From Vision to Reality:
The Emerging Information Professional

Sandra Hirsh
San Jose State University
School of Library & Information
Science
San Jose, CA 95192
sandy.hirsh@sjsu.edu

Marcia Bates
UCLA
Department of Information
Studies
Los Angeles, CA 90095
mjbates@ucla.edu

Prudence Dalrymple
Drexel University
iSchool
Philadelphia, PA19104
pdalrymple@drexel.edu

ABSTRACT
What will it mean to be an information professional in coming decades? How can we shape the public perception of our slice of the economy? How will job opportunities change? This panel session shares the insights from two recent conferences that brought together thought leaders from around the country to envision the future of information professionals. Panelists who are on the front lines of recruitment and who hire information professionals in different environments -- biomedical, industry, and government – will then share their perspectives about information professionals. Following initial presentations, the attendees will be encouraged to pose questions to the panelists in an interactive discussion.

Keywords
Information professionals, employment, information professions

INTRODUCTION
Increasingly, it is evident that there are many information professions, not just one or two, including library and information science, knowledge management, archival science, information systems, data science, informatics (medical, legal, educational, etc.), records management, and museum studies, among others (Bates 2010, 2012). What will it mean to be an information professional in coming decades? How can we shape the public perception of our slice of the economy? How will job opportunities change? This session, organized by the ASIS&T Information Professionals Task Force, addresses the charge by ASIS&T President Diane Sonnenwald to tackle advocacy for information professionals (Sonnenwald, 2012).

PANEL OVERVIEW
This panel session will begin with an introduction from Dr. Sandra Hirsh, Chair of the Information Professionals Task Force, who will also be moderating the session. The session will continue with insights shared from two recent conferences that brought together thought leaders from around the country to envision the future of information professionals – the Information Professional 2050 Conference held at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in June 2012 (organized by Dr. Gary Marchionini) and the Futures Panel held at Simmons College in January 2012 (organized by Dr. Michele Cloonan). Dr. Marchionini and Dr. Cloonan will set the stage for the panel discussion by each summarizing and sharing key takeaways from their respective conferences.

Following these brief presentations, three speakers who are on the front lines of recruitment and who hire information professionals in different environments -- biomedical, industry, and government -- will share their perspectives about information professionals. Some of the topics they will be asked to address include: What is the nature of the work that information professionals do in their workplace environment? What can information professionals do to better represent their knowledge and skills to others? What are the expected needs for information professionals in their sector? What is missing from information professional skill sets/knowledge base? What aspects of information professionals do they most value? The attendees and other speakers will pose questions to the panelists in an interactive discussion.

By bringing in Dr. Marchionini and Dr. Cloonan to set the stage about information professionals and then by holding a facilitated, interactive panel discussion among employers of information professionals, attendees will gain a broad view of the information professions and how to move toward realizing this vision.

Speakers
Dr. Michele Cloonan, Dean and Professor, Simmons College, Graduate School of Library & Information Science

Dr. Gary Marchionini, Dean and Cary C. Boshamer Professor, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, School of Information and Library Science

Allen Tien, President, MDLogix

Nathan Andrews, Partner, Deloitte

Additional Speaker, To be determined

Moderator
Dr. Sandra Hirsh, Professsor and Director, San Jose State University, School of Library and Information Science

REFERENCES
Bates, M.J. (2012). The Information Professions: Knowledge, Memory, Heritage. Association for Library and Science Education conference, Dallas, TX. Retrieved July 15, 2012 from http://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/bates/articles/pdf/InfoProfessions.pdf.

Bates, M.J. (2010). An Operational Definition of the Information Disciplines. iConference, University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science. Retrieved July 15, 2012 from http://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/bates/articles/pdf/Contribution512-1.pdf.

Information Professional 2050 Conference (2012). Retrieved July 15, 2012 from http://sils.unc.edu/events/2012/ip2050.

Sonnenwald, D. (2012). President's Page, Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology. Retrieved July 15, 2012 from http://www.asis.org/Bulletin/Jun12/JunJul12_PresidentsPage.html.