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AIS President's Report: 2001-2002

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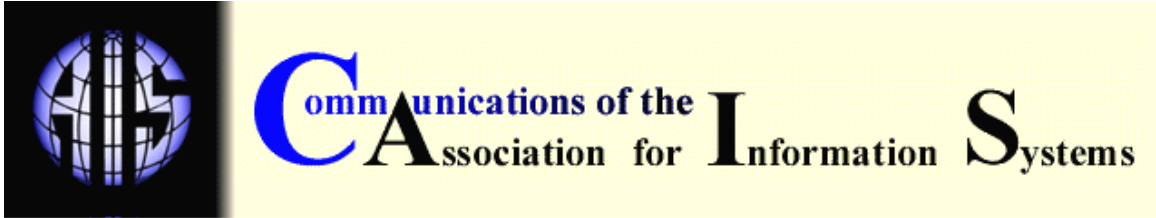
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AIS PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2001-2002

Blake Ives

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ABSTRACT

Three years ago, my most recent predecessor as the President from Region One, Gordon Davis, published the first of these President's reports in *Communications of the AIS*. Two years later, Michael Vitale, the most recent AIS President from Region Three, provided another. Gordon and Mike set a difficult precedent, not only by the quality of their report but, more importantly, by the many accomplishments of AIS during their terms in office. The following presents my view of most of the significant work of AIS from May 1, 2001 to April 30, 2002.

KEYWORDS: President's report, JAIS, MIS Quarterly, ISWorld, ICIS, AMCIS, AIS outreach, accreditation, affiliations, AIS finances, elections, awards, AIS membership, AIS office.

NEW EDITOR AT JAIS

The *Journal of the Association for Information Systems* (JAIS) is one of two journals published by the Association. It is the objective of AIS Council that JAIS be perceived as comparable to *MIS Quarterly* and *Information Systems Research* in the quality of its scholarly reputation. Phillip Ein-Dor, the founding editor, after providing essential and sustained leadership in starting up the journal, elected to step down as editor to concentrate better on his responsibilities as AIS President. A search committee was appointed with members drawn from all three AIS Regions: Cynthia Beath, Phillip Ein-Dor, Rudy Hirschheim (chair), Hank Lucas, and Neo Boon Siong. After extensive deliberations, the committee selected Sirkka Jarvenpaa. Sirkka, who took office on May 1st 2002, appointed an outstanding new senior editorial board including Soon Ang, Izak Benbasat, Matthias Jarke, Kalle Lyytinen, Tridas Mukhopadhyay, and Bob Zmud. AIS Council provided financial resources necessary for several initiatives proposed by Sirkka, with input from the JAIS Senior Editorial Board and Cynthia Beath, AIS Vice President of Publications.

AIS ALLIANCE WITH MIS QUARTERLY

In my predecessor Michael Vitale's report to the membership (Vitale 2001), he noted the conclusion of our long sought after merger with the International Conference on Information Systems. That merger, coupled with an agreement several years before to bring ISWorld under

the AIS umbrella, placed two valuable resources within the AIS family. I am pleased to report that this year we concluded an agreement with the Management Information Systems Research Center (MISRC) and the University of Minnesota that, while not quite an adoption of the *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, more clearly binds our two professional families together.

The first benefit, which we hope will be available by October 15th, 2002 will provide all non-library AIS members with online access to the entire archive of the *MIS Quarterly* (a beta version is already available at <http://emisq.isworld.org/>). While some schools already have online access to much of the archive, no one previously had access to the two most current years. Moreover, the complete archive is now also available to those members in parts of the world who qualify for our discounted rates – in some instances to individuals with no access to either the paper copies or the older issues available through online services.

Our agreement with the MISRC also provides considerable input into the governance process, with AIS and the MISRC each providing two members to the five person *MIS Quarterly* Policy Committee. The fifth member will be the Editor-in-Chief of the *MIS Quarterly*, currently Ron Weber. The VP of Publications, currently Cynthia Beath, will serve a three -year term as one of the AIS representatives. The second member, to be appointed by the AIS President, will normally also serve a three-year term. However, to ensure some staggering of terms, the first term of the second AIS representative will be for only two years. President Phillip Ein-Dor appointed me as the second AIS representative and I will also serve as the committee's elected chair. The chair will rotate every two years between AIS and MISRC.

Among the responsibilities of the Policy Committee will be the selection of future editors of the *MIS Quarterly* and providing oversight of the publishing operation. The Policy Committee will play no role, however, in the editorial direction of the *MIS Quarterly*. That remains in the hands of the Editor-in-Chief and his or her boards. Further information about the merger is available in Ron Weber's editorial statement (Weber 2002). In that statement Ron Weber identifies the many people who made this alliance possible. Among those playing essential roles were Gordon Davis, Allen Lee, Eph McLean, Ron Weber, and Bob Zmud.

ELECTRONIC INITIATIVES

Much of my energies as President were spent in cheerleading a number of electronic initiatives, intended to better serve our globally dispersed membership and the broader IS community. Many of these initiatives are described in more detail in my outgoing letter to the membership entitled, "Pushing the Frontiers of Intellectual Infrastructure" (<http://www.aisnet.org/news/ives043002.shtml>).

I highlight several of these below.

ISWORLD LIST

Our community is fortunate to have been served for many years by the ISWorld distribution list. Created in 1994 from two previous lists managed by Rick Watson (ICIS-L) and Al Bento (CIS-L), the list was renamed by John Mooney and hosted at University College Dublin. 2001-2002 proved to be a most eventful year for ISWorld, much of it fueled by uncertainty regarding uses of the list following the terrorist actions in the USA on September 11, 2001. Three days later, acting in my capacity as President of AIS, I requested Gabe Piccoli, the list's manager at the time, to temporarily suspend any further postings to the list due to some sensitivity regarding some of the postings. Five days later the list was reopened, but as a moderated list (Appendix I) . The list was operated as a moderated list for over six months, with John Mooney and I taking turns as

moderator. The list reopened on April 18th, 2002 as an unmoderated list at a new URL address and with benefit of a commercial provider. The move to a commercial provider, paid for by AIS, also eliminates some confusion about AIS authority in providing list oversight. (the Appedices include the three messages that discontinued the list, restarted it as a moderated list, and restarted it as an unmoderated list at a new location.)

ISWorld's new manager is Andy Schwarz of the University of Houston. Andy migrated much of the archive from the old list to the new, with the further benefit of a web interface and search engine (the word "terrorist", for instance, appeared in twelve postings, all but three of them in September 2001).

Within approximately two weeks of its announcement, some two thousand subscribers migrated to the new list (as of early August 2002, almost 2,400 people subscribe). Each re-subscriber or new member is now required to agree to the conditions of the list before being permitted to join. Each time a subscriber posts a message they are also asked to confirm their message meets the conditions. These conditions were developed by a committee consisting of Lynda Applegate, Roger Clarke, Dennis Galletta, Joze Gricar, Gabe Piccoli, Rick Watson, and John Mooney (chair). I would like to use this opportunity to thank each of them as well as Andy Schwarz who was so instrumental in identifying and establishing the new list and associated web site.

ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

AIS has long been committed to electronic media, with both JAIS and *Communications of the AIS*, our other official outlet, always published only online. Our agreement to provide the *MIS Quarterly* online for our members is a natural extension. So, too, are the additions to our eLibrary of the complete archives of the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) and the America's Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS). The eLibrary is accessible at: <http://aisel.isworld.org/>. In 2001 Council approved the elimination of paper proceedings for all AIS Conferences, with the stipulation that proceedings would be available online starting two weeks prior to the conference. And, with the benefit of wireless technology, ICIS 2001 also made the proceedings available onsite. Reagan Ramsower is the driving force in this electronic publishing initiative, and he and Baylor University pushed us a very long way. Our long run objective here is an integrated, "soup-to-nuts" system that can take a submission on one end and eventually output a finished article in a variety of formats for a variety of display devices,.

REVIEWING SYSTEM

We long wrestled with the choice of a review system for our various conferences. In days gone by it was not unusual for each conference program chair to commission a new tailored system. In one instance, AIS itself invested in such a system, only to see it fall into disuse when its creator was no longer available to manage it. For the past two years we agreed to use the Temple Peer Review System, created and run for us by Munir Mandviwalla at Temple University, for both AMCIS and ICIS. A committee headed by Cynthia Beath is now examining that system and other available options so as to advise Council on how to proceed for the 2003 conferences and beyond. No matter what the outcome of that decision is, we are most indebted for the energies that Munir and his staff provided.

THE AIS MISRC-ISWORLD FACULTY DIRECTORY

Our agreement with the University of Minnesota for managing the *MIS Quarterly*, also informally includes Policy Committee oversight of the Faculty Directory, one of the most valued resources in the field (The Directory is accessible at: <http://webfoot.csom.umn.edu/isworld/facdir/default.htm>).

In the past year the faculty directory was given a minor face-lift, primarily to make it look more like other AIS resources. At present, a major revision of the directory is underway, a revision that should provide specialized functionality to AIS members. Dave Naumann has spearheaded much of the technical development of the directory, with Jan DeGross providing the administrative support. The Directory is a magnificent resource that I make use of almost every day. We are most thankful for the efforts of Dave Naumann and colleagues at the University of Minnesota for making this gift available to AIS and to the field.

CONFERENCES

AIS is pleased to be a sponsor of both the European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS) and the Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS). We also have affiliations with several other conferences and rules that govern those affiliations. In addition, AIS presents the America's Conference on Information Systems essentially intended to serve Region One, and the International Conference on Information Systems.

AMCIS 2001 IN BOSTON

As I write this report, AMCIS 2002 in Dallas is about to kick-off. It follows the very successful AMCIS meeting in Boston last August that attracted some 1100 AIS members. Conference chairs Jane Fedorowicz and John Gorgone with help from program chairs Detmar Straub and Diane Strong put on a great conference, made even more delightful by the late summer weather of Boston and, for one attendee at least, the attraction of an afternoon of baseball at nearby Fenway Park (before, or was it after, the conference, of course!).

ICIS 2001 IN NEW ORLEANS

In December of 2001, ICIS 2001 in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, combined the great food, music, and nightlife of "Big Easy" with a great and professionally orchestrated program. Congratulations and a hearty thank you to my Co-Chair Joey George, the program chairs Sumit Sarkar and Veda Storey, the consortium chairs, Dov Te'eni and Peter Todd, and the many other folks on the various committees that made the conference go so smoothly. Thanks especially to Joey who did most of the Conferencing Chair work, while I focused on the AIS Presidency. Among the highlights of the social program was a Mardi Gras style parade down Canal Street, complete with bands, beads, bangles, and, as one cop on the street described the 1,100 of us, pointy-headed polysyllabic pontificators. The next ICIS is scheduled for December 15th to 18th in Barcelona, Spain. I hope we will see you there (<http://dsi.esade.es/icis2002/>).

OTHER INITIATIVES

The AIS financial surplus is a healthy one with Council anxious to find some level that balances our need to cover conference contracts in case of a disaster with our desire to keep our membership dues and conference fees low. But, we also feel considerable responsibility to take on professional challenges – for instance, our discount rate makes AIS membership viable in parts of the world where we would not otherwise anticipate having members. Sometimes, this means taxing some members, institutions, or regions for the benefit of others. In other cases it means taking a small piece of everyone's contribution to pay for something that will be of value to all or many. Below are some examples.

OUTREACH

Council allocated \$30,000 two years ago to establish outreach activities in each of the three regions. Last year at ECIS, Region Two, under the leadership of John Mooney, used some of that money to subsidize attendance for members from Eastern and Central Europe. A special event was held at the conference for those attendees. Among the facilitators were the President, President-Elect and at least three past AIS Presidents. A similar initiative, this time organized partially by Region One representative Jaana Porra and VP of Publications, Cynthia Beath, is scheduled for Mexico City this November. A delegation of AIS Council members will meet with information systems scholars and faculty from Mexico and Central America, to ascertain how the Association can best meet the needs of that community. Region Three's representatives have yet to decide if, or what, they might do for their region.

Among the other initiatives kicked off or fine tuned during 2001-2002 was our Special Interest Groups (SIGs), created by Dennis Galletta, Vice President for Member Services. There are now nine SIG's in various stages of roll-out. SIGs are a powerful means of identifying and learning from others with similar interests. See <http://www.pitt.edu/~galletta/sigs.html> for more details.

Conference Regularization

Malcolm Munro, AIS Vice President of Meetings and Conferences, reports that both ICIS and AMCIS conference sites have been selected to 2005, that there are two active candidates for AMCIS 2006, and three others for ICIS 2006. Future AMCIS sites include Tampa (2003), New York (2004) and Omaha (2005); future ICIS sites include Barcelona (2002), Seattle (2003), Washington (2004), and Las Vegas (2005). Malcolm Munro, and former AIS President and last year's chair of the ICIS Committee, Ron Weber led an initiative to update our conference site selection guidelines and our procedures for running a conference. Those interested in hosting an AMCIS or ICIS conference should contact the AIS Vice President for Meetings and Conferences (accessible from <http://www.aisnet.org/directory.shtml>)

Accreditation

AIS Council approved a three-year association with the CSAB, formally known as the Computing Sciences Accreditation Board. Previously consisting only of representatives from IEEE and ACM, AIS now has a seat on this board as well as allies among the other representatives. Joe Valacich was chosen by Council to serve as the AIS representative to the CSAB. Among the objectives of the CSAB are to evaluate the feasibility of broad accreditation of IS programs and to seek opportunity for joint accreditation activities between CSAB and AACSB.

Curriculum Development

AIS is participating on a joint task force including ACM, AIS, and AITP, to develop a model curriculum for an undergraduate information systems curriculum. IS 2002 is a follow-up to IS'97 also developed by a joint task force of those three organizations. John Gorgone chairs the joint task force. All of the other five members of the task force are also AIS members.

Affiliations

Jane Fedorowicz, AIS VP for Chapters and Affiliated Organizations, led AIS into a number of exciting relationships with several national and other professional organizations. For instance, we have recently established a relationship with the German Computing Society's, GI FB5 group. Its 4,000 members now can be joint members of AIS at a discounted rate and obtain access to some AIS member benefits. AIS members, in turn, now will have access to FB5 publications and we may jointly sponsor conferences with FB5. Similar agreements are in place or underway with professional organizations in France, the UK, and Slovenia. In addition a new AIS chapter was established in Australasia and been approved by AIS Council. We also endorsed Beta Alpha Psi, now a student honorary society for accounting, finance, and information systems, as an official AIS honorary society. Another organization, long loosely affiliated with ICIS and AIS, the International Academy for Information Management (IAIM), was approved as the official AIS Special Interest Group on Education (SIGED). AIS and IAIM are now working together to bring their honorary society, Alpha Iota Mu, into the AIS family.

FINANCES

The short version is that AIS finances, after two highly successful conferences, are very healthy. For those who seek the longer version, Treasurer Dick Elnicki maintains a web archive of AIS-related financial statements. This archive is available at: <http://nersp.nerdc.ufl.edu/~icis/reports/reports.htm>.

Please direct any questions regarding financial statements to Dick: dicke@ufl.edu

ELECTIONS

We went into the election with a strong slate of candidates and confidence the Council would be well off no matter what the outcomes. Several of the races were very tight, and we do appreciate each candidate's willingness to serve. The new officers elected for 2002-2003 include:

President-Elect (Asia, Australia, New Zealand)	Kwok Kei-Wei
VP Publications	Cynthia Beath
VP Education	M. Lynne Markus
Council Region 1 Americas	Diane Strong
Council Region 2 (Europe, Middle East, Africa)	Jose Gricar
Council Region 3 Asia/Pacific	Sid Huff

In addition both Jaana Porra and Patrick Chau agreed to stay on for a third year as regional representatives, filling in for Cynthia Beath and Kwok-Kei Wei who were elected to other Council Posts.

The newly elected officers will work with incoming President Phillip Ein-Dor and the continuing members of Council. If you are interested in running for office or nominating someone, please contact President-Elect, Kwok-Kei Wei who heads the nominations committee.

AIS AWARDS

Richard Mason was selected by the Leo Selection Committee to be the sixth awardee of the prestigious Leo award for Life-Time Exceptional Service. Sirkka Jarvenpaa and Jim McKenney were selected as the 2001 AIS Fellows recipients. The 2001 Leo Selection Committee members included Mary Culnan (Chair), Joachim Griese, John King, Frank Land, Neo Boon Siong, and Phil Yetton) and the Fellows Committee included Maryam Alavi, Chrisanthi Avgerou, Phillip Ein-Dor, Hank Lucas, Mike Vitale (chair), and myself. At this writing we are soliciting nominations for the 2002 Leo and AIS Fellow selections. Nominations can be submitted from the awards home page at: <http://www.aisnet.org/award/awards.html> or directly to Neo Boon Siong, chair of the 2002 Leo Fellows Award Committee or to me, chair of the 2002 AIS Fellows Selection Committee.

AIS OFFICE

Samantha Spears, the AIS Director continues to do an excellent job heading up our Atlanta office. The most significant challenge she faced this past year was the transition to a commercial provider, Association Gate, for servicing our membership records and handling the financial side of conference registration. We also added a Finance Manager to our HQ staff, Elizabeth Davis.

MEMBERSHIP

Last year Mike Vitale reported that we met our objective of 2000 members in 2000. No, we did not set our sites on 2001 in 2001 nor 2002 in 2002! I am pleased to report that, as of this writing (August 2002), we have 2,699 members of which about 20% are students, 7 are retired, but less than 2% are, thus far, taking advantage of the 10% rate available to individuals residing in the countries listed at <http://www.aisnet.org/countries.shtml> . We also have 16 institutional members, whose names are listed at the bottom of the AIS home page at <http://www.aisnet.org> .

COMMITMENT

Increasing membership numbers and successful conferences do not fully capture the health of a professional association. Other indicators include the depth of commitment as well as the involvement of a field's demonstrated leaders. On those two measures, I feel AIS made great progress. In the last several years we saw a great increase in interest in running for our offices, in the enthusiastic involvement of the nominations and award committees, in the percentage of members participating in elections, in nominations from the field for AIS awards, and even in expressions of self-interest in how one goes about qualifying for such awards. The many names that appear in this document as well as the hundreds of others who volunteer services as a member of a program committee or as paper referees is another illustration of the depth of involvement. But we are also seeing among our nominations for office, on our committees, and, most recently, on the JAIS Senior Editor's board, the names of past Editor's-in-Chief of the field's other major journals, past conference, and program chairs and so on. While some might suggest that this could result in too much power in the hands of too few people, I am personally pleased that we experienced and proven leaders as well as world renowned scholars seeking to be involved in AIS activities.

CONCLUSION

I acknowledged the contributions of scores of people throughout this report but still left of many others (e.g., track chairs, members of our editorial boards, SIG founders, election candidates) who played essential roles. One name that hasn't yet appeared is that of Iris Vessey, who played an absolutely essential role as AIS Secretary in keeping us organized and moving forward. Thanks to Iris and the many other current and past members of council and our headquarters office that were so helpful to the Office of the Presidency.

When asked to run for AIS President some years ago I saw it more as a necessary professional responsibility than as either an honor or likely source of entertainment. I suspect this feeling may have been shared by several of my predecessors during AIS's formative years. I hope that in my year as President, with the strong support of a first-rate Council that we collectively lived up to that responsibility and left AIS a stronger organization. And, with the benefit of hindsight and experience it has even proven to be an honor to have been given the opportunity to be your President. Better, it was good fun!

Editor's Note: This article was received on August 11, 2002 and was published on August 20, 2002, 2002

REFERENCES

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Weber, R. (2002) Editorial Statement, *MIS Quarterly* ()1, September. (or see: <http://www.misq.org/archivist/vol/no26/Issue3/EdComments.pdf>)

APPENDIX I. INITIAL MESSAGE SUSPENDING ISWORLD LIST

[Sept 14, 2001: From Blake Ives via List Manager]

As I receive the ISWorld Net message by digest rather than individual message I only began to understand how badly the content of some of the postings had deteriorated when I looked at yesterday's digest late last night. As the Association's name appears on the list and as we may have some legal responsibility for looking after the content of these messages, I have, acting in my position as AIS President, asked Gabe Piccoli, manager of the list, to temporarily suspend the list immediately after sending this message for me. Several people asked me yesterday to take this action and I responded that I would not do so as I knew that many of you view ISWorld as community property and would view this as censorship. Suspension would also, of course, create a great loss for the many uses for which the list is intended. Reading yesterday's postings and thinking about it overnight has caused me to change my position. I do so with a heavy heart but with a strong commitment to the decision. I now strongly believe, in view of some of the recent postings, that it is necessary to protect the Association and the individuals who run and manage the list (as well as some of our more reckless posters) from any unanticipated legal risks that might accompany the use of the list for purposes for which it was never intended.

I realize that, by sending a personal message regarding the tragedy two days ago that I may have appeared to sanction, at least for these troubling times, the use of the list to help vent frustrations and anger. I apologize to all of you if my own actions led to any of the outcome we have observed. Please understand, however, that I am not intending to criticize the contents of any of the postings or their authors. That assessment will come in the hearts and minds of each of our diverse readers who collectively represent the cultures of much of the world.

You are most welcome to send me your suggestions regarding how we might get the list back in operation in a manner that is not risky to the Association or the institutions and individuals responsible for managing or using it. That would seem likely to be a return to the tightly constrained and well defined list that we knew up until a year or two ago. You are also, of course, most welcome to vent any anger you may have about my decision to me personally at bives@mail.uh.edu.

I can not say how long the list will be suspended for. In the next several days I will ask Council to address this issue. Unless I am told otherwise by Council, ISWorld will be off-line for at least the next five days and perhaps far longer.

Blake Ives
President for Association for Information Systems

APPENDIX II: MESSAGE ANNOUNCING MODERATED LIST

[Sept 18, 2001: from Blake Ives]

At this writing I have had about 70 messages regarding my decision to temporarily close off the ISWorld list. About 60 of these specifically agreed or disagreed with that decision. At the bottom of this note are reproduced many of the messages. I have deleted the names of the authors, to save the time that would have been required to get permissions of the authors to attribute their words. I have also, in a couple of instances, deleted portions of the message that seemed to run the risk of further inflaming passions or that were more personal in nature.

The message ran about four to one in favor of suspending the list. This is, of course, a tiny sample of our 2,800 some subscribers. It is also likely biased with many friends and AIS Council Members coming to my defense while, I feel certain, some who opposed the decision were likely reluctant to say so.

Setting aside "the vote," the messages convey a wealth of different opinions and different perspectives. I have only been able to respond to a very small number of these in person but I appreciate the time and advice of all who chose to respond - whether you agreed with the decision or not. Many of these, on both sides of the aisle, were most thoughtful. The pro and con groups did seem to generally agreed on two points. The first was the value they placed on ISWorld. The second was that they wanted it back as soon as possible. These points coupled with the argument that taking the list down was a surrender to those who perpetrated this horrible act, convinces me that we must get the list up again as quickly as we can. The fastest way to do that is to create a temporary moderated list while we determine when and how we will bring back up the unmoderated version.

Therefore, until that time comes you may post a "properly focused" message to the list at the usual address. I will try each day or, in the worse case, every two days to approve/disapprove the messages posted to the temporarily moderated list. I will not, however, publish messages having nothing to do with information systems or our profession, trivial messages (e.g., roommate requests, tenure jokes, lost gloves), or adverts for commercial products. Additionally, I will accumulate any messages that are a specific response to this message (e.g., regarding this decision or the future of the list) and post them in a separate message in three or four days.

Please also keep in mind that ISWorld is primarily a broadcast rather than discussion list. While this incident again highlights the need by some for a forum for discussion, this is not, and has never been the intention of ISWorld. As we have noted previously, if someone feels strongly that the IS community needs an online discussion forum, or is one of our frequent posters, we invite them to set up such a forum and invite members of the community to join.

Below are summarized my justifications for suspending the list.

First there was the risk of defamation. While the messages had not yet turned personal, I saw no way to guarantee that they would not, as the dialog became, in some instances, increasingly more mean-spirited. We have yet to resolve the legal questions here, but some of the suggestions in the messages below suggest that I may have overstated the risk to the Association. But there remains the issue of the legal liability of individual posters. And all of this is a rather murky framework of laws drawn up in many countries around the world. We would most value further knowledge on this matter from subscribers to the list who have expertise in this area.

But my concerns, and as you will also see reflected in the messages below from our subscribers, went beyond legal risks. Some of us were very much in need of some reassuring words after the horrifying experience that we witnessed on TV or, in some cases, in person. Instead we found uncomfortable anger and angst coming from a forum that had been, for me at least, an often caring and cooperative community. Some might argue the wake-up calls embedded in those messages were good for the complacent among us, but not at a time when loved ones, former students, neighbors, and friends are still unaccounted for and nerves are already raw.

I worried as well about the long-term implications of comments made in haste to an audience including at least some who might be both incensed and endowed with a long memory. Among our subscribers are those who will write promotion and tenure letters, make job offers, seek out chair candidates, join program committees, vote on conference bids, host sabbatical visits, and so on. It is naive to think those decisions could not, at least in the subconscious of the decision maker, be influenced by an intemperate remark that had been found to be offensive some months or even years before. And, even for senior members of faculty, more insulated from such sanctions, there is the risk of having hard-won reputations for scholarship stained by poorly thought through postings (having once spread the famous "Nieman-Marcus cookie recipe" urban legend over ISWorld, I am perhaps more sensitive to that possibility than some might be).

I also felt some responsibility to the silent majority among our subscribers. We are professionals and ours is a professional list. That profession is information systems. If I go to see my dentist for my annual check up, I don't care about her political leanings. I care only about her knowledge of dentistry. But if each time I see her she sings the praises of mayoral candidates from the X party while I favor the Y, I may elect to find myself a new dentist, despite her skills with the drill. Our subscribers might make similar decisions if posters commonly stray from expertise to poorly informed opinion and even prejudice.

Still, as more than one of the writers below notes, "there may be something that we can add as IT professionals." I would not want to preclude our presenting that kind of well-reasoned analysis. Similarly valued, by me at least, are calls to help our fellow researchers who may have, for instance, lost valued materials because of the disaster (Dennis Galletta relied on ISWorld to lead

such an initiative when the University of Georgia had a fire in their Business School in 1995. Several donors (<http://www.pitt.edu/~galletta/needs.html>) helped them rebuild their library collections. Clearly the technologies that we teach about have also played a role in helping relatives find out about their lost loved ones, relief agencies to identify volunteers, the medical community to manage the blood supply, and so on. Getting the stock market back on-line yesterday must have required Herculean efforts in technology management. In the best of all worlds our list and the people on it, could have played - and many probably did play - helpful roles. In any case there will be IT lessons here that are very much worth sharing.

Among the arguments arrayed against my decision were those opposing censorship, those who felt the problem was fading away, and those who felt that this was creating exactly the kind of disruption that the terrorists had sought.

I take on the responsibility as temporary list moderator with little enthusiasm and I am sure the typical subscribers enthusiasm for this intermediate step will be still lower. I hope that we can soon fashion a return to an open list, but one in which we have some recourse against those who use the list for purposes for which it was not intended.

I have asked several members of AIS to take on the responsibility to advise the AIS Council regarding the steps we must take in moving forward with a return to an unmoderated list. The members of that task force, which is already hard at work, include Lynda Applegate, Roger Clarke, Dennis Galletta, Joze Gricar, Gabe Piccoli, Rick Watson and John Mooney (who has kindly agreed to serve as chair).

Blake Ives
President for Association for Information Systems

APPENDIX III: RESTORATION OF FULL OPEN LIST ON NEW SERVER

[April 4, 2002: From Blake Ives]

In the weeks immediately after September 11th, the ISWorld list, like many similar lists, included many strongly worded postings triggered by the events of that day. In response to subscriber concerns that some of these messages were hurtful and/or contrary to the stated objectives of the list, the managers of the list, with considerable reluctance, temporarily began to moderate the list. That moderation, for a variety of reasons, has lasted far longer than any of us wanted or planned for.

As President of the Association for Information Systems (AIS), I appointed a task force to make recommendations about the future of the list. The members of the task force included Lynda Applegate, Roger Clarke, Dennis Galletta, Joze Gricar, Gabe Piccoli, Rick Watson, and John Mooney (chair). The committee developed a set of potential policies for use and administration of the list as John Mooney will describe in a subsequent message. During their deliberations they also began to wrestle with the issue of the "ownership" of the list. If, for instance, AIS was to assume administrative responsibility for the list, then it was necessary for AIS to have a legitimate basis for assuming that responsibility. The committee, therefore, recommended that the list be moved to a commercial provider to be paid by AIS.

After exploring various options, we selected a well established service provider, Lyris, and have been working with them tailoring the list functions to meet our requirements. That list, primarily due to the hard work of Andy Schwarz, is now available.

Our plan is to make the transition over the next fourteen days, with the old list remaining the official communication vehicle until Sunday April 14th. From April 14th - 17th we will turn off the posting capability on the old list but continue to post there a digest from the new list. On April 18th, if all goes according to plan, the old list will be discontinued - though we hope to be able to maintain the historical archive there for sometime to come. Between now and April 14th you may begin to use the new list, in conformance with the rules of use. However, we request that you not post messages there that are redundant with those you will publish on the old list while it remains the official list.

While we will continue to moderate the "old" list through April 14th, the new list will NOT be moderated. Rather individual subscribers will have previously agreed to the terms of list usage. In other words, you will have to sign up again for the ISWorld list. Individuals not adhering to the terms they have previously agreed to can be removed from the list.

The specific details regarding the new posting rules will be distributed by John Mooney, the chair of the ISWorld list task force, in a subsequent message. A third message, this time from Andy Schwarz, will explain the process we will go through in making this transition as painless as possible. Andy's message will also explain the steps required to switch over to the new list.

On April 14th the official role of ISWorld list manager will pass from Gabe Piccoli of Cornell University to Andy Schwarz of the University of Houston. Previous list managers have included Rick Watson (University of Georgia) and John Mooney (University College Dublin). Speaking for the officers of the Association for Information Systems and, I hope, many of our subscribers, I offer our gratitude to Gabe for the outstanding job he has done as list manager as well as our thanks to Andy for agreeing to take on this important responsibility. Our thanks also to John Mooney for assisting me over the past six months with monitoring the list as well as for, with the help of Andy Deegan and John's other former colleagues at University College Dublin, hosting the ISWorld list for so many years. I also offer, in the name of the AIS Council, thanks to the task force that worked closely with John in pulling together the plan for this somewhat revised service.

And, finally, thanks also for the patience of the vast majority of our 3,000+ subscribers these past six months.

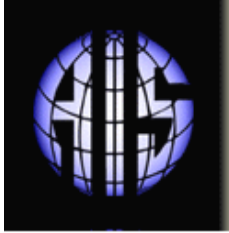
Cordially,

Blake Ives
President, Association for Information Systems

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Blake Ives is Past President and a Fellow of the Association for Information Systems and Director of the University of Houston's Information Systems Research Center. He is a past Editor-in-Chief of the *Management Information Systems Quarterly* and twice served as Conference Chair for the International Conference on Information Systems. Blake is also a founder of ISWorld. A frequent contributor to *CAIS*, Blake also published in *MIS Quarterly*, *Information Systems Research*, *Sloan Management Review*, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *Decision Sciences*, *Management Science*, *Communications of the ACM*, *Decision Sciences*, *IBM Systems Journal*, and variety of other journals. He has been a visiting Fellow at both Oxford and Harvard. He currently holds the Charles T. Bauer Chair of Business Leadership at the C.T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston.

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