialized areas of expertise. Examples include competitive intelligence; leadership and management development; pharmaceutical and health technologies; and science and technology. Technology is an enabler, yet in-person meetings are encouraged.

Regions: Geographical areas where members can meet to learn, network, and advocate for the profession. Management of each region is very simple, with numerous neighborhoods that are convenient for members to join. Technology is an enabler, yet in-person meetings are encouraged.

So, what do you think? I presented this futuristic scenario to the SLA leadership during their June 2004 Leadership Summit. Many people were intrigued by some of the concepts and others were skeptical. For me, the exercise was interesting and forced me to stretch beyond our SLA boundaries and yet remain aligned with our vision, mission, and core values. As you begin your association unit year activities, I ask each of you to stretch your mind and your strategic thinking. Who knows what we can accomplish together in moving our profession forward!

A Story

As promised, I will relate a story in each of my columns. This one is about the one-year anniversary of the SLA Iowa Region. Dru Frykberg, chair of public relations, sent a news release to the business editors at the Des Moines Business Record and the Des Moines Register, the major daily newspaper. The release described the role of information professionals and information centers in the various organizations in Iowa and Des Moines and announced the anniversary of the community.

Dru followed up a few days later with a hard copy of the news release, a link to my SLA bio, and a story that appeared at KansasCity.com on the role of information professionals as information "detectives." The mailing piqued the interest of a reporter from the Business Record who interviewed me regarding my vision for the future of the profession and the association. The story later appeared in a May 2004 issue of the Record. This is an excellent example of a public relations best practice and one that the SLA director of public relations and our chair of the Public Relations Committee will use in their best practices methods.

Make it so!

Ethel Salonen
Ethel H. Salonen
President

making news

SLA Forms New Chapter in Australia/New Zealand

SLA has formed a new chapter in Australia and New Zealand, the 59th geographically-oriented network within its membership. The SLA board approved the new chapter during its meetings at the annual conference in Nashville.

SLA member Sue Henczel (CAVAL, Ltd., Bundoora, Australia) organized the effort to support SLA members in Australia and New Zealand.

"For many years now information professionals in Australia and New Zealand have had the opportunity to affiliate with SLA for professional support, networking and professional development," she said.

"Now that we have our own regional chapter, we can gain leverage from SLA's resources, support services and infrastructure, including its effective global communication and networking channels. It will enable us to become more involved in international events, activities and discussions and to share our expertise, knowledge, innovative practices and experiences with information professionals throughout the world."

Henczel also committed to leading the chapter – she now serves as its first president and is a nominated candidate for the 2005 SLA Board of Directors.

"SLA is poised to grow rapidly in this very important region of the world, and build on our existing membership of 12,000 information professionals," said SLA Executive Director Janice R. Lachance. "Australia and New Zealand are important to the SLA community because they represent a very strategic area of the world. We must continue to grow globally, and establishing a chapter there just makes sense for the Association and for the worldwide community of information professionals."

The chapter acquired 48 members in its first four weeks of existence and is expected to continue to grow rapidly.

Former SLA Board Member Heads Cincinnati Library Group

Anne K. Abate has been named executive director of the Greater Cincinnati Library Consortium.

For the last four years, Abate has been the director of marketing for a large government contractor. Anne has worked in a variety of library settings. She was the director of a large law firm library in Cincinnati and also held positions in academic, public, and corporate libraries in the Cincinnati area.

Abate has a master's degree in library science and a doctorate in computer technology in education. In addition to her work in libraries, she is an adjunct faculty member at the University of Kentucky School of Communications and Information Studies and at the Xavier University Department of Information Systems. She has been an active member of several professional associations, including the Special Libraries Association and American Association of Law Libraries. She served on the board of directors of SLA from 1997 to 1999. She is the chair of the Ohio Council of Libraries and Information Services.

The Greater Cincinnati Library Consortium is a cooperative of 44 academic, public, school, and special libraries organized to promote services among and through member institutions.

NCLIS Honors Libraries For Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Libraries and other information organizations in 37 states have won the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science 2004 NCLIS Blue Ribbon Consumer Health Information Recognition Awards.

The new awards are designed to highlight libraries that do the most to promote a healthy lifestyle. NCLIS administered the award, providing overall direction, with a task force of NCLIS Commissioners volunteering to organize the process and judge the entries. State library agencies made the nominations.

The winning organizations are:

- Lister Hill Medical Library, Jefferson County Library Cooperative and the Harrison Regional Library System, Alabama
- Arizona Health Sciences Library
- Denver Public Library
- Greenwich (Connecticut) Library
- The Delaware Academy of Medicine Lewis B. Flinn Library
- Palm Beach County (Florida) Library System
- Georgia Coalition of Regional and Academic Libraries
- Hawaii Medical Library
- Kootenai Medical Center DeArmond Consumer Health Library, Idaho
- Blessing Health Professions Library, Illinois
- Indiana Senior Health Information Center, St. Vincent Garceau Library
- Archie Dykes Health Sciences Library, University of Kansas Medical Center
- Hart County (Kentucky) Public Library
- Beauregard Parish (Louisiana) Library
- Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Libraries' Health Information Center

- The Lamar Soutter Library, University of Massachusetts Medical School
- Munson Medical Center Department of Library Services, Michigan
- McGoogan Library of Medicine, Nebraska
- Henderson District (Nevada) Public Libraries
- Gale Medical Library, New Hampshire
- Jersey Shore University Medical Center Booker Health Sciences Library
- University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability LINC: Library and Information Network for the Community
- Crandall (New York) Public Library
- Eastern Oklahoma District Library System
- PeaceHealth Oregon Region Eugene Public Library
- Cumberland County (Pennsylvania) Library System
- Providence (Rhode Island) Veterans Affairs Medical Center Library
- Medical University of South Carolina Library
- Rapid City (South Dakota) Regional Hospital Health Information Center
- University of Tennessee Preston Medical Library Consumer and Patient Information Service
- Biblioteca Las Américas/Med High and the UTHSCSA RAHC Library, Texas
- Utah Consumer Health Information Initiative Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library Outreach Program
- Ilsley (Vermont) Public Library
- Virignia NLM/ACPF Project
- University of Washington Health Sciences Libraries
- Calumet County (Wisconsin) Public Libraries
- Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Committee of the Wyoming State Legislature

Award winners were chosen based on the overall success of the library's consumer health information services program, with particular emphasis on the program's potential impact, innovativeness, and transferability. Winning entries will be compiled into a report of best practices in consumer health information distribution done through libraries that NCLIS will publish later this year.

NCLIS Sets Strategic Goals

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science has set three strategic goals to guide its work in the immediate future:

- Appraising and assessing library and information services provided for the American people.
- Strengthening the relevance of libraries and information science in the lives of the American people.
- Promoting research and development for extending and improving library and information services for the American people.

making news continued...

NCLIS Chair Beth Fitzsimmons noted that the legislation that created the commission affirmed that "library and information services adequate to meet the needs of the people of the United States are essential to achieve national goals" and that "the federal government will cooperate with state and local governments and public and private agencies in assuring optimum provision of such services."

"It was that Congressional statement that guided us in our decision," said Fitzsimmons, of Ann Arbor, Michigan. "The mandate to the commissioners couldn't be clearer, and we thought long and hard about how we could best work with the American library and information community to ensure that services are adequate. Targeting these goals will position NCLIS for doing its best work, we think."

NCLIS members have identified eight strategic subject areas in which the commission expects to be active, and each of these is being given attention by a task force composed of volunteer commissioners. The task forces and their leaders are:

- Appraisal/assessment/statistics, Jose Aponte, Colorado Springs.
- Digitization, Allison Druin, College Park, Maryland.
- Economic development/job creation, Bridget Lamont, Springfield, Illinois.
- Educational achievement, (Commissioner Allison Druin, College Park, Maryland.
- Emergency preparedness, Stephen Kennedy, Dunbarton, New Hampshire.
- Joint NCLIS/ICSECA activities, Joan Challinor, Washington, D.C.
- Libraries and consumer health information, Mary (Mitzi) Perdue, Salisbury, Maryland.
- Universal services section, (Section 245) Telecommunications Act of 1996, Fitzsimmons.

Digital Preservation Program Launches Research Grants

The National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program of the Library of Congress is partnering with the National Science Foundation to establish the first research grants program to specifically address the preservation of digital materials. NSF will administer the program, which will fund research to support the long-term management of digital information. This effort is part of the library's collaborative program to implement a national digital preservation strategy.

The deadline for proposals is September 14. For more information, see www.cise.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_display.cfm?pub_id=13106&div=iis%20.

The research program announcement coincided with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Library of Congress and NSF to collaborate over the next decade in a broad set of research activities related to digital libraries and digital archives. The formalized collaboration arose from a joint Library of Congress and NSF workshop in 2002 that developed a research agenda in these areas. Through their leadership, NSF and the Library will encourage other government agencies to continue research support for improving the state of knowledge and practice of digital libraries and digital archiving.

The new digital archiving and long-term preservation research program, which expects to make approximately $2 million in initial awards using NDIIPP funds, has three main focus areas for which proposals are sought:

- Digital repository models
- Tools, technologies, and processes
- Organizational, economic, and policy issues.

Congress authorized the Library of Congress in 2000 to develop and execute a congressionally approved plan for the program with a $99.8 million appropriation. The legislation mandates that the library work with other federal entities to build a network of committed partners with defined roles and responsibilities working through a preservation architecture.

DTIC Established as DoD Field Activity

The Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), an organizational member of SLA, has been realigned as a field activity within the Department of Defense.

In its new capacity as a field activity, DTIC joins several other organizations whose work reaches across DoD, such as those dealing with healthcare, news/information services, and education.

DTIC, which works with the information community through numerous partnerships and affiliations, has 15 SLA members among its more than 300 civilian employees. Many of the DTIC staff members who belong to SLA are active participants in the Military Librarians Division, which brings together members from all of the U.S. military services, the Canadian Combined Armed Forces, other national military services, other DoD agencies, contractors and vendors, and anyone with an interest in military librarianship.

The Military Librarians Workshop, begun in 1957, is an annual professional event of the division. DTIC will co-host the next workshop to be held in Columbia, South Carolina, December 6–10.

By providing DoD with information on research activities of other DoD agencies and their contractors, DTIC prevents unnecessary or duplicate research at the taxpayers' expense. DTIC is a major player in the DoD E-Gov initiative to create a centralized view of DoD research and development data sources and relevant information. Its early adoption of Web technology has resulted in DTIC hosting more than 100 of DoD's Web sites including the popular DefenseLINK, www.defenselink.mil.

The gateway to DTIC's products and services is its Web site, www.dtic.mil, and its flagship Scientific and Technical Information Network service is one of DoD's largest scientific, research, and engineering online information resources. This service is available in two versions, Public STINET for the general public, and Private STINET for DTIC registered users.

Well known as the DoD central facility for defense information for almost 60 years, DTIC provides a "one-stop" access point to DoD scientific, research, and engineering information. DTIC resources are available to DoD, the military services, other U.S. government agencies, contractors to DoD and other government agencies, potential contractors, and universities with federal research grants.

Registration is required for access to many DTIC products and services (www.dtic.mil/dtic/registration/index.html). For more information about how to obtain DTIC products and services, contact bcporder@dtic.mil or call 703-767-8244.

National Book Festival October 9

The fourth annual National Book Festival, organized and sponsored by the Library of Congress, will be held October 9, on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The festival is free and open to the public.

The 2003 festival attracted 80 authors, illustrators, poets, and storytellers, and a crowd of more than 70,000.

Festival goers may bring books, or buy them at the festival, for authors to sign. Children can meet some of their favorite storybook and television characters, who will appear on the festival grounds throughout the day.

For more information see www.loc.gov/bookfest.

The Future of the Special Library

In this Librarian's View, the Future Will Be More Digital, More Collaborative

R. James King has been serving as chief librarian of the Ruth H. Hooker Research Library, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D.C., since August 2002. King completed his Masters in library and information science at Catholic University of America in 2002. For the last 15 years he has been customizing information technology tools to create innovative library services for the benefit of naval researchers and administrators. Several of these services are now key components of the NRL digital library, including the library's Web site, journal digitization efforts with scholarly publishers, and TORPEDO Ultra, the digital archive for NRL containing more than 3 million journal articles representing more than 25 million pages of full-text searchable content. King holds leadership roles in the Federal Library and Information Center Committee, the Consortium of Naval Libraries, the National Research Library Alliance, the Librarian of the Navy Advisory Panel, the DoD BIC eContent Working Group, the IEEE Library Advisory Board, and the Alliance for Innovation in Science and Technology Information.

By R. James King

With the constant wave of changes that have washed against libraries over the past decade, many libraries are hunkered down into a defensive position, fighting to stay alive. Between these waves of disruptive change, many librarians are looking at trends and patterns to discern how the next wave of change will affect them. Peering into the future is a dangerous pastime with predictions holding less accuracy than a local weather forecaster. Since it is often said that the best way to predict the future is to invent it, I will gaze into the future that I plan to make it here at the Naval Research Laboratory.

To better understand the potential future, we must first understand the rich past upon which we are built, as well as the current environment. It is also helpful to keep in mind that every library is different because every user community is different. I'll be focusing on the future through the eyes of a library serving NRL, the corporate research facility for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps.

I suggest, as I'm sure others already have in the past, that the advent of the World Wide Web and its disruptive impact on publishing, libraries, and scholarly communication are similar in scope and impact to the invention of the printing press in the 15th century.

Elizabeth Eisenstein's book The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe, reprinted in 1993, offers a detailed view into the world of manuscript and explores the impact that print had on the world at the time. As she explains, the revolution around print started with a series of innovations, including movable metal type, oil-based ink, wooden hand presses, paper, and wood carvings for accurate reproduction of illustrations.

Print allowed, for the first time, the wide dissemination of existing ideas that were previously limited to direct oral transmission or hand-copied manuscripts; standardization of output which allowed for the accurate reproduction of text and complex illustrations without transmission errors; and the preservation of the content through massive duplication. Interestingly, initial efforts with the type used in printing presses were designed to match the scribes' work as closely as possible, a phenomenon that we see today with PDF mirroring the look and layout of paper in the new digital medium. Scholarly communication was enhanced by print because it became easier to see other discoveries, rationalize those discoveries into a comprehensive whole, or critique an opposing thought from another part of the world.

Jumping ahead to World War II, special libraries were faced with tremendous growth in demand and volume of information due to the rapid creation of technical reports and journal articles. Suddenly, bibliographic control had to deal with journals at the article level and special libraries had to deal with the 'new' format of the technical report. Libraries responded by indexing journal articles themselves, a task that was later replaced by abstracting and indexing firms. Libraries also created special cataloging formats and processes to deal with the explosion of pseudo-published technical reports. As the volume of information continued to grow, libraries collaborated more than ever, driving the creation and standardization of MARC – originally created to help libraries print catalog cards from tape.

Now, the World Wide Web – built on top of a series of innovations including the Internet, FTP, Ethernet, cheap PCs, graphics cards, and Web browsers – has continued this evolution in information distribution, having a revolutionary effect on the existing players. Rather than having to visit a monastery to view the only manuscript in the region, or a large regional library that holds one of a thousand copies of a printed book, researchers are now able to view an item from millions of locations around the world, making an endless number of copies without any degradation of the original. Of course, the current Web model is also a step backwards in the sense that much of the content has moved from having thousands of copies to having a single copy stored on a single publisher's Web site.

Based upon where the NRL research library has been over the past 75 years, the suite of services that we currently have, the plans that we have for continuing to meet researchers' needs, and the environmental scan that I've been doing over the last decade, here's what I see the library of 2010 looking like.

Journals

Much of the focus with journals has been to get current issues online. By 2010, I expect that at least 80 percent of all journal issues will be in digital form with the remainder either being from organizations that have ceased operations or are still afraid of losing memberships to institutional access.

Given the costs of digitizing this volume of material, I do not expect it to be available free of cost. Organizations like J-STOR will make it available at a low cost, publishers will sell it at a one-time cost, or publishers/associations will charge an annual fee for access. The continuum of journal access methods are consolidating, forcing libraries to reevaluate how they portray these access methods. Long before 2010, I expect that libraries will be able to offer a single gateway into the world's collection of journal literature. Users would be able to get desktop access to the journals that are important enough for that organization to secure a subscription to (based upon a threshold of annual, unique article usage), while the others will be provided on an article-by-article basis either through ILL (where the request is not urgent) or document delivery (where immediate gratification is required).

Unmediated document delivery has been frowned upon in the past due to the possibility of paying for content already housed in the library. Since the system, based upon OpenURL and a link resolver, will know who the user is and what is available to them, the unmediated document delivery option will not be available when that content is available through local delivery means.

Will the journal go away in favor of a database of articles? Since the journal title lends some authority to the individual articles, I do not see the journal title going away completely until some other method can be devised (if desired). I do, however, see some of the print-driven distinctions fading away. Journals that are split into A, B, C, etc. are often split into specific sub-topics to keep the size of the paper issue manageable. APS' PROLA (http://prola.aps.org/) is a prime example. It started as the Physical Review from 1893 through 1969 when it was split into PRA, PRB, PRC, PRD, PRL, and eventually PRE. Online access through PROLA now offers APS the ability to reintegrate Physical Review into a single entity through a single search engine.

If users do not want the entire scope of the reintegrated journal, they are still able to browse into the specific legacy titles or can look at the articles in a new way through a 'virtual' journal that pulls articles from a variety of publishers based upon a specific topic.

Though there are several core journals for each scientific discipline, no one journal meets all of the specific needs of a researcher. Providing the researchers with an ability to create their own personal virtual journals to help them stay current with their direct area of research as well as periphery topics of interest will be of incredible value and usefulness.

The debate over scholarly communications and the journals crisis are forcing libraries and publishers to justify the expense of journals. Many publishers are experimenting with a number of pricing models to find a fair way to charge for the content, although many of them are simply trying to figure out how to maintain their current revenue stream. Pricing based upon relevant professionals combined with usage statistics seem to be coming to the fore and may provide some short-term pricing relief for libraries.

Long term, I think that libraries will abandon the goal of providing all journal content to all users and instead will target subscriptions or portions of subscriptions to specific sub-cultures within the user community. This, combined with providing access to a spectrum of delivery options (subscription, document delivery, ILL), will help to keep costs down while specifically applying limited funding to the areas of highest importance. Web delivery and authorization schemes will allow libraries to do this relatively easily and save money in the process. One hopes this also will force publishers to drop journal titles that are more fluff than substance, whittling down the size of the problem to a more manageable proportion.

Accompanying the growth in journal articles has always been an increased tension in shelf space within the library. Retention of both paper and online material is getting harder and harder to justify. The NRL Research Library has been locally hosting many of the core journals for years, reducing the risk of going online-only although adding to the burden of digital preservation. As a result of the NRL Research Library's TORPEDO Ultra digital archive, the library is dropping all current print subscriptions that are duplicated in TORPEDO and shipping older paper versions of these online journals to remote storage. Since there still are problems with digital conversion, I see cooperative efforts in identifying the "copy of last resort" for a collective of organizations within a consortium (Navy or DoD libraries, for example) so that libraries can reduce their paper holdings while still being assured of future preservation through both paper and digital means.

Conference Proceedings

Conference proceedings are under far less bibliographic control than journals and I see Web delivery helping to solve this problem. By 2010, I expect that 50 percent of relevant historical conference proceedings will be online, with closer to 90 percent of current proceedings online. These will become more complex as video and PowerPoint slides are fully integrated into the proceedings making for a richer experience. Having a standard conference proceeding identifier (an ISSN-type number for a conference series) will bring additional stability to a format that has been difficult to manage.

Abstracting and Indexing

I see a mixed future for abstracting and indexing services. Originally created to provide bibliographic control over the growing volume of journal articles, several of the services have diversified over the years to be more than simply a collection of bibliographic records from a specific set of journals.

The recent announcement of SCOPUS from Elsevier and CrossRef's decision to offer a search capability to its large collection of journal article records shows that the entry barrier is being reduced in this market, making unique features and comprehensiveness the deciding factors. Organizations like Thomson Scientific (formerly ISI) have rich citation navigation features and Chemical Abstracts has a unique structure search – features that are keeping both of these organizations out in front (at least for now). Other smaller niche indexes will find it harder to stay distinct and may get absorbed by larger players in the future, as evidenced by Thomson Scientific's purchase of BIOSIS.

Cross-search products are helping to direct users to the correct index/database for general searches but really have not gone beyond a database recommender system for comprehensive searches. Integrated indexes like the Web of Knowledge or federated searching like OAI will help to make cross repository searching better.

Linking

Full-text linking has been a boon and timesaver to researchers, moving from a nice addition to an expected necessity in a short period of time. By 2010, I would expect to have links between related content pieces, such as linking the addendum back to the article (and vice versa). I would also expect to see more context-sensitive linking to information about the author, organization, and topic.

Additionally, I would expect to see full text links to nearly all journal articles, fulfilling the user's assumption that it is all online. Whether we'll see the full development of the semantic Web is unclear but there should at least be steps towards it.

Integrated Library System

The integrated library system has been the gateway to a world of information for decades. Unfortunately, it still retains much of its legacy past, sticking fairly closely to the card-catalog format. MARC, designed as a standardized method of transferring bibliographic data so that sites could print (rather than type) catalog cards, has morphed into this database structure, mostly at the insistence of libraries.

Many library requests for proposals specifically demand that a vendor's system fully support MARC; this has often been translated into using the MARC tape format in the form of a flat file database on top of a relational database. As Andrew Pace describes in his 2004 Library Journal article, the integrated library systems are being slowly dismantled so that libraries can deploy the best of breed product to meet a specific need rather than getting stuck with an integrated package filled with a hodge-podge of parts.

ILS vendors will need to either fulfill their original role of providing access to a world of information in light of the Web or be further relegated to a niche product focusing on managing a physical collection within a library. Innovations like "Sirsi rooms" are starting to take this best-of-breed approach by rolling metasearch products, link resolvers, and real search engines into their suite. But it will take radical approaches to break out of the current mindset that librarians have with their ILS.

What do the users do with the library catalog anyway? As a majority of journals and reference sources, and an increasing percentage of books, move online, how is that affecting the services being asked of ILS? Will there still be a need for a paper journal issue check-in process in a digital world? If we move to a NetLibrary world, do we simply transfer the circulation responsibilities to OCLC?

User-Centered Design

Many of the services and collections developed by libraries are done in a vacuum with little input from the user community. Recent years have shown an increased use of usage statistics that are far more detailed than previous paper-based usage monitoring processes could provide. I see libraries in 2010 taking advantage of the extensive research being done in interface design and usability to make online systems more usable.

I also see a shift towards a user-centric view rather than a librarian-focused view, indicative of the shift from mediated searching to self service searching that is discussed in the OCLC 2003 Environmental Scan. Mediated searching is increasingly being reserved as the option of last resort rather than the first place for researchers to turn. Libraries and librarians will need to ensure that they have a good handle on the information needs of their user communities and jointly create services and products that make their life easier. The Web and increased budget pressures are definitely moving special libraries from the just-in-case to the just-in-time mindset.

Capturing Corporate Knowledge

Much hype surrounds knowledge management, but at its roots is a desire to manage a new format of information, the unpublished corporate material. Libraries have worked out detailed, solid processes for validating and managing published information but do not have a good handle on internally produced materials.

KM is mostly driven out of the IT community as a way to apply machine cycles to address the problem of this huge volume of unstructured data since using existing library practices would take several lifetimes. A mix of manual and automated processes will allow rough cuts to be done by machines and then refined where warranted by a librarian. The growth in popularity of dSpace and related self-publishing products shows the desire to capture this information in a way that provides some level of future protection.

Unfortunately, many of these projects are being created in an ongoing manner with little effort being expended on capturing the wealth of knowledge already created by the organization. These systems also are often created as a new information silo with dSpace connecting to other repositories through OAI. I see the published and unpublished information silos merging in the future, offering a single search, either through a physically merged collection or a federated merger. I also expect to see a retrospective conversion effort in the corporate community as we have seen in the publisher community.

A lot of the institutional repository movement, as exemplified by dSpace, is in reaction to the high prices of journals, and will not be able to go far beyond experimental stages in their organization until the corporate tenure and promotion culture is changed to include these semi-published and unpublished materials. Rights language will also factor heavily into the future that we create, allowing us to share information more freely or lock it down, depending upon the availability of terms.

Government-produced information in the journal literature, for example, should be publicly accessible, but since there is no easy way to determine what articles were written by federal employees (like this one) or written by a federal contractor who ceded rights to the government, these articles continue to be resold by publishers and document delivery firms. A future infrastructure that has embedded rights inside the object will not only restrict access (like the DRM community want, to do) but should also open up content where appropriate.

New Devices

With the boom in wireless access points and handheld devices, it is easy to predict that more information access in 2010 will be done through these networks and devices than is being done now. Wireless standards already on the horizon will allow for broadband network speed through wireless devices, potentially solving the "first/last mile" problem of getting high speed access into the homes. Devices are also continuing to get faster and to hold more storage each year. The only remaining barrier to handhelds becoming a possible desktop replacement is the small screen size. eInk (www.eink.com) has developed a paper-like screen technology that may be the answer, with initial products focused on interactive signs and wearable devices. Having a desktop computer that could fit in your pocket and be always "on" may be useful but also may usher in the 168-hour work week, if we're not careful.

Library as a Place

For a special library, especially a research library, if most of the journals are online, most of the reference sources are online, most of the conference proceedings are online, and the reference staff is available online, what is the need for a physical structure? Why couldn't libraries follow the newspaper's lead and deploy the librarians into the specific research areas of the organization as a sort of 'embedded' librarian?

Davenport and Prusak wrote a pre-Web article called "Blow Up the Corporate Library," which called for libraries to move away from a warehouse mentality and move towards a service mindset. Many of the processes and procedures used in libraries are designed to protect the books held in their care, not to get the information out to users as quickly as possible. Several special libraries have struggled with the library-as-a-place question and have come up with some interesting solutions that may point to the future of physical library structures.

The National Institutes of Health library is doing extensive outreach into its user community, bringing the library to the users. Librarians also have become embedded into research teams to provide the literature expertise for the group. Though this is a situation that requires extra diligence, I think an increased level of outreach will become a necessary part of future special libraries.

Outreach is not simply a marketing tool, but is a two-way conversation ensuring the library knows what is needed by the researcher and the researcher knows what already exists to meet his or her needs. Knowing in detail what is and will be needed by their researchers will help librarians to respond more quickly with collections and services to address those needs, especially as we move away from a just-in-case comprehensive collection mindset.

Don't get me wrong, I still feel that there are roles for a physical library. In addition to providing logical access to the physical materials not in digital form and as a home port for the library staff, the physical library will also be a place to get away and research quietly, to work in collaborative groups (either physically or via video teleconferencing), and to work one-on-one with a reference librarian. The key is to figure out what the user community needs from a physical library in this Web world and make sure that the facilities are redesigned to accommodate them.

Conclusion

As a relatively new librarian, it would have been very easy to shy away from the "L" word and used one of the flashier titles out there. I instead see both a rich history and promising future for the librarian profession, if librarians are ready to step up to the challenge.

At the time of the U.S. Civil War, the best graduates of West Point were selected for the engineering corps, where they built forts and dug ditches. Engineer's tools and engineering have evolved with the times to continue to be a sought-after profession. Librarians have been the go-to people for information needs for hundreds of years – the changing nature of information does not mean that librarians are becoming irrelevant.

Librarians and libraries that can change to meet the new needs of information seekers and can manage the new forms of information cost effectively will survive and thrive in the new economy.

Leveraging Leadership for KM Success

If you want make knowledge management work, start at the top.

By Carla O'Dell

Editor's Note: This article is condensed from the introduction to ***The Executive's Role in Knowledge Management****, the latest book authored by Ms. O'Dell and published by the American Productivity & Quality Center. Ms. O'Dell is a keynote speaker at next month's Innovation Symposium, presented by SLA.*

No business can ignore the need to manage what it knows.

During the 1990s, a number of business principles gained attention as efforts "critical to your organization's success." However, unlike other opportunities for a competitive advantage, knowledge management became a mode of operations for leading organizations. Now, more than 80 percent of major corporations have explicit knowledge management initiatives, and global organizations now have hundreds of communities of practice. The Journal of International Marketing estimated that spending on knowledge management was approximately $12 billion USD in 2003.

I commonly see on executives' agendas the desire to increase responsiveness to customers, identify cost redundancies, improve new product/service development, improve the quality and productivity of work, and make better decisions. A response to these challenges will require use of an organization's best knowledge assets by a whole organization. That systematic capture, transfer, and use of internal and external know-how is a vital part of any business strategy.

A knowledge management initiative enhances the performance of the organization and its people. The goal is not to share knowledge for its own sake, although that is a valuable byproduct of the process. The goal is to enhance organizational performance by explicitly designing and implementing tools, processes, systems, structures, and cultures to improve the identification, capture, validation, and transfer of knowledge critical for decision making.

Since the American Productivity & Quality Center (APQC) began focusing on knowledge management in 1995, the KM arena has evolved rapidly in both scope and practice. The most significant change has been in the business community's level of understanding. Eight years ago, we did not have tools to analyze how knowledge flows in an organization; we did not have the methodologies for improving the flow and use; and we did not even know how to see the work of the organization in terms of what was productive knowledge to manage. Today, KM has come of age. The formulation of crisp methodologies and the ability to blend various approaches to KM to tackle real business problems has made a dramatic difference. Other major developments have facilitated this evolution, including:

- A growing recognition of the need to apply knowledge management thinking to every business issue and process.
- The creation of user-friendly technologies for collaborating and for accessing information.

Finally, the myth that you cannot measure KM has been dispelled. Knowledge itself is intangible and difficult to measure, but the impact of actively managing knowledge is far easier to gauge. The key to identifying the effects of knowledge management is to start with a business's desired outcome and work back from there. By stringing together this chain, you have a measurement system with clear, direct correlations.

As the processes, tools, and adoption of knowledge management continue to expand, senior managers are rightly asking: "What investments are we making in knowledge management? Are they enough? Too much? What are we getting for our money? What outcomes are we achieving, and what could we expect if we invest more?"

Why Senior Leader Support is Critical

In every knowledge management benchmarking study APQC has organized, one key finding consistently surfaces: the support of senior leaders is the primary critical success factor. In APQC's very first consortium benchmarking study on knowledge management in 1996, simply called *Knowledge Management*, we reported that executive support, usually gained by compelling competitive needs, is essential. One organization we studied that did not receive support was not able to fully deploy its approach. In contrast,

Carla O'Dell is President of the American Productivity & Quality Center, a thought leader on knowledge management and performance improvement. O'Dell's latest book, ***The Executive's Role in Knowledge Management****, can help senior managers throughout their journey to create a learning organization and guide KM practitioners who must establish a compelling business case to gain senior-level support. Order your copy of this KM publication for only $19.95 by visiting www.apqc.org/pubs.*

the CEOs of several of our benchmarking partners were zealots about the value of knowledge and sharing of best practices. It was obvious from the responses to the question, "What are the major drivers that help create a knowledge-sharing culture?" that the best-practice organizations were reaping the most gains from the CEO's vision.

In the years that followed, we found hundreds of examples to support that finding. In the benchmarking report *Using Information Technology to Support Knowledge Management*, the World Bank reported: "Management sponsorship is essential. It is important to get senior management involved and educated. Senior management must play a role in removing barriers by making learning a priority and eliminating the negative impacts of sharing." The World Bank has one of the world's most comprehensive and sophisticated knowledge management efforts, so the weight of this statement comes to bear. NASA also noted in the benchmarking report, *Using Knowledge Management to Drive Innovation*, that it was extremely important to get executives' support and broad sponsorship to make it easier to achieve cultural change, to deploy systems and solutions, and to transition and infuse knowledge management into day-to-day processes and activities.

Executive involvement lends credibility to knowledge management principles and ensures the effort will be long term. Leading by example, executives shape the values of the organization and establish a support system to initiate and manage change. Without direction from management, knowledge management support tools, such as a portal, are unlikely to be aligned with the business strategy or to be fully capitalized for an intended purpose. Executives ensure that a knowledge management initiative exists to support the big picture.

With such weight put on the shoulders of executives, it is encouraging to see that executives throughout large organizations have taken a more preemptive approach to knowledge management and not waited for grassroots efforts to proceed without an organization-wide vision. Enthusiasm like this is but one characteristic of leaders in organizations with the most successful knowledge management initiatives.

As our needs of executives evolve, they must respond quickly and embrace learning opportunities. In the article "The Role of Leadership in the Management of Corporate Knowledge," J.A. Kok astutely observes that effective senior managers realize "that effective management is not a matter of having the most knowledge; but knowing how to use it. It is not enough to know modern management concepts, but how they get implemented is equally important."

Nine Tips for Successful Knowledge Management

1. Get smart. Understand knowledge-sharing behaviors and support systems. Read. Benchmark. Get feedback.

2. Start planning. Assess just where you stand on the KM learning curve. Identify your business strategy component in need of support. You need to know where you are now and where to go before you embark on any change efforts.

3. Set the guiding principles, and define the need. Your involvement in this step will mitigate resistance and change management questions. Executive involvement and periodic meetings ensure you know any risks or issues that come up and react accordingly. The "right" knowledge management approach depends on the context and the need.

4. Find the processes and projects that support your value proposition, inform the rest of the organization, and demand a solid business case.

5. Select pilot projects that give your organization a good chance of early success and a testing ground for techniques and methods.

6. Follow tried-and-true principles of design, such as employing a multidisciplinary KM core group and sound change principles. Get buy-in and understanding in the organization.

7. Guide the implementation and launch of your projects. Ensure employees are properly trained and results and lessons are accurately documented.

8. Apply what you have learned from the pilots in an expansion strategy that embeds KM into every area of the organization.

9. Sustain your improvements, and plan to scale up.

An Executive Task

Knowledge management can produce outstanding gains. For instance, Ford's Best Practice Replication process is built around communities of practice, which include people in each plant or facility who help identify, share, and transfer practices. More than $1 billion USD in documented bottom-line savings have been achieved since 1995, with a large number of additional benefits and savings measured and reported by communities but not certified for financial impact. Ford has now integrated Best Practice Replication into its Six Sigma initiative to ensure that gains from Six Sigma projects are leveraged across the corporation.

Ford is not alone in its success. For instance, IBM has saved $50 million USD a year just in travel costs avoidance through virtual collaboration. It has also saved $6 million USD annually by finding information more quickly through its KM initiative. Caterpillar examined two of its communities of practice and found they generated $1.5 million USD from using a single KM network tool. This was, respectively, an ROI of 212 percent and 738 percent.

As such gains become more common, shareholders in organizations in all industries will turn to their executives for similar results. As the records for company leaders become tied to their performance in leveraging knowledge assets, they must ask themselves: "Can I afford not to get involved in implementing knowledge management efforts? What is the cost of not sharing knowledge?" With the professional fate of executives tied to their companies' success, every executive will benefit from ensuring that sound operating principles are applied to his or her KM initiative's design and implementation.

The bottom line is this: For good results, develop a vision for the knowledge management initiative. For exceptional results, translate that vision into explicit expectations and demand tangible results. Executive involvement begets success.

CALL FOR PROFESSIONAL PAPERS

SLA TORONTO 2005: PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK®

SLA is accepting professional papers for presentation at its annual conference June 4-9, 2005, in Toronto and for publication on its Web site.

The papers will not be formally peer reviewed. Instead, a panel of SLA members will evaluate abstracts of the papers. Authors whose abstracts are accepted will be asked to write the paper.

Topics of the papers should be related to library science, information management, research, or other issues related to the work of special libraries. Abstracts also will be judged on substance, potential member interest, and relevance to the conference theme (Putting Knowledge to Work) or to the SLA tag line (Connecting People and Information).

Authors need not be in academia, but the author (or co-author) must be a member of SLA.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND SPECIFICATIONS

Deadlines

October 15, 2004 – Abstract due. Submit an abstract of your paper via e-mail to Ann Shea, at ashea@caamuseum.org. Abstracts should be approximately 250 to 300 words in length, roughly one page in 12-point text with normal margins.

Applicants will be notified of acceptance by October 31. March 15, 2005 – Paper due. Submission deadline for the complete paper and copyright assignment to SLA. The copyright assignment form is online at www.sla.org/documents/conf/copyrightform.html.

June 4-9, 2005 – Conference presentation. Presentation of papers will occur during the SLA conference in Toronto.

Minimum Requirements for Acceptance

In addition to the quality and relevance of the proposed paper, it must meet these requirements:
• The abstract has been received by the deadline.
• The author (or a co-author) is a member of SLA.
Not a member? You can join online at www.sla.org/content/membership/joinsla/index.cfm
• The author (or co-author) commits to present the paper at the annual conference.
• The paper has not been published in or submitted to any other publication or conference planning group.
• The author (and any co-authors) also must be willing to sign a copyright assignment that will permit SLA to use the paper in various formats.

Please print, complete and mail the copyright assignment to Professional Papers, SLA, 331 South Patrick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. The copyright assignment form is online at www.sla.org/documents/conf/copyrightform.html.

Accepted papers will be posted on the SLA Web site shortly after the 2005 conference ends.

For examples of papers from SLA's 2004 Annual Conference in Nashville, see http://www.sla.org/content/Events/conference/2004annual/04contribpapers.cfm.

THE BASICS

Style. For questions about style, refer to The Chicago Manual of Style, 14th Edition (University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Length. Papers may be as long as necessary. However, presentation of the paper at the conference will be limited to 15 minutes.

Endnotes. Use endnotes, not footnotes.

Editing/Proofreading. Papers must be final versions when they are submitted. You are responsible for copyediting, proofreading, and formatting.

Submission. Your completed paper must be submitted electronically to contributedpapers@sla.org by March 16, 2005. The paper should be in Microsoft Word (strongly preferred) or Corel WordPerfect and sent as an e-mail attachment.

Copyright assignment forms should be postmarked by March 16, 2005, and mailed to Professional Papers, SLA, 331 South Patrick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. If we do not receive the copyright assignment, we will not publish your paper. The copyright assignment form is online at www.sla.org/documents/conf/copyrightform.html.

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Font. The entire paper should be in Times New Roman. Use 12-point Times New Roman for all text.

Titles and Headings. Examples of title and heading style and formatting are online at (get URL from Natasha) The title of the paper should be centered at the top of the first page (no blank lines between margin and title) in bold 18-point Times New Roman, with the first letter of each significant word capitalized.

• The author's (and co-author's) names, titles, degrees, and affiliations should appear below the title of the paper in regular (not bold or italic) 14-point Times New Roman, centered, with the first letter of each significant word capitalized. Insert two blank lines between the last line of the title and the first line of the author's name. The author's name and degrees should be on one line, with titles, employers, and affiliations below. Insert one blank line between the bottom of the first author's name and credentials and the second author's name.
• Insert four blank lines between the last line of the author's names and the first line of text (or the first chapter heading).
• Chapter or major division headings should be in bold 16-point Times New Roman type, centered, with the first letter of each significant word capitalized.
• Subheadings should be no more than one-half line long.
• A-level subheadings should be in bold 14-point Times New Roman, centered, all capital letters.
• B-level subheadings should be in bold 14-point Times New Roman, centered, with the first letter of each significant word capitalized.
• C-level subheadings should be in bold 12-point Times New Roman, flush with the left margin. The first letter of each significant word should be capitalized.
• D-level subheaddings should be flush to the left margin in italic 12-point Times New Roman (not boldfaced), followed by a period. The subheadings should in line with the first line of the paragraph. Only the first letter of each significant word should be capitalized.
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• The endnotes should be titled "Endnotes" and be in bold 16-point Times New Roman type, centered, the same as chapter and major division headings.
• Do not use an outline format to number subheads.

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Margins. All four margins should be set to one inch.
In MS Word, use File-Page Setup. In the Margins tab, set all margins to 1".

Justification. Do not justify text. All text, except where specified otherwise (e.g., titles, bylines), should be flush left, ragged right.

Line Spacing. Single-space the text of your paper. Between paragraphs, include a single blank line. Use two blank lines between the end of a section and a following A-, B-, or C-level subheading. The text of your paper should start four lines below the author lines. Use one blank between an A-, B-, or C-level subheading and the following text.

In MS Word, use Format-Paragraph. In the Indents and Spacing tab, set Spacing Before and After to 0.

Other Spacing. Use only one space after sentences.
Hint: If you are accustomed to using two spaces after sentences, it can be difficult to start using one space consistently. When the paper is finished, use the search-and-replace function to change all the double spaces to single spaces.

Indentation. Indent all paragraphs one-half inch (1.3 cm), using tabs, not spaces.

Widows/Orphans. Use the settings in your word processing application to eliminate widows and orphans (single lines at the top or bottom of a page).

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In MS Word, use Format-Paragraph. In the Line and Page Breaks tab, check the Don't Hyphenate box.

GRAPHICS

Authors are encouraged to use charts, tables, maps, and other useful non-text elements in papers. Number illustrations, graphs, charts, and other graphics consecutively as Figure 1, Figure 2, and so on, and refer to them as such in the text of the paper.

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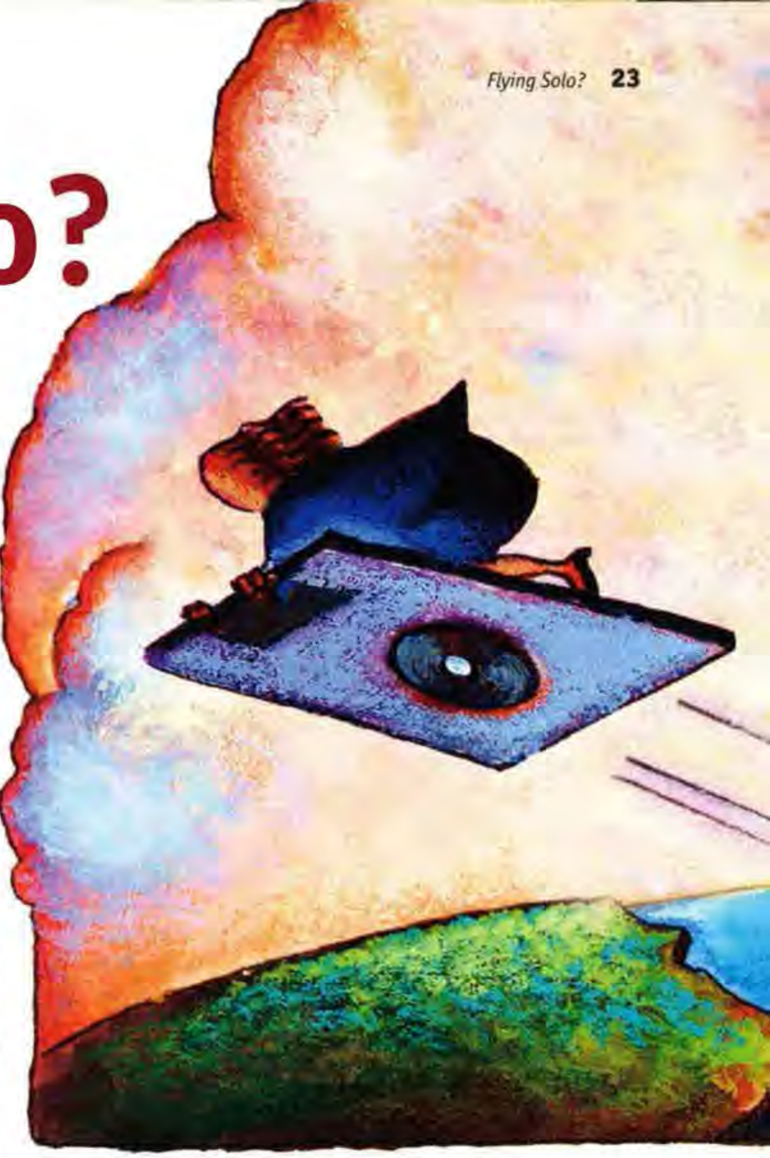
Flying Solo?



Involve Your Patrons in Your Work; Involve Your Library in Theirs

By Donna M. Fisher

In September 2003, fresh from receiving my master's degree in library science from the University of Missouri, I became the first professional librarian in a mid-sized law firm. Beginning my career as a solo librarian in a newly created position was intimidating, but it also offered an exciting opportunity. My goal was to increase our small library's usefulness, effectiveness, and visibility.

The library is physically centered in the law firm, and a large number of employees pass through it daily. I wanted the library's role to reflect its physical structure as a focal point of the office. An additional challenge was to accomplish this with our existing technology and without any large expenditures.

Over the last few months I've discovered some simple techniques to re-energize and revitalize a small law firm or corporate library. These methods can be applied to other types of special libraries. They will particularly benefit any information center that is underutilized or neglected. Implementing these 10 basics steps will help make your library a vibrant part of your organization.

1. Involve your coworkers as much as possible. After all, they are also your patrons, so invite their comments. Solicit suggestions about potential acquisitions. Take advantage of individual areas of subject expertise that employees have.

Ask employees what services they would like the library to provide. Request feedback on the usefulness and effectiveness of existing services. Respond gratefully and graciously to all ideas, even those not adopted.

Involving coworkers means you must be prepared to be flexible. When someone recently requested that I reshelve a book in what he considered a more user-friendly location, the new librarian in me cringed at the thought of something being in the "wrong" place. However, granting that simple request was an easy way to show that I valued his input and that I would welcome other ideas he might have about improving the library.

Enlisting the cooperation of employees gives them a sense of shared ownership in the library. And as a solo librarian, I have found the contributions of others to be invaluable in improving overall service.

2. Tailor your services to the needs of your patrons. Anticipate their needs. Don't wait to be asked to provide information that is obviously valuable to someone.

For example, if an attorney has written an article for publication, I monitor news and updates on the article topic and keep him or her informed of any updated information. I know that the human resources manager will appreciate being told about online continuing HR education classes, and that the attorneys handling biotechnology patents will be interested in a new DNA website.

Librarians in a small corporate setting often have the luxury of being able to provide very individualized service that time and staff constraints do not allow in larger libraries. This is an excellent way to establish good relationships between the library and every department in your company.

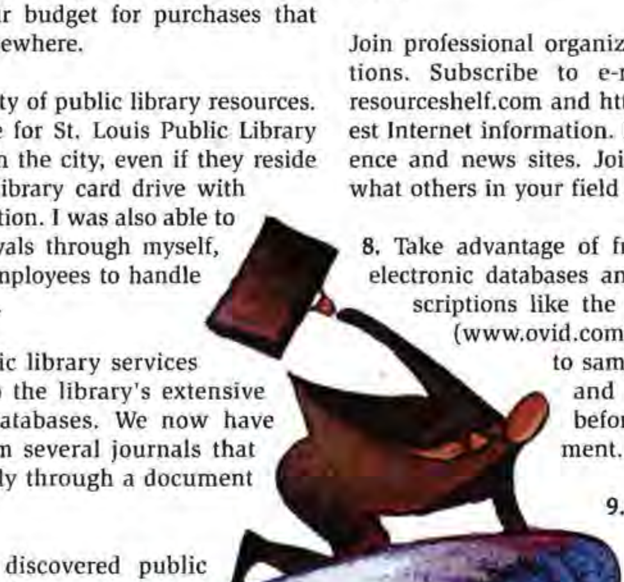
Donna M. Fisher is the librarian at Senniger Powers, a St. Louis law firm specializing in intellectual property.

3. Maximize your print collection. In a small library, every title is obviously important. Soon after I was hired, I completed a very necessary weeding of the collection, but this resulted in our collection's dwindling to approximately 400 titles. I asked employees if our catalog could include books that they personally owned and kept in their offices. This resource-sharing project brought the number of titles to 500, an increase of 25 percent.

Resource sharing saves time and money. There's no need to initiate an interlibrary loan or make a purchase if a title is already available in an organization, even if technically it isn't a part of the library collection. Resource sharing also frees up your budget for purchases that can't easily be obtained elsewhere.

4. Check into the availability of public library resources. Our employees are eligible for St. Louis Public Library cards because they work in the city, even if they reside elsewhere. I conducted a library card drive with almost 50 percent participation. I was also able to arrange library card renewals through myself, eliminating the need for employees to handle this on an individual basis.

Foremost among the public library services we now have is access to the library's extensive collection of electronic databases. We now have free access to articles from several journals that we had obtained previously through a document delivery service.



Several employees have discovered public library databases and websites, such as those pertaining to genealogy, that hold personal interest for them. Although these resources may not be directly related to their work, discovering them helps employees sharpen their online research skills, making them savvier library users. This can only reflect positively on the corporate library by showing the value of libraries in general.

5. Put the catalog on the intranet. No matter how small the collection, making it available and searchable from everyone's desktop is paramount. Use Microsoft Access or another database program if purchasing specialized cataloging software is not practical or economically feasible.

Having the catalog available encourages library use and saves valuable search time. It facilitates collection development by making it easy to assess the contents of your collection. Most importantly, it gives your library a constant, visible presence.

6. Investigate free online resources. Space and finances are usually at a premium in a small library. Free Internet sites are an easy and important way to expand your collection. Invest in a good Internet reference guide such as The Web Library: Building a World Class Personal Library with Free Web Resources, by Nicholas G. Tomaiuolo (Information Today, Inc., ISBN 0-910965-67-6).

Make sure you are familiar with a multitude of search engines and websites so you can offer assistance where needed. Evaluate websites for content and authority before recommending them to patrons.

7. Stay current. In a small library you will probably have limited daily contact with other librarians, so it's highly important to be proactive in your professional development.

Join professional organizations and read their publications. Subscribe to e-mail newsletters like www.resourceshelf.com and http://lii.org that provide the latest Internet information. Regularly review general reference and news sites. Join a listserv to stay abreast of what others in your field are discussing.

8. Take advantage of free trial subscriptions to both electronic databases and print periodicals. Trial subscriptions like the monthly one offered by Ovid (www.ovid.com) allow you and your patrons to sample a wide variety of literature and examine products hands-on before making any financial investment.

9. Both a borrower and a lender be. Get to know other librarians working in similar small corporate settings. Many of these libraries do not have online catalogs, so be willing to share information about the titles in your collection. Arrange reciprocal borrowing privileges. This can be a godsend in corporate libraries that often need to borrow expensive, very specialized, and hard-to-find publications.

10. Promote your library. Regularly notify employees by e-mail of new acquisitions and useful websites. Consider writing a periodical library newsletter than can be posted on the Intranet or sent by email. The newsletter can contain such helpful tidbits as advice on online searching, book reviews, and library news.

Purchase some inexpensive bookmarks for giveaways. Conduct National Library Week activities. Be helpful. Be available. Above all, be enthusiastic. If you don't love your library, who will?

When it comes to library service, size doesn't necessarily matter. Even the smallest law firm or corporate library can have a big impact. I'm still a novice and I still have many unmet goals for my library. But I have discovered that with a little creativity and ingenuity even the smallest library can become an integral part of an organization.

How to Set Performance Goals

Employee Reviews Are More than Annual Critiques

By Debbie Schachter

A manager and a supervisor of a large library system meet to discuss a library's decreasing service statistics. The supervisor comments, "I don't know what the problem is. Staff seem to be really busy but I'm not sure exactly what they're doing."

An employee asks her supervisor for feedback on a recent initiative that she developed for the department. The supervisor responds, "It seems fine, but it turns out that it's not what the manager wants us to be doing."

A supervisor meets with one of her library technicians and informs her that she is behind in her work and needs to process a minimum number of items a day, no excuses.

These examples illustrate situations that can arise when an organization has not developed a performance management system. Lack of clarity in setting and developing staff goals, lack of alignment between organizational goals and employee goals, lack of communication on priorities (leading to employee disgruntlement), all can be avoided through the effective implementation of a performance management system.

A performance management system is defined as "the process through which companies ensure that employees are working towards organizational goals."[1]

It includes more than just a performance appraisal. The performance management system is also composed of "strategic plans, manager accountability, pay, promotion, training/development, and discipline."[2]

Most organizations have some type of formal or informal performance reviews, but a performance management system attempts to provide the overarching structure for planning and analysis of activities for each individual, in the context of the organizational whole. Through continual assessment, the system ensures that successes are recognized and problems are addressed early. Better planning at the beginning of the year, including setting realistic goals for each employee, ensures measurable positive successes for the library and its staff, aligned with the larger organizational goals.

If performance management systems hold the promise for such great results, why do they often receive such negative press? Even a casual review of the literature on human resource management shows a number of concerns on the use of performance management systems. Many concerns arise not so much from the nature of the performance management system but the consistency and the manner in which it is implemented.

Be aware of the pitfalls. Consider the negative effects of a faulty or badly planned performance management system by imagining you and your staff experiencing the following situations:

" The library's performance management system consists of the performance appraisal alone, and is used primarily to provide negative feedback on employee behaviours.
" The system only considers employees' past performance without developing current and future plans.
" The system is used once or twice a year, with no regular feedback and coaching provided throughout the year.
" A forced ranking system ensures most employees are defined as mediocre.
" The system does not link performance to compensation or other rewards.
" The system is not used to assist employees to create goals and objectives linked to organizational goals.
" The system does not get revised over time to better suit the library that has implemented it.

Goal Setting

The main purpose of a performance management system is to align employee and departmental goals to organizational goals. This means that the performance management system must first have the commitment of the top library managers; it must be implemented from the top down.

Performance management begins with the chief librarian or senior executive linking her goals or objectives to the strategic goals of the organization. These are the goals for the library. The chief librarian then ensures that her direct reports develop their goals in relation to the library's overall goals. In a multi-departmental library, managers develop their goals, and thus their departmental goals, to correspond to the organizational goals. Staff members within each department then develop their objectives for the year, in cooperation with their managers. Using this pattern for planning, all activities and objectives for all employees should be directly related to the overall objectives of the library or the larger organization.

Overview of the Process

While performance management systems are often considered to be nothing more than the performance review, this is only the final event in an entire year of activity.

At the beginning of the year, the manager and employee discuss the employee's goals or objectives for the year. This will form the basis for ongoing discussion recorded in a document called the performance plan. The manager assists the employee in developing her objectives by helping her to understand how her work relates to the department goals and the overall goals of the organization. The employee and manager also should work together to determine the measurements for evaluating each of the objectives. It is important that both the manager and employee agree what the objectives are, and how they are to be measured.

Employees should not be set up with unrealistic expectations, which will only lead to a sense of failure. If additional support or education is required during the year to help the employee meet her objectives, those can also be identified and planned for at this time.

The performance plan will contain the section on goals or objectives. It also should include a section that identifies the organization's expectations of employee competencies.

The set of expectations will involve a range of competencies applicable to employees based on their level in the organization. These competencies include expectations of how employees deal with problems, how proactive they are in respect to changing work, and how they interact with internal and external customers. In addition to basic behavioural traits, supervisors and managers are expected to exhibit leadership and, more senior still, provide vision and strategic direction. It is important to ensure that employees understand these competencies in respect to themselves.

Throughout the year, the librarian or supervisor must participate actively in coaching and assisting all her employees to meet their individual objectives. Should a problem arise – either in the way that success is being measured or in the nature of the objectives set at the beginning of the year – it can be identified well in advance of any review, and adjustments to the goals or support for the employee can be provided. This is referred to as continual assessment.

For example, suppose a staff member predicted that she would complete a new manual for updating the library's Web site by a particular date, yet she has encountered problems in receiving vital information from another department. Through active involvement in her staff's activities, the supervisor is made aware of the situation and understands that the employee is intimidated by the supervisor she must work with in the other department. With coaching, the employee develops a method for initiating contact with the other department and receives the vital information she requires to meet her objective.

Performance Reviews

Mid-way through the year the librarian/supervisor should hold a formal discussion with each staff member to review individual activities to date and to modify the performance plan. There should be no surprises at this meeting: The supervisor should have been actively involved in continual assessment of her staff through regular contact and coaching. If major concerns arise, the performance plan can be modified or the employee can receive development in areas in which she may be weak. This also is a time for the employee to provide formal feedback to the supervisor on the coaching, the planning, and how the process seems to be working for her.

At the end of the year, a final review of the activities and plans for developing the next year's objectives begin. Again, this is a chance to provide constructive and positive feedback and to address any ongoing concerns about the employee's activities and competencies. Continuing education opportunities can be identified, and for those systems linked to compensation, salary raises will be linked to the employee's performance during the year. Again, there should be no surprises to either employee or supervisor, as continual assessment and coaching should take place throughout the year. Supervisors and managers are involved in the same series of activities with their own supervisors to ensure that the entire organization is developing and focussed on the same common objectives.

There are many varieties of performance management systems available, but you must be aware that you will need to tailor any system to suit the needs of your library and your staff. As the library changes over time, the system will also need to develop to reflect changes to employee competencies, ranking systems, and rewards linked to the plan.

Best Practices

1. Decide what you are hoping to achieve from the system. Is it to reward the stars and to correct problems? Or is its primary function to be a tool in focusing all staff activities through better planning?

2. Ensure you have commitment from the top. Planning must begin at the executive level and be filtered down through the organization to ensure that employees' plans are meaningful in the context of the organization's direction.

3. Ensure that all key staff are involved in the development of the performance management processes from the early phases. Provide group orientations to the program to decrease anxiety over the implementation of a new system. It will ensure a consistent message communicated about the performance management system.

4. If the performance management system is not linked to salary, be sure employees are aware of it. Make sure they know the purpose of the system and what they get out of it.

5. Provide additional training for supervisors on how to conduct the mid-year and year-end performance reviews. Ensure that supervisors are proficient at coaching staff.

6. Plan to modify the performance management system over time to meet your library's changing needs.

Conclusions

The performance management system is one tool in the library manager's toolkit to ensure staff are working effectively towards a common goal. It should improve communication, increase morale, and increase employees' understanding of how their work plays an important role in the library or larger organization. It empowers employees through ensuring they are responsible for identifying their most important objectives annually, within the context of the library's overall objectives. It also provides the opportunity to identify and enable employee development, identifying gaps in training and offering opportunities to develop new skills.

The performance management system will not be perfect. It must develop over time to meet the changing needs of your staff and your library. If possible, it should be linked to compensation, but there are many unique ways you can reward your star performers and develop each member of your library staff over time.

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Tracking, Capturing and Taming Custom Research Files

Lucent Technologies' Integrated Information Solutions

By Leslie A. Rodgers

A friend recently joked to me that a former colleague of his was a "real librarian" because, although his office looked like a yard sale, he in fact knew exactly where everything was. He would get a call from a client, and after a beat or two he would walk to a pile of materials, stick in his hand, and almost invariably find what he was seeking. No one else, however, could access that information without expending a great deal of time and experiencing a great deal of frustration.

Today, instead of the "real librarian's" piles of papers, our records are an amalgam of e-mail and file folders – but the issue of sharing this information is as troublesome as the yard sale scenario mentioned above. Regardless of the level of organization, when researchers maintain unique file systems, that information is cordoned off from colleagues. It is ironic that the library often drives and maintains an organization's knowledge management efforts.

Knowledge management –the management practice that helps an enterprise manage explicit, tacit, and cultural information in order to reuse the information and, when appropriate, create new knowledge. (St. Clair, Guy; June 2003)

Like the cobbler's children who have holes in their shoes, libraries take on the knowledge management function for their companies but can neglect to leverage their own knowledge-making efforts.

Two years ago, Lucent Technologies' Integrated Information Solutions group developed a tool to capture the knowledge and content generated by its research team. To provide some background: Integrated Information Solutions (IIS) serves a broad base of research clients and their varied information needs across Lucent's business units and world regions, providing information research and resources, processes and solutions designed to accelerate Lucent's global exchange of knowledge. In order to develop a research tracking system, IIS colleagues with systems expertise worked with research analysts to design a database to register and store requests. The result was the Research Management System (RMS).

The system uses Exceed's Hummingbird software to provide a user-friendly graphical user interface that allows

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anyone to retrieve a record of a research request using standard search default options. Requests may be retrieved using keyword searches, name of researcher, or a specified time frame within which research requests were received or completed.

Like any knowledge management tool, RMS addresses a number of the organization's information and business needs. Its most immediate function is to unify the previously disparate files of the research team. With access to all of the research the team performs, a research analyst can leverage colleagues' time and skill by accessing previous work related to the current project. RMS is also used to gain insight into the research function and how it serves the company. By providing a reflection of how our services are used, the database allows IIS to react to both the current and future needs of our clientele.

Use of the system breaks out into three stages: initiation of the request, communication with the customer, and completion of the request. Upon receiving a request, the research analyst opens a record. Once the researcher and requestor are specified, the record is automatically populated with basic facts such as phone number and business unit. The research analyst describes the work from several angles (request, purpose, client comments), and the information is submitted to create the request record. At that time, the database assigns a unique identification number to the request.

If at some point the work extends to another researcher, a "Follow On" option allows a second record to be created that uses the ID number of the original request as a reference. RMS also allows the research team to manage projects involving several colleagues by using a "Project ID" as well as a separate, unique "Research ID" for each analyst's part of that work. The complete set of research related to one inquiry can be recalled using the Project ID. The Project ID records and facilitates the work accomplished by two or more researchers and provides management with a view into research which calls for project-level resources.

The second stage, communication, spans the length of the work: as the researcher collects and creates materials, communicating with the customer and other involved parties such as outside analysts, relevant e-mails with attached files are sent to a designated e-mail address. Identified by the unique research identification number, files and correspondence are stored along with the request description in the RMS database.

The third step, completion, involves recording the resources utilized to fill the request, namely time and research materials. The research analyst then has the opportunity to add any concluding comments that assist in understanding the request and the accompanying research. The researcher also determines at that time whether it is appropriate to send a survey to the customer concerning that request. If selected, the survey will automatically be created and sent to the end user using information provided in earlier steps.

Once the record is created, it becomes part of the RMS database and can be searched at any time from that point forward. A Web-based form allows for searching by client name, researcher name, request description, date, or the other "Client Comments" or "Researcher Comments" fields that are used to describe the work.

The tool functions on several levels. First, it accommodates sharing of information, insights, and knowledge within the research team. As a research tool, RMS allows the team to leverage the skill and hours utilized for previous requests. One of the IIS researchers described a situation where she found a complete response "sitting right there" in the database, which saved her enough time on a busy day to allow her to complete another rush project she was working on.

Second, RMS provides the larger organization with a window into the group's research activities. For instance, what are the popular research topics? Who are the top research customers? Which business units most actively rely on the organization? Also, by querying RMS to determine the current workload of the research team, management can quickly have an idea of the capacity available for other projects or initiatives.

Third, the database provides the organization with anecdotes and examples to illustrate the value we provide to the company. At short notice the organization can tap into requests that, for example, identified potential business opportunities or determined risks that informed market placement or product development decisions. Finally, using RMS as an expert database, researchers can seek out prior related requests and connect the customer with colleagues who have similar information needs and complementary skills within the company.

RMS acts as the memory for the research function of the IIS team while also serving as a tool for research, marketing, and strategic initiatives. A database such as LexisNexis allows for searching of hundreds of resources in one place. RMS, by its nature, multiplies this capacity by all of the resources to which we have access, organized by the needs of our company as determined by incoming research requests. In other words, the database represents the best of those resources as they pertain to the company's information requirements addressed by our team. The tool captures the processes and output of information experts, as well as the guidance of the customers with whom we work to define and tailor the results, recorded via email correspondence or in the comments box.

My own approach to using the database is fairly systematic. Upon receiving a request, I check the database to see if anyone else has received the same request (to avoid duplication of work) or if any past work is relevant to the customer's information need. Seeing the work of my colleagues can unearth resources I wouldn't have thought to search. In other cases a researcher

had special access to a file or developed custom work in response to the request. Leveraging the hours spent by that previous researcher on a similar request, as well as the products of that person's unique experience and set of skills, saves time and allows me to offer more comprehensive results to my customer.

The above activities reflect on the workhorse nature of the tool and how RMS can be used for research inquiries. But RMS can be more than just practical – it can also be reflective. As a tool that is "about" the research function, RMS provides information that is both quantitative and qualitative. The tool tracks the resources used to respond to an information need, which allows the organization to be aware of how the collection is used and to discuss ongoing support of IIS services with our customer base. In addition, RMS includes fields to record customer accolades and to detail the business impact of the work. This information can be used to demonstrate the worth of the organization and our contribution to the bottom line. In an article detailing how to communicate the value of the information center, Amelia Kassel writes, "...understanding your own corporate culture is of critical significance since the library must align its internal measurement efforts for ROI with corporate strategic initiatives" (2002). RMS has the facility to highlight work that explicitly matches corporate initiatives, putting the organization in a better position to track and detail our contributions.

A parallel feature of the database is to log cost savings associated with information requests. For instance, if a customer requests a report we do not own which costs $5000, and IIS can provide comparable information from another resource, we have saved the company that extra expense. This allows IIS to document that we are supporting company efforts to spend responsibly while still deploying the information our customers require. Furthermore, IIS became the primary content purchaser for Lucent Technologies in 2001 and, by funneling such purchases through our organization, saved the corporation over $37 million in 2001 and over $15 million in 2002. RMS is one of the tools used to track these savings.

The RMS database provides the pieces which, when assembled, create a unique picture of the company's research needs. When the collection does not include a requested resource, that fact can be noted. Using that information, the organization can assess if there is a growing need for more information in a particular subject area. Company research trends, including the frequency, type, and source of the request, can be tracked on a weekly or monthly basis and evaluated over time. This perspective allows our group to understand the company's changing needs and react accordingly, altering our own services when trends persist.

When I posted on the BUSLIB-L listserv about members' experiences with research tracking and management tools such IIS, most of the dozen or so responses I received voiced a mix of interest and frustration. While there was interest in the idea of a research database, some who had shopped for a similar product felt they had few options available to them. A few expressed reservations about the "tracking" aspect of such a solution. Four who responded had developed their own tracking system or research database using Lotus Notes, Access, or Excel. Others expressed keen interest in the product we were using: five respondents hoped to purchase the program if I could report a positive experience. Regarding this last item, RMS is an internally-developed database leveraging existing frameworks and systems of the IIS organization, not an off-the-shelf product available for purchase.

RMS turned three this fall, and group members have suggested changes according to how the tool needs to better serve their function. A better indexing feature for the request description has been suggested. Expanding the function of the database to address needs of other groups in the organization is also of interest. Recently we discontinued the use of a complexity measure that we were using to rank requests when we found it was difficult to apply evenly due to the subjective notion of complexity and the unique ways in which people measure their work.

In the final analysis, the value of any KM tool is determined by its ingredients. As one of my colleagues put it, "Any system like this is only as good as the people using it – we all have to input religiously or it won't be helpful as a KM tool." As the universe of information grows, so grows the database. Making the tool as functional and relevant as possible while that information accumulates is the top priority for its continued development. The combination of IIS's research skills and content with the group's systems expertise created a Swiss Army knife for IIS, but rather than a toothpick, scissors, and file we have a tool for marketing, project management, and research, as well as a reflection of what the company cares about, knows, and needs to know.

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"Toward World-Class Knowledge Services: Emerging Trends in Specialized Research Libraries: Part One: The Management Perspective," St. Clair, Guy, Victoria Harriston, Thomas A. Pellizzi, Information Outlook, June 2003

copyright corner

Drafting an Organizational Copyright Policy

By Laura Gasaway

Libraries deal with a wide range of issues relating to copyright, many on a daily basis. Librarians often must make decisions about whether a particular use of a copyrighted work is a fair use or is permitted under a license agreement. A copyright policy can provide guidance to those who must make these decisions. Even for libraries that have a Copyright Clearance Center license, a copyright policy can be useful since not all copyrighted works are covered in the CCC license.

Many corporations, institutions, or their libraries adopt copyright policies as a general statement of corporate adherence to the copyright law and intent to respect the rights of creators of copyrighted works. The policy may be general or may be quite detailed and cover the gamut of copyright issues encountered by librarians and other employees. Other policies also contain guidelines or best practices for the organization.

Frequently, it is the librarian who first notices that the organization needs a copyright policy and suggests it to management. How does one get management to recognize the need for such a policy? It may be that all that is required to convince management of the need for a copyright policy is to present the need to the appropriate manager. But many librarians have reported that their requests for a policy have been ignored for years. It may be more effective to gather copyright questions and problems that the library has encountered, organize them by type of question, and present them in a short proposal that recommends a policy. In many organizations, it is the librarian who has provided the leadership to draft a policy.

What are the benefits of drafting a copyright policy? The document itself provides an overview of the corporate or organizational policy on copyright compliance. It charges employees to follow the policy and provides a basis for disciplinary action should an employee fail to adhere to the strictures of the policy. It guides librarians and others who have to make quick decisions involving copyright.

Who should be involved in writing the policy? Ideally, a small committee to draft a policy would include representatives of various groups that regularly confront copyright problems, in addition to the librarian. This ensures that the policy will take a broad view of what should be included and not be limited to library issues. If the representative group is not possible, then a copyright policy for the library is the next best alternative. Legal counsel should be involved, of course, but whether an attorney is involved at the initial stage or later when there is a draft of the policy to review depends on the organization itself. Legal counsel certainly must be involved at some point before the final policy is adopted, however.

What should the policy contain? The document should begin with a general statement that the organization's policy is to comply with the copyright law and the exclusive rights of the copyright holder. It should also recognize that the law also contains several limitations on the rights of the copyright holder, such as fair use, and indicate that the organization will take full advantage of these limitations.

It should address the following library issues:

- The extent to which the organization will exercise its fair use privilege.
- In-house photocopying (including whether the organization has a CCC license and what it covers).
- Use of authorized document delivery services.
- Interlibrary loan.
- Scanning printed documents for employees (including whether the organization has the digital repertory license).
- Posting copyrighted materials on the corporate intranet.
- Posting copyrighted works on the Web.
- Where to locate information on institutional licenses for copyrighted works that detail what can and cannot be done under the license.
- For nonprofit educational institutions, classroom use, distance education, and making copyrighted materials available to students.

If the policy covers more than library issues, it should certainly address copyright ownership of materials produced by employees.

Although library associations have opposed the adoption of fair use guidelines by associations and other groups, individual libraries, educational institutions and corporations have adopted policies that contain local guidelines. It is easy to locate some of these copyright policies on the Web to serve as examples for institutions that currently are drafting policies. It is more difficult to locate corporate policies online since usually these are treated as proprietary information.

Are there any pitfalls or difficulties in adopting a copyright policy? Yes, but there are few. First, it can be time consuming to draft a policy but it is well worth the effort. Second, the policy must be publicized initially and then to all new employees. Third, it must be published in the same method as all other corporate policies, in print or on the intranet. Finally, the policy must be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect amendments to the law and cases that affect copyright for the organization.

index of advertisers

coming events

September 2004

European Digital Library Conference
UKOLN, University of Bath
September 12-17
Bath, England
http://www.ecdl2004.org/

9th European Conference of Medical and Health Libraries EAHIL
September 20-25
Santander, Spain
https://ibio.humv.es/biblioteca/eahil/

Competia International Symposium 2004
September 28-October 1
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
http://www.competia.com/symposium/

October 2004

North Atlantic Health Science Libraries (NAHSL) Annual Meeting
October 3-5
Sebasco Harbor Resort, Maine,USA
http://www.nahsl.org/2004/

Internet Librarian International 2004
Information Today
October 10-12
London, UK
http://www.internet-librarian.com

2nd Shanghai International Library Forum
Shanghai Library
October 12-15
Shanghai, China
http://www.libnet.sh.cn/silf2004

KMWorld and Intranets 2004
Information Today
October 26-28
Santa Clara, CA, USA
http://www.kmworld.com/kmw04

November 2004

ICDM 2004: The Fourth IEEE International Conference on Data Mining
November 1-4
Brighton, England, UK

Virtual Reference Desk (VRD) Conference
November 8-9
Cincinnati, OH, USA
http://www.vrd.org/

Internet Librarian 2004
Information Today
November 15-17
Monterey, CA, USA
http://www.infotoday.com/IL2004

Online Information and Content Management Forum Europe 2004
November 30-December 2
London, UK
http://www.online-information.co.uk/

December 2004

Portals, Collaboration and Content Management
December 7-9
Orlando, FL, USA
http://www.dci.com/events/porweb/

7th International Conference of Asian Digital Libraries
Shanghai Jiao Tong University Libraries
December 13-17
Shanghai, China
http://icadl2004.sjtu.edu.cn/

information trends

Place, Space, Face, Trace

By Stephen Abram

I'll admit it. I like the title of this month's column because it rhymes! It also reflects some of the issues I've been struggling with over the past year. And, indeed, I think it reflects some of the issues we are dealing with in libraries and information services too.

I have had a lot of time to think about the issues of physical and virtual space in the past few months. For one thing, I took a new position as vice president of innovation at Sirsi Corporation. This is a global position and my colleagues on the executive team are spread in places around the world including the U.S., U.K., Australia, and Canada.

For another, I needed to decide how I was going to work virtually and in the real world with management and teams of librarians and developers around the world. I have been traveling out of my home town between two and three weeks every month of 2004. I am pretty well connected through my laptop and can access the web and my e-mail anywhere – by modem, broadband, or wirelessly. I can also be contacted through my digital phone – by voice, v-mail or e-mail. So, I had to ask myself, do I really need a physical space called an office? Can I truly operate only virtually? Can I operate from home occasionally and easily without having a negative impact on my home and family life?

Hmmmmm . . .

Well, I have to tell you – working virtually as my only modality just doesn't work for me. It's not my primary mode but I still find a strong need for physical space. Why? Well the reasons are encapsulated in the title of this column.

Place

I discovered that I have a strong sense of place. By this, I mean I need to be rooted in order to achieve. I find it difficult to concentrate when I don't find my environment aligns with the task at hand. So writing reports, composing e-mails, and making calls seem to be improved for me by having the proper place to work. I can do all of this on planes, in hotel rooms, in airport lounges, and so on. For occasional use virtual "anywhere" access is a godsend. I can do it fine but I can think better when the place is designed for the task at hand.

Space

Space – workspace, family space, eating space, entertainment space. I find that for me personally these don't mix well. Indeed, televisions and PC-based work don't combine well for me - especially in close proximity to the refrigerator. I also find that my work requires an amazing range of simple and complex tools to be accomplished effectively. It was a discovery for me how frustrating work can be when the PC, printer, telephone, post office, envelopes, stamps, copier, stapler, letter opener, tape, and scissors – among other things – were not conveniently located at my fingertips when I needed them. Assembling a workspace that "worked" for me while not interfering with other operations in my home was a challenge. Issues of comfort and productivity quickly rose to the forefront.

Face

Finding me and finding me in person have become two different things. My cell phone works worldwide most of the time, although as I write this column in Johannesburg I am disconnected from my cell despite being assured that it would work here! My voicemail works on the cell and at home. I use instant messenger quite often with my primary contacts. My family has been conscripted to take messages – with mixed results from the teens.

Still, there is a huge difference in the quality and effectiveness of conversations that are in person or virtual. Again, I knew this intuitively, but the balance changed when my conversation shifted from 80 percent in person to 80 percent virtually. I became more than nostalgic for real in-person contact. I started to think more explicitly about when face to face was necessary versus phone calls, e-mail, and instant messaging. I find this issue intellectually stimulating as I develop a better virtual persona.

Trace

Where am I? Have I left a trace somewhere? Can people trace me to send me things?

I was surprised how oddly difficult it became to receive mail, parcels, and courier deliveries. Some things just don't deliver well without hard copies, or their online delivery creates additional problems. Try printing color cost-effectively on the road!

One neglects to remember the infrastructure needed to support an employee in his or her work. It all becomes clearer when you're a one-person office. I learned that if it has to be, it has to be me. I am learning new lessons in independence and tracing resources and supporters who can get my technology working better and more effectively or can parcel up a courier to actually arrive on time.

I have also learned a few things about myself. First, I once considered myself a very independent person. I now realize that this was accomplished with an almost invisible and largely misunderstood support system. Alone, I have to make this support network more explicit and tend to its care and feeding. Second, all of this technology doesn't happen by itself. We know that, but such things as printer repairs, software installations, backups, and the like are handled quite differently when you're your own office.

What did I choose?

So I ended up choosing a small office space close to home. It's amazing how comfortable 600 square feet can be and how much more productive I can be when my "stuff" (books, papers, articles, props, etc.) is there when need it. I envisioned a life where I modeled the happy villager – living and working within waking distance of home and lattes while remaining easy flying distance from any client. I am delighted to report that I feel more productive and I don't spend so much time being frustrated by the little things that annoy me.

I am still on the road a lot, which I love, but when I come home I have a place to put my stuff. I have a space to meet folks face to face. And I am leaving a trace – I now have a center to my operations. That's all good for me. Am I the norm? I doubt it. I do think I am within the range of normal behavior.

Are library users like me and what can library services learn from my recent experiences?

Bricks, Clicks Tricks

I've noted before that our libraries' biggest challenge for the next few years is finding the right balance of our bricks (buildings and spaces), clicks (Web sites and intranets) and tricks (our professional skills). I believe that as we virtualize more and more information services we need to consider the issues that I have faced lately. After all, every user is an individual and every user perceives the success of his or her information needs from that point of view.

It seems simple enough but so often we look at users from a demographic or market overview. That's not enough. When you use this as your starting point you think of average users - you don't think about them as individuals with a broader range of needs and behaviors. I know – airline seats are designed for so-called average people with no give for the extra short, extra tall, or extra large. It's an awful situation where few are happy or comfortable. Are intranet sites designed for the average employee delivering the same unsatisfying experience? Imagine designing library services for a single parent with 2.3 children. That's the demographic and it's remarkably silly when we think about it! So here are some questions that would make a fun debate amongst our colleagues:

1. Is the average user stereotype useful for developing our services and products in libraries? When is it useful and when isn't it?

2. How do we ensure that we deliver personal satisfaction for our users' experiences with our services? How do we measure and test individual and group usability? Is satisfaction with features and functions balanced from the psychological need to achieve their work and personal goals?

3. What are the differences between face-to-face use and virtual use of our services and how do we introduce personal service beyond our physical space?

4. Are there technologies like instant messenger, virtual reference, VOIP, virtual classrooms, e-polling, and the like that allow us to offer an improved virtual information experience beyond public and intranet Web sites and internal and external remote access databases?

5. Is there a way to increase the face to face experience with information professionals when your enterprise is spread far and wide? Does our library staff need to 'be' beyond the library's walls 75% of the time now?

Librarians excel at two things in particular - delivering information efficiently and effectively, and improving the quality of the ill-formed question that the user brings to their research, learning or information experience. And that's the biggest challenge of all - how do we ensure that our best competency in our enterprise's context - improving the quality of questions throughout the organization - continues in a virtual world. Try working only virtually for six months. I can share from my experience that there are a lot of lonely, needy end-users out there needing our special brand of help.

This column contains the personal perspectives of Stephen Abram, MLS, and does not necessarily represent the opinions or positions of Sirsi Corporation or SLA. Products are not endorsed or recommended for your personal situation and are shown here as useful ideas or places to investigate or explore. Stephen would love to hear from you at stephen.abram@sirsi.com.

information management

2004 Basic Annual Salaries: Canada and the United States

	Salary							Percent Change
	10th Percentile	First Quartile 25%	Median 50%	Third Quartile 75%	90th Percentile	Number	Mean	Mean percentage change
All Canadian Respondents	46,000	52,000	60,000	74,000	86,137	219	63,548	3.6%
All U.S. Respondents	38,000	46,000	58,258	75,000	94,359	2,320	63,151	4.3%

2004 Salary Survey Results

By John R. Latham

The 2004 SLA Salary Survey results show that the average salary increases for SLA members have outpaced inflation once again. Based on salaries as of April 1, the mean percentage increase in salaries for 2004 over 2003 was 4.3 percent for U.S.-based respondents. For the same 12-month period, the Consumer Price Index rose only 2.3 percent. For Canadian members, salaries were 3.6 percent higher on April 1, 2004 than a year earlier, while the CPI had only increased by 1.6 percent.

The average salary for U.S. members who answered the survey was $63,151, compared with $61,522 in 2003, and for Canadian members CAN $63,548 compared with CAN $61,959.

All salaries in Canadian tables are reported in Canadian dollars. The exchange rate on April 1, 2004, was CAN $1.31 Canadian = USD $1.

Although we announced with pride in 1999 that gender equity had been achieved in U.S. median salaries, when women's salaries exceeded those of men for the first time, this trend has not continued. Since 1999 the differential has moved slightly in favor of men, but this year's results show a marked increase in the difference between male and women's salaries. The median shows men's pay 10 percent higher, but the mean is only 7 percent higher, which indicates that the differential is less marked at the top end of the scale.

The salaries of our Canadian colleagues have done the opposite. The results show women's mean salaries exceeding those of men for the first time: CAN $63,985 compared to CAN $60,996. The median figures show the same percentage differential. It will be interesting to see if this is a lasting trend or, like the U.S., just a temporary phenomenon.

The mean salary in the Pacific region moved into the second place this year ($67,083), just behind the Middle Atlantic region ($67,786). The responses of New England survey participants indicate a mean salary of $66,775, and the South Atlantic region closed the gap in fourth place with $65,522 compared with $60,960 in 2003. As I pointed out in last year's review, don't forget that the higher pay scales may look inviting, but one has to consider the cost of living in those areas.

The results show that 47 percent of the US members who responded supervise or manage one or two employees; these respondents earn, on average, $55,678. Just under 4 percent of the respondents supervise or manage 20 or more employees, and, on average, earn $104, 339, a differential that is no great surprise.

The complete results of the 2004 survey will be published electronically in PDF by the end of September. Additionally, an exciting new feature will allow users to leverage survey results online. An online salary calculator will access the survey data, based on search criteria set by the user, to provide an instant result.

Due to the ease of delivery of an online survey, in 2004 we surveyed 100 percent of the U.S. membership compared with the 50 percent surveyed over the last few years. Although the overall response rate fell slightly, we received 2,320 usable survey responses compared with 1,366 in 2003.

Communities of Practice Update

It is pleasing to note that since June 21, new communities have been added to SLA's Communities of Practice at http://cop.sla.org. They are as diverse as the new Competitive Intelligence Division and the Emerging Leaders Network.

Don't forget that once you have joined a community you need to set up your notification preferences for each community by clicking on the Notifications icon on the top of the Community Home page. If you wish to be notified automatically to your external e-mail address click on the Messaging icon on your Personal Home page and select Mail Preferences.

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