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Information Outlook, October 2003

Special Libraries Association

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vol. 7, no. 10
October 2003

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Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21st Century

From Data to Outcomes: Assessment Activities at the NIST Research Library

Virtual Reference: A Telecommuting Opportunity?



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The Special Committee on Competencies for Special Librarians, comprised of Eileen Abels, Rebecca Jones, John Latham, Dee Magnoni, and Joanne Gard Marshall, outline a set of competency tools in this revised edition of the 1997 Competencies for Special Librarians of the 21st Century, to help information professionals create road maps to professional growth and development.



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SLA's Place in the World

I recently, had the unique opportunity to attend the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Annual Conference in Berlin, Germany. The conference theme, 'Access Point Library: Media - Information - Culture' and logo, which is based on Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, symbolizes the role of libraries of all kinds as gateways to information, knowledge and culture.

As a first-time attendee, I was impressed with the atmosphere, which was most conducive to learning and knowledge sharing. IFLA provided an enriched forum for information professionals who are divided by geographical boundaries but united by core issues, professional development and networking opportunities.

There were 4,500 registered attendees from 133 countries, representing diverse backgrounds and cultures. Access to information and freedom of expression were sub-themes throughout the conference. These topics prompted spirited debates on the impact of global anti-terrorism legislation and raised concerns over threats to the free flow of information because of international security issues (e.g. the U.S. Patriot Act and similar legislation emerging around the world).

Throughout the week, the conference generated exposure and raised SLA's profile immensely. Our visibility was spearheaded by many SLA members who made presentations, moderated panels and networked with their colleagues. We also benefited from a great reception at our exhibit booth and the positive participation in our session "Meet the Executive Director and President," with Cindy Hill and myself. Our value and importance to information professionals around the world was evident, as people inquired about joining the Association.

The topics covered during IFLA confirmed that SLA is on the right track in planning and developing new ways to engage infor-

mation professionals from diverse cultures and backgrounds. And the activity at our booth, demonstrated a great potential for global membership growth and networking opportunities. It is clear that developing and delivering our programs and services in ways responsive to the needs of all information professionals, no matter where they call home, will strengthen our Association and make our members more effective professionals. In the coming months, we will continue to improve our efforts by working with the Strategic Planning Committee to ensure that the Association appeals to our international colleagues. We will also enhance our brand identity to fulfill our goal of being the leading organization representing the interest of information professionals worldwide.

I am confident these efforts will, in turn, provide valuable learning and networking opportunities for SLA's current members who work in a profession where information speeds across vast oceans, overcomes the highest mountain ranges, and refuses to recognize national borders.

Janice R. Lachance
SLA Executive Director

Janice R. Lachance



making news

sla news

SLA Introduces New Career Development Series for Information Professionals

Special Libraries Association (SLA) is pleased to present a new series of virtual seminars. The career development series is geared toward career growth for all professionals in the library field or information industry. The seminars focus on building and enhancing personal competencies, job-hunting techniques, and balancing work and life.

SLA Executive Director Janice R. Lachance remarked, "So much of our professional time is spent on assisting the needs of others that we often neglect our own career development. The career development series offers a great balance for the personal needs of information professionals and demonstrates our commitment to the growth of the information industry worldwide."

The first seminar, "Job Hunting Online" with speaker Rachel Singer Gordon, is scheduled for October 8, 2003. "Competencies for Info Pros: The Critical Balance," with speakers SLA President Cindy Hill and Rebecca Jones, is scheduled for December 17, 2003. For more information, please visit the Career Development Series website (<http://www.sla.org/content/learn/careerdevelopment.cfm>) on Virtual SLA at www.sla.org; or call Shelva Suggs at 202-939-3672; e-mail: shelva@sla.org.

Awards Program Recognizes Outstanding Federal Libraries, Librarians, and Library Technicians

To honor the many innovative ways in which federal libraries,

librarians, and library technicians fulfill the information demands of government, business, research, and scholarly communities and the American public, the Federal Library and Information Center Committee (FLICC) announces its sixth annual series of national awards for federal librarianship for fiscal year 2003.

FLICC fosters excellence in federal library and information services through interagency cooperation and provides guidance for the Federal Library and Information Network (FEDLINK). Created in 1965 and headquartered at the Library of Congress, FLICC also makes recommendations on library and information policies, programs, and procedures to federal agencies and others.

The 2003 award winners will be honored at the annual FLICC Forum on Federal Information Policies in Washington, D.C., in March 2004. A plaque engraved with all winners' names will be on permanent display in the FLICC offices at the Library of Congress.

Nominations are being accepted for the following awards:

Federal Library/Information Center of the Year. This award commends a library or information center for outstanding, innovative, and sustained achievements during fiscal year 2003 in fulfilling its organization's mission, fostering innovation in services, and meeting the needs of users. Awards are given to both small (staff of 10 or fewer federal and/or contract employees) and larger library/information centers (staff of 11 or more federal and/or contract employees). All nominations must be made on behalf of an entire library or information center

(e.g., main or branch library or information center). Winners in 2002 were the Homer E. Newell Library, NASA, Goddard Space Flight Center (large); and the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital Library, Tampa (small).

Federal Librarian of the Year. This award honors a federal librarian who demonstrates active and innovative leadership and professionalism in the promotion and development of library and information services during fiscal year 2003. The nominee must be a federal employee and a practicing librarian in a federal library or information center. The 2002 winner was Ann Parham, Army librarian.

Federal Library Technician of the Year. This award recognizes a federal library technician for exceptional technical competency and flexibility under changing work conditions during fiscal year 2003. The nominee must be a federal employee and a practicing paraprofessional or library technician in a federal library or information center. The 2002 winner was Reginald A. Stewart, library technician, U.S. Army Library, Giessen, Germany.

To obtain nomination materials, visit the Awards Working Group section of the FLICC website (www.loc.gov/flicc/awards.html), call 202-707-4800, or send e-mail to fliccfpe@loc.gov. Completed nominations must be postmarked no later than November 14, 2003.

NCCUSL Announces Decision About UCITA

At the annual meeting of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (NCCUSL) in Washington, D.C., this August, the president of the conference, K. King Burnett,

issued a letter to all commissioners. The letter announced the NCCUSL Executive Board decision to discharge the Uniform Computer Information Transactions Act (UCITA) Standby Drafting Committee and to stop promoting the act. NCCUSL issued a press release on August 2 to announce these decisions. This change in NCCUSL strategy falls short of an official "downgrading" of the act to a model law. (<http://www.nccusl.org/nccusl/DesktopModule.s/NewsDisplay.aspx?ItemID=56>). Despite this decision, UCITA could still be pursued in any legislature. In fact, President Burnett noted in his letter that NCCUSL is "not abandoning interest in the subject matter." He continues, "UCITA will remain in place as a resource for the American legal and political community and for reference by the courts."

Miriam Nisbet, AFFECT president; Dave McMahon; Lynn Johnson; and Riva Kinstlick attended the NCCUSL meeting as observers.

President Burnett praised the efforts of the UCITA drafting committee and at no point acknowledged any of the substantive problems of the act. No mention was made of "bomb-shelter" bills.

He also said, "Unfortunately in the real world, sometimes doing the right thing at the right time is not enough. The reality of groundbreaking legislation is that it is often either ahead of its time or comes with great political upheaval, or both. Clearly we are experiencing directed intense and incessant politics and strong opposition, without the suggestion of concrete alternatives, from some consumer groups, insurance companies and libraries, and the allies they have accumulated."

AFFECT Comments on UCITA

Although the NCCUSL decision is a remarkable one and certainly the direct result of Americans for Fair Electronic Commerce Transactions' (AFFECT's) successful efforts, it does not affect the Virginia and Maryland enactments, which remain on the books. The rationale for bomb-shelter bills remains. Furthermore, other proponents of UCITA are not bound by this decision and could still promote the act.

AFFECT has reached a critical juncture. Although we are pleased with this turn of events, our work is not done. AFFECT just learned that at the September 17, 2002, meeting of the NCCUSL Executive Board, UCITA was taken off the "target list" of acts for active promotion by commissioners. Despite this decision, two introductions were made in 2003, and following the ABA defeat, the president of NCCUSL publicly

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stated that UCITA would still be promoted in 2003 legislative sessions.

AFFECT has taken an interest in the impact of the proposed changes to Article 1 and Article 2 of the UCC because of their relevance to UCITA and remains committed to supporting interest in more bomb-shelter legislation. The board has just begun to consider the ramifications of the NCCUSL decisions.

In response to Burnett's contention that UCITA failed even though it was the "right thing at the right time," Miriam Nisbet, President of AFFECT, commented, "UCITA's failure to take the state legislatures by storm was more than a matter of timing—it was the wrong act as well as the wrong time. We are quite pleased that the conference has decided to expend no further energy on UCITA."

"It is heartening to see NCCUSL backing away from a very flawed statute, but it will never be able to write sound law for the information economy until it takes to heart the criticisms of the user sector," said Professor Jean Braucher of the University of Arizona College of Law. "The debate is not just 'politics.' There are fundamental policy problems with UCITA."

AFFECT is a coalition of over 60 retail and manufacturing concerns, financial institutions, nonprofits, consumer advocates, technology professionals, and

libraries that has successfully opposed UCITA in the more than 20 states that have considered the act since it was enacted in Virginia and Maryland in 2000.

Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology Receives Telecommunications Collection

The Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology recently received a unique collection on telecommunications standards from Ken Krechmer and Elaine Baskin of Palo Alto, California. The collection includes a complete file of Communications Standards Review (CSR) from 1990 to 2002, in both print and electronic formats, plus a file of related standards committee documents. "We chose the Linda Hall Library as the archival repository for this collection based on the strength of its extensive holdings in related areas of electronics and the history of technology," states Krechmer.

The collection has two components: One is CSR, a journal that reports abstracts and references all the documents submitted to standards committees as part of their work. The second component is the accompanying file of the full committee documents referenced by the journal. The committee documents provide detailed technical information on tests and discussions that influenced choices among alternative approaches in the course of bringing various standards to the marketplace. Together, these records document the process of developing telecommunications standards for network access technology for wireless (1900-1996) and wireline (1990-2002) technologies. All issues of CSR are accessible at no charge via the library's online catalog, LEONARDO, at <http://leonardo.lindahall.org>.

The 2nd Annual International Federation of Library Agencies

3M International Marketing Award 2003

To recognize libraries that develop and implement effective marketing programs, the Management and Marketing Section of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and 3M Library Systems joined last year to create the IFLA/3M International Marketing Award. Prizes were presented this past August at IFLA's Annual Conference in Berlin, Germany.

Criteria and Applications

Altogether there were 15 applicants representing seven countries: Spain, the USA, the United Kingdom, India, Tanzania, Serbia and Thailand. Any library, agency, or association in the world that promotes library service was eligible to receive the award. For this award, applications were available in the five official IFLA languages (English, Spanish, French, Italian, German) starting at the beginning of 2003 on the Web sites of sponsors, IFLA and 3M.

Applicants were judged on creativity and innovation as demonstrated by solutions to marketing challenges,

effectiveness of marketing goals, and an ongoing commitment to marketing.

First Place:

"The Marketing Campaign: Literary Pathways." Concorci de Biblioteques de Barcelona (CBB) Spain

Submitted by: Mireia Sala, director.
Contact email: msalaf@mail.bcn.es

The public library system of Barcelona, Spain, is developing non-users into users through a program called "Literary Pathways." This is a program featuring actors or guides leading tour participants and reading selections of works, into neighborhoods in which famous authors lived, or were portrayed in their writings. The library requires the participants to register for a library card.

Second Place:

"CU e-Intellectual Property" Center of Academic Resources
Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

Submitted by:

Ms. Yupin Chanchaensin and Ms. Supaporn Chaithammapakorn.

Contact email:

yupin.c@car.chula.ac.th

The Center of Academic Resources within the university, offered a full-text in-house database of graduate theses which was well accepted, but little used. To better serve the academic community, the library added faculty research data, and created a well-developed marketing plan to increase use of the database by 10%. A second objective was to provide easier access to the database at anytime from anywhere.

Third Place:

"We Got News for You!" Newman College of Higher Education Library and Learning Resource Centre, Birmingham, UK

Submitted by:

Janice Bell and Maureen Carter

Contact email:

library@newman.ac.uk

Newman College Library designed a campaign to communicate changes in the library's staff, programs and services. The library staff identified primary target markets, as academic staff and students. The goal was to make the markets more knowledgeable about the 'new'

and larger library, and to increase use of a growing array of virtual services. The library created a newspaper "The Library Times," which is published and available on campus and available on the college's intranet. The winning features of this application were again the identification of customer groups, the precise and systematic communication to those groups through various and sundry media, and evaluation

based upon measurable objectives.

Next Year's Application

Applications will be available in September for the 2004 award at www.3m.com/us/library or through the IFLA website, <http://www.ifla.org/>. Applications are due by November 30, 2003. Award winners receive paid airfare and lodging to the IFLA conference in Buenos Aires in 2004, and US\$1,000 for marketing activities in their library.

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Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21st Century

Introduction

By Rebecca Jones, Special Committee on Competencies for Special Librarians

In 1991 the Special Libraries Association (SLA) started on a quest to define and refine our profession's competencies. A critical milestone was reached in 1996 with the publication of *Competencies for Special Librarians of the 21st Century*. With the demands on the profession continuing to change and increase, the competencies needed to reflect these changes and therefore revised competencies were adopted in June 2003 as *Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21st Century*.

Why is there such emphasis on the profession's competencies? Our competencies are the very essence of our profession; it is our unique competencies that make our profession indispensable to our communities, clients and constituencies. Put another way, what are we without our competencies? As G. Allport wrote in 1961,

"it would be wrong to say the need for competence is the single and sovereign motive of life. It does, however, come as close as any ... to summing up the whole biologic story of life. We survive through competencies and we become self-actualized through competency."

It is critical for a professional association to invest in the competency development of its membership. Although there is no easy way to measure the financial 'return' on this investment, the qualitative return is priceless. Competency development begins by identifying those competencies that make the profession unique and indispensable; the association can then further its ROI by facilitating the continued growth of these competencies among the membership. The revised competencies identify what makes our profession so increasingly more valuable, and the toolkit now being developed will ensure that all association members have the opportunity to develop their competencies and to continue to contribute to both the association and the profession.

The first edition of competencies was very well received by the SLA membership and a broader audience of librarians and information professionals worldwide. This revision is the next step and builds on that excep-

tional ground-breaking work. The original document will remain on the SLA website at www.sla.org/competencies1997, linked to this revised edition, to show the continuity, advancement and maturation of SLA's pursuit of competency definition and development for the profession. A PDF version of the revised competencies is available for easy reference at www.sla.org/competencies.

As Sylvia Piggott said in her introduction to the first edition, "The criteria for successful performance in the information profession are constantly being raised as a result of innovations in technology, communications, and learning." The quest initiated in 1991 will – and must – continue. These revisions are yet another milestone in the defining and refining of competencies required of a dynamic, progressive profession.

In fact, the next steps are already being taken. The Competencies Development Committee is developing a Competency Development Toolkit. The toolkit will include but not be limited to:

- a "Competency Management Matrix", available for members on the SLA website, that integrates the professional development opportunities with the competencies. The

Matrix will enable members to track their competency development and identify professional development opportunities for furthering this development

- a series of articles enhancing the professional and personal competencies through case studies and thought-leadership writings
- a mechanism for gathering examples, experiences and evidence from the profession to be widely shared and leveraged among the membership.

The Competencies Development Committee (Rebecca Jones, John Latham, Dee Magnoni) welcomes your input and ideas regarding the competencies and

the Competency Development Toolkit. We look forward to hearing from you at competencies@sla.org with any questions or suggestions for the matrix, articles, or ways to ensure our competencies enable us to continue the tradition of **Putting Knowledge to Work®**.

¹Allport, G. (1961). *Pattern and growth in personality*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston



Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21st Century

Revised Edition, June 2003

*Prepared for the SLA Board of Directors by the
Special Committee on Competencies for Special Librarians
Eileen Abels, Rebecca Jones, John Latham, Dee Magnoni, Joanne Gard Marshall*

What is an Information Professional?

An Information Professional ("IP") strategically uses information in his/her job to advance the mission of the organization. The IP accomplishes this through the development, deployment, and management of information resources and services. The IP harnesses technology as a critical tool to accomplish goals. IPs include, but are not limited to librarians, knowledge managers, chief information officers, web developers, information brokers, and consultants.

What are Information Organizations?

Information organizations are defined as those entities that deliver information-based solutions to a given market. Some commonly used names for these organizations include libraries, information centers, competitive intelligence units, intranet departments, knowledge resource centers, content management organizations, and others.

Background

The Special Libraries Association (SLA), an organization of dynamic and change-oriented IPs, has long been interested in the knowledge requirements of the field. The Association's members have explored and shared their vision of the competencies and skills required for specialized information management in many forums over the years. The first edition of the competencies document published in 1997 attempted to synthesize and build on earlier work in the light of ongoing social, technological and workplace change. This document has been widely used by IPs, as well as educators, employers, and current and prospective students. The 1997 edition may be found at: <http://www.sla.org/competencies1997/>.

In preparation for the 2003 revision, the committee discussed the latest trends and reviewed other competency documents in peer industries. SLA's revised research statement,

Putting OUR Knowledge to Work, with its emphasis on evidence-based practice, was also found to be highly relevant. Evidence-based practice involves consciously and consistently making professional-level decisions that are based on the strongest evidence from research and best practice about what would work best for our clients. The research statement is recommended as a companion document to the competencies. The SLA research statement may be found at <http://www.sla.org/researchstatement/>.

In the information and knowledge age, specialists in information management are essential – they provide the competitive edge for the knowledge-based organization by responding with a sense of urgency to critical information needs. Information, both internally and externally produced, is the lifeblood of the knowledge-based organization and essential for innovation and continuing learning. Information sharing is also essential for any organization that is attempting to understand and manage its intellectual capital, often in a global context. IPs play a unique role in gathering, organizing and coordinating access to the best available information sources for the organization as a whole. They are also leaders in devising and implementing standards for the ethical and appropriate use of information.

If IPs did not exist they would be reinvented as organizations struggle to gain control over ever-increasing amounts of information in multiple storage formats. The astounding growth of the Internet and the rise of electronic communications and storage media generally have transformed our work and personal lives. Information overload is a growing problem and IPs are needed more than ever to quality filter and provide needed information in an actionable form. In order to fulfil their purpose, IPs require two types of competencies:

Professional Competencies relate to the practitioner's knowledge of information resources, access, technology and management, and the ability to use this knowledge as a basis for providing the highest quality information services. There are four major competencies, each augmented with specific skills:

- A. Managing Information Organizations
- B. Managing Information Resources
- C. Managing Information Services
- D. Applying Information Tools and Technologies

Applied scenarios illustrate many of the myriad roles and responsibilities that IPs perform in organizations of all types.

Personal Competencies represent a set of attitudes, skills and values that enable practitioners to work effectively and contribute positively to their organizations, clients and profession. These competencies range from being

strong communicators, to demonstrating the value-add of their contributions, to remaining flexible and positive in an ever-changing environment.

Core Competencies anchor the professional and personal competencies. These two core competencies are absolutely essential for every information professional. As educated professionals, IPs understand the value of developing and sharing their knowledge; this is accomplished through association networks and by conducting and sharing research at conferences, in publications and in collaborative arrangements of all kinds. IPs also acknowledge and adhere to the ethics of the profession. The importance of these two cardinal core competencies cannot be emphasized enough; these are paramount to the value and viability of the profession.

The competencies outlined in this document are a set of tools for professional growth, recruitment, and assessment. Specific jobs will require specific sets of competencies at various skill levels. We encourage you to use these competencies to create roadmaps of growth and development for yourself, your colleagues and your organizations.

Core Competencies

- I. Information professionals contribute to the knowledge base of the profession by sharing best practices and experiences, and continue to learn about information products, services, and management practices throughout the life of his/her career.
- II. Information professionals commit to professional excellence and ethics, and to the values and principles of the profession.

Professional Competencies

A. Managing Information Organizations

Information professionals manage information organizations ranging in size from one employee to several hundred employees. These organizations may be in any environment from corporate, education, public, government, to non-profit. Information professionals excel at managing these organizations whose offerings are intangible, whose markets are constantly changing and in which both high-tech and high-touch are vitally important in achieving organizational success.

A.1 Aligns the information organization with, and is supportive of, the strategic directions of the parent organization or of key client groups through partnerships with key stakeholders and suppliers.

A.2 Assesses and communicates the value of the information organization, including information services, products and policies to senior management, key stakeholders and client groups.

A.3 Establishes effective management, operational and financial management processes and exercises sound business and financial judgments in making decisions that balance operational and strategic considerations.

A.4 Contributes effectively to senior management strategies and decisions regarding information applications, tools and technologies, and policies for the organization.

A.5 Builds and leads an effective information services team and champions the professional and personal development of people working within the information organization.

A.6 Markets information services and products, both formally and informally, through web and physical communication collateral, presentations, publications and conversations.

A.7 Gathers the best available evidence to support decisions about the development of new service and products, the modification of current services or the elimination of services to continually improve the array of information services offered.

A.8 Advises the organization on copyright and intellectual property issues and compliance.

Applied Scenarios

- Develops strategic and business plans that support the host organization's goals and that establish long-term stretch targets and near-term priorities for the information organization.
- Inspires a shared vision and creates a compelling mission for the organization that energizes people to work towards achieving its strategies and delighting its clients and key stakeholders.
- Conducts market research of the information behaviors and problems of current and potential client groups to identify concepts for new or enhanced information solutions for these groups. Transforms these concepts into specialized information products and services.
- Sets clear performance expectations linked to organizational strategies and priorities.
- Provides professional development opportunities for staff members.
- Calculates a return on investment for information services and products or develops other measurable contributions of the information organization.
- Clearly demonstrates the value-add of the information organization to clients and key stakeholders through communications with top management.

B. Managing Information Resources

Information professionals have expertise in total management

of information resources, including identifying, selecting, evaluating, securing and providing access to pertinent information resources. These resources may be in any media or format. Information professionals recognize the importance of people as a key information resource.

B.1 Manages the full life cycle of information from its creation or acquisition through its destruction. This includes organizing, categorizing, cataloguing, classifying, disseminating; creating and managing taxonomies, intranet and extranet content, thesauri etc.

B.2 Builds a dynamic collection of information resources based on a deep understanding of clients' information needs and their learning, work and/or business processes.

B.3 Demonstrates expert knowledge of the content and format of information resources, including the ability to critically evaluate, select and filter them.

B.4 Provides access to the best available externally published and internally created information resources and deploys content throughout the organization using a suite of information access tools.

B.5 Negotiates the purchase and licensing of needed information products and services.

B.6 Develops information policies for the organization regarding externally published and internally created information resources and advises on the implementation of these policies.

Applied Scenarios

- IPs are experts in identifying the best information resources, comparing free versus fee resources to determine if value-added features warrant the cost, examining features of resources available from multiple vendors, and providing access to those resources for the organization by negotiating cost-effective contracts with vendors.
- IPs select and secure information resources that are appropriate in terms of format, language, content, coverage and that provide special features that tailor the content and retrieval capabilities to specific needs of the user group;
- IPs may work together to provide group pricing or other cooperative arrangements both inside and outside the organization that provide the maximum value for the investment made.
- IPs integrate externally published and internally created information resources as well as knowledge resources to create new client-specific information collections and sources.
- IPs may use off-the-shelf information products recognizing that these products could require modifications to meet the needs of specific user groups; IPs then select or design and implement the required modifications.



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- IPs select, preserve and make accessible technical reports, standards, best practices guidelines and other internal documents for ongoing use.

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C. Managing Information Services

Information professionals manage the entire life cycle of information services, from the concept stage through the design, development, testing, marketing, packaging, delivery and divestment of these offerings. Information professionals may oversee this entire process or may concentrate on specific stages, but their expertise is unquestionable in providing offerings that enable clients to immediately integrate and apply information in their work or learning processes.

C.1 Develops and maintains a portfolio of cost-effective, client-valued information services that are aligned with the strategic directions of the organization and client groups.

C.2 Conducts market research of the information behaviors and problems of current and potential client groups to identify concepts for new or enhanced information solutions for these groups. Transforms these concepts into customized information products and services.

C.3 Researches, analyzes and synthesizes information into accurate answers or actionable information for clients, and ensures that clients have the tools or capabilities to immediately apply these.

C.4 Develops and applies appropriate metrics to continually measure the quality and value of information offerings, and to take appropriate action to ensure each offering's relevancy within the portfolio.

C.5 Employs evidence-based management to demonstrate the value of and continually improve information sources and services.

Applied Scenarios

- Seeks opportunities to work with clients on projects or within their environments or operations to fully understand

their processes, information behaviors and how information services can most effectively be utilized.

- Analyzes and synthesizes information into accurate answers or actionable information for clients, and ensures that clients have the tools or capabilities to immediately apply these.

- Customizes information services to better meet the specific needs and usage patterns of clients.

- Develops and delivers specific information packages or alerting services for clients such as competitive intelligence, business intelligence, industry monitors, topic or issue indicators.

- Develops, delivers and manages curricula educating clients in information literacy, Internet usage, and locating and interpreting information sources.

- Uses evidence-based management to present reasoned evidence of a service's value and an organization's abilities. Develops and applies measures of service/product usage, client satisfaction and the organizational or client impact of services and products. Regularly assesses clients' information wants and gaps using market research tools including questionnaires, surveys, interviews, focus groups and observation.

D. Applying Information Tools & Technologies

Information professionals harness the current and appropriate technology tools to deliver the best services, provide the most relevant and accessible resources, develop and deliver teaching tools to maximize clients' use of information, and capitalize on the library and information environment of the 21st century.

D.1 Assesses, selects and applies current and emerging information tools and creates information access and delivery solutions

D.2 Applies expertise in databases, indexing, metadata, and information analysis and synthesis to improve information retrieval and use in the organization

D.3 Protects the information privacy of clients and maintains awareness of, and responses to, new challenges to privacy

D.4 Maintains current awareness of emerging technologies that may not be currently relevant but may become relevant tools of future information resources, services or applications

Applied Scenarios

• IPs are active partners with technology vendors, providing feedback, suggesting improvements, and keeping the needs of the clients in the forefront.

• IPs maintain awareness of emerging technologies through reading professional and popular documents, participating in peer dialogs, and attending courses, workshops, and conferences. IPs are prepared to advise all levels of the organization on how technology trends will affect the organization and the clients.

• IPs lead technology initiatives in their organizations by forming partnerships, obtaining buy-in of upper management, overseeing the project management life-cycle, and communicating to all critical levels of the organization.

• IPs test, select and use new technology tools as they are developed.

• IPs maintain awareness of the latest policy and legislative initiatives that will impact privacy, accessibility, and openness of information use and transfer, and of technology deployment.

• IPs educate others in the use of information tools and technologies in a variety of ways, from training people in finding the information they want on the Internet or in proprietary databases to integrating information tools into their clients' workflow or curriculum.

Personal Competencies

Every information professional

- Seeks out challenges and capitalizes on new opportunities
- Sees the big picture
- Communicates effectively
- Presents ideas clearly; negotiates confidently and persuasively
- Creates partnerships and alliances
- Builds an environment of mutual respect and trust; respects and values diversity
- Employs a team approach; recognizes the balance of collaborating, leading and following
- Takes calculated risks; shows courage and tenacity when faced with opposition

- Plans, prioritises and focuses on what is critical
- Demonstrates personal career planning
- Thinks creatively and innovatively; seeks new or 'reinventing' opportunities
- Recognizes the value of professional networking and personal career planning
- Balances work, family and community obligations
- Remains flexible and positive in a time of continuing change
- Celebrates achievements for self and others

CONCLUSION

These are the competencies of Information Professionals for the 21st century. They have their roots in the past and reach far into the future. These competencies form the basis for growth in the information age. IPs recognize and embrace the expanding nature of the field and the challenges facing them.

Although the core of the profession remains the same, the methods and tools for information delivery and the scope of the enterprise continue to grow and change dramatically. While maintaining their client and content-centered approach, practitioners increasingly require advanced knowledge of information technology to realize their full potential. Continually emerging opportunities will propel the prepared professional into as yet unseen realms of advanced information retrieval, interpretation, synthesis, product development and virtual services on a global scale.

The Special Committee on Competencies hopes that this document will evolve and grow through continuing discussion of our expanding knowledge and practice base. We encourage SLA members to provide examples of their activities in relation to these competencies. Mutual support in the form of building a shared culture of evidence-based practice will be a key to

meeting the challenges ahead. The Committee recommends that members consult the association's research statement Putting OUR Knowledge to Work cited earlier for additional information on this concept.

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SLA Research Statement - June 2001

Putting OUR Knowledge to Work:
A New SLA Research Statement
June 2001

The Role of Research in Special Librarianship

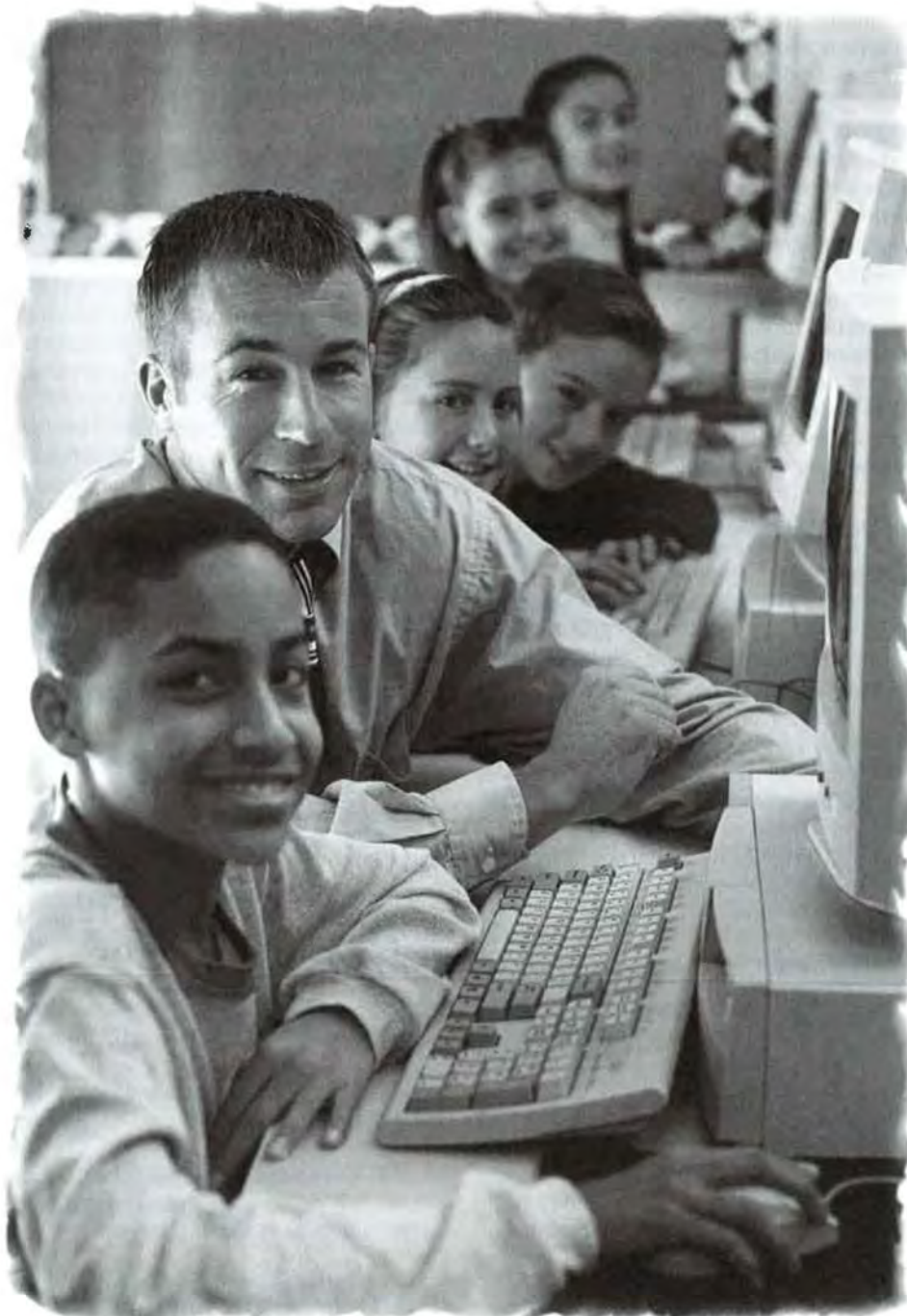
Like the word information, the word research can be used in many ways. To some people, research is simply a carefully conducted investigation of a subject or a situation. To others it is the discovery of previously unknown facts. To still others it implies a highly specific approach to designing and conducting research studies in keeping with externally determined guidelines or methods. Whatever the approach, the intent of research is to contribute to the shared knowledge base and to provide the grounds for a more informed decision making.

Since resources are finite, it is important to create, share and use research results in the most cost-effective way possible. In large part, the value of the profession depends on the extent to which practitioners are able to apply their knowledge base for the benefit of the organization and individuals being served. The challenges of measuring the cost/benefit of intangibles such as information services are considerable and represent one of the current research challenges facing the field of library and information science.

Special librarians are steeped in the research tradition. As university graduates at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, they have been taught to think broadly and critically about a broad range of social and research issues. More often than not, the information that special librarians collect, organize and make accessible to their clients is of a research nature. The very complexity and specialization of the information required in all realms of science, business, industry and public sector organizations today demands a high standard of specialized information service tailored for a particular environment and clientele.

As information professionals, it seems logical that we should recognize the need to create, share and use our own knowledge base in information and library science; however, this has not necessarily been the case in the past. Like other professional groups, librarians tend to be action-oriented, relying on our own experience and professional judgment to make decisions. Both the need to make decisions quickly and the lack of a clear connection between much library and information science research and the day-to-day problems faced by librarians make seeking and applying our own knowledge base a challenge. The increasing diversity of library and information science research also makes the development of a critical mass of applied action-oriented research problematic.

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The Current State of Our Knowledge Base

If we compare the information and library science field to others in the sciences, social sciences and humanities, we quickly realize that our own field is less developed from a research perspective. Although librarians in their work have always dealt with research materials in one form or another, the idea of developing our own research base is much more recent. There are fewer peer-reviewed journals and grant-supported research initiatives in information and library science than are found in older, more established academic disciplines. In recent years, library associations, including SLA, have sometimes replaced their peer-reviewed research journals with more popular magazine formats that will appeal to the widest possible audience. In the case of special librarians, there is currently no peer-reviewed journal that focuses exclusively on the field. Comprehensive bibliographic access to the knowledge base of information and library science also continues to be a challenge.

Although graduate schools of library and information science were decreasing in number in the eighties, there are now new programs springing up and enrollment in existing programs is increasing. The demand for information and library professionals is growing as the value of the knowledge and skills of librarians is recognized in diverse settings. Companion programs in the field of information science with an increased emphasis on technology and systems have been another factor in the growth of graduate and undergraduate programs. The faculty in graduate programs in library and information science and academic librarians who are reviewed for tenure in universities are major contributors to the peer-reviewed literature. Practicing professionals from a variety of special library environments have also contributed to the literature in the field.

Building a Culture of Evidence-Based Practice

Despite the limitations of the past, there is great potential for the growing field of library and information science to develop and sustain a vibrant research culture that will form the basis for evidence-based practice. The field has an opportunity to draw not only upon its own research base, but also to link to the relevant research findings in fields such as computer science, engineering, management, sociology and psychology. Achieving a culture of evidence-based practice will require the cooperation of practitioners, researchers and associations—all have key roles to play in this evolution.

What is evidence-based practice? For special librarians, evidence-based practice refers to consciously and consistently making professional-level decisions that are based on the strongest evidence of what would work best for our clients. The areas in which decisions are made in library and information practice are cited in our SLA competencies document: selection and acquisition of

information resources; methods of information access; selection and use of information technologies; and management of library and information services.

Why evidence-based practice? These are challenging times for professionals in all areas of practice. The consumer movement and the wide availability of information, including information that was formerly only accessible to professionals themselves, have led to a demand for increased professional competence and accountability. It is time for special librarians to recognize the potential value of formal and informal research in our field as the basis for evidence-based practice. In the long term, such a knowledge base and its effective application will set information and library professionals apart in an increasingly competitive world of information service providers.

The roles of information and library professionals are changing and expanding as the scope of practice of the profession broadens beyond physical collections and reference service towards remote access and systems development. In this new environment, it is more important than ever to build our knowledge base and to use evaluation research methods to constantly monitor and improve the quality of the services provided.

What Special Librarians Can Do

As professionals with the major responsibility for maintaining their own competencies and planning their own careers, special librarians are in a position to play the major role in building their own evidence-based practice in some of the following ways:

- Making a personal commitment to consciously and consistently making decisions on the basis of the best available evidence
- Discussing the concept of evidence-based practice with colleagues
- Continuing to assess professional and personal competencies and participate in continuing education activities
- Contributing to the evidence base of the profession by organizing or making presentations at conferences and other information sharing forums
- Maintaining the habit of regularly scanning the professional literature, including that in related fields such as business, psychology and technology
- Participating in shared data collection and research activities such as benchmarking both inside and outside the organization
- Participating in evaluation and quality improvement

efforts that involve data collection both inside and outside the organization.

- Collecting and sharing evidence of best practices in library and information services
- Sharing useful literature with other special librarians both inside and outside the organization
- Organizing a journal club or evidence-based practice discussion group
- Contributing to the peer-reviewed literature in the field

What Researchers Can Do

Researchers are often found in academic environments but all practicing special librarians have the potential to play a role in research at some point in their careers. Full-time researchers in particular can contribute to the notion of evidence-based practice by:

- Incorporating the notion of evidence-based practice in the research methods courses that they teach their students
- Evaluating how their own research can contribute to evidence-based practice in the profession and pointing out these applications in their communications with practitioners
- Encouraging fellow researchers to support the concept of evidence-based practice
- Sharing their knowledge of research methods both formally and informally with practitioners who are engaged in evidence based practice
- Taking an interest in initiatives that will build the broader evidence base of professional practice such as research collaboratories; improved bibliographic and other kinds of databases, including best practices; and new forms of dissemination of research publications
- Presenting papers and panels at professional association meetings
- Supporting and legitimating the notion of applied research both inside and outside the academic community

What SLA Can Do

- Viewing all of its products and services in the context of helping to build the evidence base of special librarianship
- Engaging the members of SLA as partners in creating, using and improving the evidence base of the profession
- Working with academic institutions and other associations to incorporate the notion of evidence-based

practice into professional education

- Participating in setting standards of practice and education for the profession that are evidence based
- Supporting the creation of new evidence through the Goldspiel research grant and other initiatives
- Celebrating the contributions of SLA members and others to the evidence base of special librarianship through awards and other forms of acknowledgement
- Serving as the collective voice of the profession in communicating the importance of evidence-based information practice to employers and others in society
- Adopting the notion of evidence-based practice as part of the management of the association.
- Considering the development of a high quality, peer-reviewed electronic journal for special librarianship

Putting Our Knowledge to Work - Together

Implementing evidenced based practice in special librarianship is something that can only be accomplished together. Individual special librarians must partner with researchers, academic institutions and their own professional associations to build the culture and content of evidence-based practice. SLA as an association can help by ensuring that examples of the best evidence-based practice are communicated, reinforced and rewarded. Everyone has a role to play.

The seeds of evidence-based practice already exist in the knowledge and skills of practitioners and researchers in the field; however, we have yet to reap the benefits of the sum of the parts. Much needs to be done to improve and strengthen the quality of research in the field and our ability to apply it in a meaningful way. We also need to see the knowledge and skills of practicing special librarians as resources for evidence-based practice and learn to how to translate this tacit knowledge into best practices scenarios that can be shared for the good of all.

New technologies, while facilitating communication, have led to a speeding up of activity that seems to leave little time for evidence gathering and reflection. Creating an environment in professional associations where an evidence-based practice is valued and encouraged will be a major factor in improving the quality of the contribution of special librarians to their organizations and to their profession in the long term.

[Proofread and edited for style, not content, by Sharyn Ladner, SLA Research Committee Chair, October 18, 2001]

copyright corner

Is There a New Right of Access?

By Laura Gasaway

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act gave copyright holders an important new tool to control access to their works. Referred to as the anticircumvention provision¹, this new right imposes a liability for creating and using devices that disable a technology that the copyright owner has applied to prevent access to a work. To date, the limited-access technologies are primarily (1) time-expiring content, (2) password-protected works, and (3) encrypted materials, such as DVDs. The anticircumvention provision has both civil and criminal penalties for manufacturing devices, including software, that can be used to circumvent technological access controls, for trafficking in such items, and for using such devices.²

A small exception to this statute is provided for libraries. If a library disables access controls for the sole purpose of determining whether to acquire access to a work, there is no penalty. However, the work may not be used for any other purpose, and the work may not be retained for longer than is necessary to make a good faith determination about whether to purchase the work or acquire legitimate access to it.

To librarians, the term "right of access" likely denotes the right of a citizen to access government information and other public domain materials. In the context of the digital environment, however, the term is used to describe the right of a copyright holder to control who may use a work—an almost opposite meaning.

In offering copyright owners the legal tools to attack anyone who circumvents a technological protection that controls access to a work, has

Congress added a right of access to the list of the six exclusive rights of the copyright holder? Many legal scholars believe that it has, even though this right to control access is not enumerated in the section 106 list of exclusive rights. If the right of access is a new exclusive right, does "fair use" apply to this right, as it does to the others?

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act indicates that fair use and other rights, remedies, and defenses provided in the Copyright Act are not affected. Thus, by the words of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, fair use continues to exist. But how can a user make fair use of a work to which technological controls have been applied if the user cannot first get access? To date, few cases have considered circumvention. One court that has done so stated that there is no fair use unless the access to the work is an authorized access.³ Thus, according to this court, no right of fair access exists, even though there is fair use. This makes fair use a nullity, because if a copyright holder applies a technological access control, he or she is also controlling the use of the work—which may be permitted under the fair use doctrine but for the fact that the user cannot obtain access. The impact of this is extraordinary, as fair use is a bedrock principle of American copyright law.

So what do libraries want? The primary mission of libraries is to serve the needs of their users. They want to ensure that users have the same rights to use digital documents as they currently have to use analog works. Patrons should have the right to read anonymously, to browse electronic documents, to place a hold on desired publications in use by someone else, and to check out (use) materials for a reasonable period of time. Additionally, they should have the right to make fair use copies of

excerpts or entire works. The culture of sharing copyrighted works, both through libraries and by users in their homes and offices, is embedded in the national culture. This applies whether the materials are analog or digital.

The best statement of this is found in the Association of Research Libraries document, *Fair Use in the Electronic Age: Serving the Public Interest*, which was adopted in the mid-1990s.⁴ It specifies what members of the public have a right to do without infringing copyrights:

(a) To read, listen to, or view publicly marketed copyright material privately, on site or remotely; (b) To browse through publicly marketed copyrighted material; (c) To experiment with variation of copyrighted materials for fair use purposes, while preserving the integrity of the original; (d) To make or have made for them a first generation copy for personal use of an article or other small part of a publicly marketed copyrighted work or a work in a library's collection for such purpose as study, scholarship, or research; and (e) To make transitory copies if ephemeral or incidental to a lawful use and if retained only temporarily.

The anticircumvention provision of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act is clearly contrary to these principles. If other courts ultimately recognize a right to limit access on the part of copyright holders, libraries will have serious concerns. Assume a library patron obtains access to a work through a library that has paid for the right to access the work. Then the patron disables or interferes with the technological controls that a publisher or other copyright owner used. Is the library liable? In other parts of the copyright law, the library is not charged with the infringing conduct of users if the library follows the law, posts the required warnings and notices, etc. It appears, however, that

the anticircumvention provision could be used to create a strict liability standard for libraries. Even the new TEACH (Technology, Education and Copyright Harmonization) Act contains a provision that says educational institutions that use a work for digital distance learning may not disable the technological protections that prevent its use for distance learning, even though the school has paid for access and acquired the work solely for the purpose of using it in an online course.

There are several other concerns, such as preservation. How can a library or other entity preserve a digital work that has technological protections if it cannot acquire access? What about public domain materials? Should publishers be able to lock up public domain works? If they do so, why should it be infringement to acquire access to such works? Is there any way someone can browse a digital document protected by access controls to determine whether to acquire access? Will those who can afford to pay for access or who have library privileges simply widen the digital divide?

Access controls may ultimately prove to be unacceptable to the public. There is some indication that encryption of motion pictures onto DVDs is unacceptable to a portion of the public; they disable the controls and copy the movies. The United States tried to prohibit certain previously legal acts with the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which made the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages illegal. The consumption of alcohol was not illegal, however. Prohibition proved totally unacceptable to the public, and the result was the development of speakeasies, the rise of organized crime, and, at least according to many accounts, more widely available alcoholic beverages and increased consumption than ever before. The answer was not more Prohibition, and the detested provision was repealed by the 21st Amendment.

Proponents of anticircumvention would do well to consider the lesson of Prohibition, and keep in mind that the 18th Amendment was not as sweeping as section 102.

Prohibition did not prohibit the use or consumption of alcohol, unlike the anticircumvention provision, which provides both civil and criminal penalties against an individual who uses a circumvention device to acquire access to a work.

Notes

1 7 U.S.C. § 1201 (2000).

2 Various aspects of anticircumvention were discussed in "Copyright Corner" in *Information Outlook* for June 1999, January 2001, and May 2003.

3 *Universal Studios, Inc. v. Reimerdes*, 111 F. Supp. 2d 294, 323 (S.D.N.Y. 2000).

4 Association of Research Libraries, <http://arl.cni.org/info/frn/copy/fairuse.html>. The following library associations also adopted this statement: the American Association of Law Libraries, American Library Association, Medical Library Association, and Special Libraries Association.

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From Data to Outcomes:

Assessment Activities at the NIST Research Library

By Barbara P Silcox and Paula Deutsch

Barbara P. Silcox (barbara.silcox@nist.gov) is the group leader of the Research Library and Information Group at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

Paula Deutsch (paula.deutsch@nist.gov) is a technical information specialist in the NIST Research Library.

• • • • Analyzing the Results

This is the third and final article in a series describing assessment activities at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Research Library. The first article described the development, administration, and interpretation of a customer survey. The second described those same elements of the library's benchmarking activities. This article addresses how the results of these two activities fit together to provide direction for the library's operational and strategic planning.

Background

NIST is a nonregulatory federal agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Its mission is "to develop and promote measurement, standards, and technology to enhance productivity, facilitate trade, and improve the quality of life." The NIST Research Library is one of three work units within the Information Services Division (ISD). The library has a staff of 17 and maintains a collection of about 300,000 volumes and 1,150 journal subscriptions. Its primary customers are the researchers in the NIST laboratory programs at the Gaithersburg, Maryland, location.

Beginning in fall 2001, the NIST Research Library undertook two fairly extensive assessment activities: a customer satisfaction survey and a benchmark study. (For more information on the customer survey, see *Information Outlook*, May 2003, and for more information on the benchmark study, see *Information Outlook*, July 2003.) While both these activities involved a large commitment of time and effort, they provided a wealth of learning opportunities. We gathered valuable data that were used for guiding our strategic planning efforts and for making operational improvements. The activities also provided a

tremendous growth experience for the staff and had an impact on library customer and stakeholder perceptions regarding library operations and the professional capabilities of the library staff.

The results of the customer survey and benchmark study revealed unmet needs, service and communications issues, and organizational strengths. Typically, libraries and other organizations take actions based on data collected through one assessment mechanism. The opportunity to view ourselves from multiple perspectives at one time enabled us to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of our approaches in collection development, marketing and communications, and service delivery.

Comparing the Data

As a first step in analyzing and interpreting the results from both assessment activities, we identified major themes (see boxes 1 and 2) and looked to see how the data fit together. We were expecting to see an alignment of data; however, this was not always the case.

NIST researchers' concerns with the depth of our collections aligned with what we learned from the benchmark study. Researchers reported that they place a high value on the journal collection, use it a great deal, and are generally satisfied with it. However, they felt there were holes in the collection and that some subject areas needed better coverage. From the benchmark study, we learned that we were providing one of the lowest ratios of journal subscriptions per customer among our benchmark partners. The benchmark study also showed that our total expenditure per customer was lower than any of the benchmark partners. Although a library may have little control over how much money is available for spending on each customer, the benchmark study did point out an area in which we could exert some control. It showed that we were paying more per journal than almost all of the benchmark partners. The data provided a mandate to look at our collection development and purchasing methods.

NIST researchers expressed some dissatisfaction with our book collection. In particular, they wanted to see more technical books and textbooks. When we compared our collection budget with those of our benchmark partners, we found that we were allocating the smallest percentage of our collections budget to books. Since all libraries in the benchmark study supported scientific/technical organizations, it would seem we would all have the same need to focus on the latest research, which is



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Organic Letters publishes its 100th issue, leads all Letters journals in impact

The leading Letters journal in impact in the field of Organic Chemistry in 2001, *Organic Letters* recently published its 100th issue (Volume 5, Issue 8) on May 1, 2003.

As a **SPARC** alternative journal, *Organic Letters* is committed to a "significantly lower price" than its competition. Its cost-per-page of \$ 55 in 2002 compares to a cost-per-page of \$ 99 for *Tetrahedron Letters* for the same year. For the cost-conscious, it is interesting to note that *Organic Letters* cost-per-page decreased by \$ 51 in 2002 from a \$ 56 cost-per-page in 2001 while *Tetrahedron Letters* cost-per-page increased by \$ 52 from a \$ 57 cost-per-page in 2001. Make sure you're getting the most for your organic dollar—access more [cost comparisons, stats, and details](http://pubs.acs.org/liblink) as ACS Publications celebrates Organic Chemistry in June.

Compare cost per page for selected medicinal chemistry journals—2001 data

Continuing our analysis of our cost per page study from *LiveWire* 4.1, we focus on the Chemistry, Medicinal category this month. The chart below uses 2001 page counts and pricing for institutional print subscriptions in the US. Citation and impact factor data are based on the 2001 ISI[®] Journal Citation Reports.

Journal	Cost	Pages	Cost/Page	Citations	Impact Factor
Journal of Medicinal Chemistry (ACS)	\$1,326	4,742	6.28	22,890	4.136
Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences (Wiley)	880	2,148	9.30	8,336	2.117
Inorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters (Elsevier)	\$2,054	3,182	6.45	6,543	1.747
Journal of Natural Products (ACS)	\$550	1,606	6.34	5,665	1.737
Chemical Research in Toxicology (ACS)	\$648	1,659	6.38	5,110	3.179
Inorganic & Medicinal Chemistry (Elsevier)	\$1,526	3,307	6.66	2,863	1.798

Meet Jeffrey Mullins, ACS Publications Help Desk Operations Manager

Here's another key advantage ACS Publications offers over other publishers: superior technical support from ACS Help Desk Operations. Leading the team of specialists at the Help Desk is Jeffrey Mullins, a longtime computer support veteran—and one-time



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what a journal collection provides. Still, the other libraries in the study were choosing a different balance between their book collection and other parts of their collections. The customer survey showed that we might have underestimated the value our researchers place on the book collection. This information directed us to consider shifting resources toward this part of the library's collection.

A service that we have clearly gotten right is interlibrary loan and document delivery. According to the customer survey, this is a highly valued service. The benchmark study showed that, in the time period studied, we had filled more interlibrary loan requests than almost all of our benchmark partners and had filled an above-average number of requests per customer. However, we had also spent more money on this service, both overall and per customer, than our benchmark partners. Therefore, we knew that any efforts and funds spent on making this service as efficient and cost-effective as possible would be a worthwhile investment.

From the benchmark study we learned that we employ a relatively wide variety of methods for communicating with our customers. In addition, we make a large effort to involve researchers in collection decisions. However, the customer survey still indicated that researchers lacked an awareness of many of our information resources. There also appeared to be misperceptions about our materials selection processes and how journal cancellation decisions are made. This disconnect told us that we needed to look more closely at how, what, and to whom we were communicating.

Turning Results into Actions

The fun started after we got over the initial shock from our customers' comments and the feeling that we had before us an insurmountable task of making improvements. Grouping the findings from both assessment activities into major themes provided a broader view than either activity gave by itself. Looking at the data together offered a systematic way to delineate specific actions we needed to take, which made the task of determining appropriate improvement activities seem less daunting.

Based on what we learned, six areas of focus were identified: (1) evaluating and improving the collection, (2) marketing

and communications, (3) building and enhancing relationships with customers and stakeholders, (4) improving interlibrary loan and document delivery, (5) tracking and making better use of customer data, and (6) reducing and controlling costs. Lead responsibilities for planning and implementing improvements have been assigned to selected individuals on the library staff, but related activities from each of the areas are incorporated into the annual performance plans of all staff members. Leads are responsible for developing implementation plans and coordinating implementation activities.

The six areas of focus were incorporated into the ISD strategic objectives during the fiscal year 2002 strategic planning process. Three of ISD's five strategic objectives specifically reflect the findings from the customer survey and the benchmark study. (See box 3.)

Evaluating and Improving the Collection

Survey comments indicated that NIST researchers have a strong desire to be more involved in selecting information resources for the collection. To meet this desire, the library undertook a core journal project and put new life into its book selection activities.

In order to create a list of core journals, NIST researchers were asked to identify which journals they viewed as essential in their fields. Out of 32 divisions invited to submit core journal lists, 28 elected to participate. This resulted in a list of 650 titles, reflecting the research needs of almost 90 percent of the NIST scientific/technical divisions that make up the library's primary customer base. An article describing the core journal project authored by the lead on this activity will appear in the November 2003 issue of *Information Outlook*.

For many years the library has solicited the help of subject specialists for evaluating books received through book approval plans. Subject specialists from each of the divisions at NIST (appointed to this role by their division chiefs) regularly evaluate and recommend technical books and textbooks for the library's collection based on their division-wide research priorities. This past year the library staff consulted with this group to



review and update the profile used to acquire technical books from the book approval plan vendor. In addition, the library met with the subject specialists to discuss ways of reengineering the book evaluation and selection process to allow subject specialists to participate in the book review process through the library's website. They can now view book information and submit their recommendations using the NIST Virtual Library (NVL).

We heard through the customer survey that the collection of technical books and conference proceedings was out of date or insufficient to nonexistent in key NIST research areas. Throughout fiscal years 2002 and 2003, collection development activities focused on enhancing critical areas of the collection. Using input from NIST researchers, we purchased 70 percent more technical books and conference proceedings in each of fiscal years 2002 and 2003 than we purchased in 2001.

Mechanisms were put into place to facilitate the tracking and analysis of collection development activities. We now track the number of titles purchased for each division, the amount of money spent per division, the number of titles recommended and purchased per each subject specialist, and the number of titles and amount of money spent by subject area (including NIST's strate-

gic focus areas). These data will be compared with circulation statistics to determine how well the book purchases match with actual collection use in order to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of our collection development activities.

Although the library did receive a small increase in its annual budget for collections in fiscal year 2002, deficiencies in the collection have been addressed primarily through the redirecting of other division funds and through consortial purchases. Sufficient funding to support the collection remains a critical problem.

Marketing and Communications

It was clear from the results of the assessment activities that one big issue the library had to address was marketing and communications. At the completion of each assessment activity, the library began a campaign to communicate to its customers and stakeholders what had been learned through the customer and benchmark surveys and what actions the library planned to take.

To provide a cohesive and systematic approach to our marketing activities, a member of the library staff created

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Box 1. Customer Survey—Summary of Findings

Major Themes:

- High use and satisfaction with journals, but a need for more electronic journals.
- A preference for electronic resources over print.
- Low satisfaction with technical books, textbooks, and conference proceedings.
- Specific subject areas within the collection in need of improvement to support new and ongoing areas of NIST research.
- Lack of awareness of many of the library's information resources.
- Misperceptions about how the library selects information resources and how past journal cancellations had been handled.
- Importance of interlibrary loan and document delivery for accessing information resources not owned by the NIST Research Library.
- Concern about the future of the library's collections.
- Strong service orientation of the library staff recognized by customers.

Box 2. Benchmark Study—Summary of Findings

Significant Findings:

- Of the libraries disclosing complete financial information, NIST spends the least per customer.
- NIST is spending far above the average percentage of its total allocation on materials, pulling from other areas of its budget to cover its collections costs.
- NIST purchased the fewest titles per customer.
- NIST paid more per journal title than all but one of the libraries.
- NIST placed a greater-than-average number of requests for borrowing.
- NIST paid fees for the fewest number of borrowed documents.
- NIST's average cost per document delivered was the highest of the five libraries that provided this information.
- NIST had the highest number of customers per library staff member.
- NIST employs a very wide variety of methods to communicate with and solicit feedback from its customers.

Box 3. ISD's 2002 Strategic Overview

Run the Business Objectives:

- Build ISD organizational capabilities that will allow staff to do their best work and increase knowledge sharing and teamwork.
- Provide better information about the products and services ISD provides.
- Provide better Document Delivery Service.

a marketing plan. The plan addresses listening to customers, general marketing guidelines, and specific marketing strategies and their financial implications. The plan is broad enough and includes a wealth of marketing and outreach suggestions to be used across multiple years.

All members of the library staff were given an opportunity to review and provide input to the plan. The plan was also discussed at a library staff meeting in spring 2003, at which library staff were asked to identify three marketing/communications activities that the library should devote its energies to for the remainder of the fiscal year. Specific marketing and communications activities are included in the annual performance plans of all library staff members.

An important part of our marketing program is our role in NIST's new employee orientation activities. A 15-minute presentation on library resources and services made by ISD staff is a regular part of the biweekly orientation sessions for new employees and guest researchers. Starting in June 2003, the library began a new employee tracking program that involves sending new employees a welcome package 1 month after their start date and follow-ups 6 and 12

months later. Follow-ups take several forms, depending upon the new employee's role in the organization and his or her research needs. The 6-month follow-up also includes a short questionnaire that asks if employees have used the library, what services were found useful, and which services they would have liked to have known about at the beginning of their employment at NIST. The feedback from these surveys will be used to guide our overall marketing activities and to refine presentations made to new employees.

Building and Enhancing Relationships

In fall 2002, in an effort to enhance two-way communication with NIST researchers, we established a Research Library Advisory Board (RLAB). The NIST director approved the charter for the RLAB, and the board is recognized and operates just like other NIST standing committees. The 20 members of the board (including primary and alternate members) represent each of the NIST laboratories and programs. The board also includes the head of the library, in a nonvoting capacity.

The RLAB meets once a month and functions as a mechanism for NIST labs and programs to communicate their needs to the library. RLAB members are expected to recommend

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directions for the library's collections and services consistent with current and future trends in NIST research. The RLAB also serves as a means for the library to keep the NIST community informed about ISD products and services. The board will produce its first annual report to the NIST director later this year. Information about the work of the RLAB, including the board's charter and the names of the current members, is maintained on the NVL.

In addition to establishing the RLAB, the library launched a Laboratory Liaison Program in fiscal year 2003. The Laboratory Liaison Program is an outgrowth of the core journal project. The overall goal of the program is to meet the needs of NIST researchers more effectively through a better understanding of their information requirements and service expectations. Each of the NIST labs has been assigned to a reference librarian, who serves as a single point of contact for questions, in-depth research, suggestions for the library's collection, and publication support. To learn more about each lab, the library's lab

liaisons are developing profiles for each division in their assigned labs. Profiles consist of division data from the 2001 customer survey, their core journal requirements, statistical data on their use of document delivery services and the collection, the division's research priorities, and information about their published papers. The knowledge gained about the division through the profile development exercise will enable the lab liaisons to anticipate more effectively the information needs and research support required by the labs.

Improving Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery

The results of the customer survey and the benchmark study provided the library with useful information to guide improvements in interlibrary loan (ILL) and document delivery services to NIST researchers. The library has undertaken a number of approaches to address some of the issues related to cost control, responsiveness to customers, and management of staff workload.

To quickly meet the information needs of

NIST researchers doing work in the biomedical and health care fields, the library implemented access to Loansome Doc and PubMed through the NVL in spring 2002. Through an agreement established with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the NIH library serves as the primary supplier of journal articles requested by NIST researchers through Loansome Doc.

In fall 2002, the library implemented an ILL management system to allow customers to submit their ILL and document delivery requests directly through the NVL and obtain information about their current and past requests at any time. The new system also allows the library staff to better track expenses and ILL/document delivery activity.

The library looked at the number and types of document delivery suppliers being used as well as its payment mechanisms. In fiscal year 2003, the library began using OCLC's ILL Fee Management (IFM) service. The library also set up deposit accounts with several key document delivery suppliers. Use of OCLC's IFM and deposit accounts has reduced the administrative burden on ILL staff for tracking and reconciling charges.

The library's ILL/document delivery costs have been rising significantly over the past three years. The introduction of these two ILL management systems has enhanced our ability to track and report on ILL activities. This is a first step toward identifying ways to stabilize or reduce these costs. To evaluate how these new service elements are affecting NIST researchers, the library plans to conduct a customer satisfaction survey focusing on these services in late fall 2003.

Tracking and Making Better Use of Customer Data

As a result of undertaking the customer survey and benchmark study, the gathering and analyzing of customer data have become an integral part of the library's operations. The collection and analysis of customer data are part of all library staff annual performance plans. Furthermore, we are implementing a variety of new mechanisms for listening to and learning from our customers and stakeholders. Through the Laboratory Liaison Program we are working toward a better understanding of each lab's research interests and information needs. We are using ILL/document delivery borrowing data in our budgeting and collection development decisions. We are also tracking and reporting on Information Desk customer inquiries, including complaints and their resolution.

Reducing and Controlling Costs

Sufficient funding to allow the library to effectively meet the information needs of the NIST community continues

to be a problem. The library did receive a small increase in its library collections budget in fiscal year 2002, but there have been no additional increases in funding to help deal with rising costs and customer expectations.

Without additional funds, the library continuously looks for areas in operational and collection expenses to save money that can be used to meet rising collection costs. As a member of several library consortia, the library has been able to take advantage of some discounted purchases. The library has also been able to access additional electronic resources at reduced rates through consortial purchase arrangements. Like many other libraries, the NIST Research Library is considering print plus electronic versus electronic-only options to incur savings that can be re-deployed elsewhere. Because respondents to the customer survey indicated a preference for electronic journals, a movement to electronic-only subscriptions may be received reasonably well.

Benefits of Assessment

When we embarked on these two projects, we expected to benefit from what we learned about our customers, services, and processes. However, there were also some unexpected benefits.

Both the customer survey and benchmark study resulted in tremendous professional growth for the library staff. We not only gained insights into our customers and operations, but new talents also emerged, and we learned more about our own professional abilities. A divisionwide Professional Development Plan was created to encourage library staff to continue their professional growth and share the knowledge gained through these experiences. The plan provides a framework and suggests opportunities for training, writing/publishing, and presenting at professional conferences.

As a result of these assessment activities, customer and stakeholder perceptions about the library have changed. The library has received considerable recognition from NIST management for conducting and reporting on the two activities, and NIST management now has a better understanding of how the library operates. In addition, because NIST is a research institution, demonstrating that we can conduct research in our own field has caused our customers to see us more as equals.

Looking Ahead

How will we know that we took the right actions? The library staff has always enjoyed a reputation for being customer-oriented. However, more sophisticated methods of listening and learning are now embedded in our operations and our way of thinking. Our evidence-based practices enable us to be more responsive to our customers and demonstrate concretely the value the library brings to the NIST community.

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By John Latham

New Partnership with Factiva

In a recent SLA.COMmunique we were delighted to announce the new Factiva sponsorship of the Knowledge Exchange (KEx). The partnership will enable SLA to develop the KEx's virtual resources and meet the goal of being a model for virtual information exchange. The KEx will have access to Factiva's online product, Putting Knowledge to Work by Inspiring Business Decisions. We are working on a number of new ideas for incorporating Factiva's tracking services within KEx's resources. We hope the incorporated tracking services will be available by the time you read this column. Already we have added two more information portals (IPs) on blogging and mentoring to KEx's resources at www.sla.org/infoportals.cfm. The new blogging IP will help us decide on the best way to create a new KEx blog, if appropriate.

We have asked student groups to assist in the development of the IPs as a major resource for all SLA members. We hope that by cooperating on this venture, this pool of nearly 1,500 student members will enjoy and gain experience by participating in the enhancement of SLA's information resources. If you have not been approached by your student group, please contact your faculty advisor for more information.

Steven I. Goldspiel Memorial Research Fund Grant

Detailed information about applying for the 2004 Goldspiel grant has been posted to Virtual SLA at www.sla.org/goldspielgrant, and I encourage you to take advantage of this great opportunity to have your research funded and gain recognition within SLA's global community. The purpose of the fund is to support projects that promote research on and advancement of library sciences, with particular focus on projects that address the goals identified in the

SLA Research Statement. You can find those goals at: www.sla.org/researchstatement and in this issue on page 18.

2003 SLA Salary Survey

The 2003 SLA salary survey is now available for purchase via SLA's online book store at: http://www.sla.org/sla/stores/1/category.asp?SID=1&Category_ID=4. This year the survey was carried out electronically using a Web-based survey instrument. A summary of the findings from the survey can be found at: www.sla.org/salarysurvey2003.

SLA's Global Community Part III

This is the last of the reports in KEx Corner on the progress of the Global 2000 Fellows. It is particularly exciting to see how they have become involved in the new SLA chapters outside the United States.

If you are interested in SLA's international activities and information, please visit the website of the International Information Exchange Caucus at www.sla.org/caucus/kiie/. The leadership of the caucus moved from a Canadian member to an Australian, clear evidence of how far SLA's international influence has traveled in the last few years. Many thanks to Marcelle Saint-Arnaud of Ottawa, Canada, for her excellent helmsmanship of the caucus, and congratulations and best wishes to Sue Henczel of Melbourne, Australia, the new caucus convenor.

Ozi Ijeoma Orji, corporate librarian, Shell Exploration and Production Company Nigeria, is an officer in SLA's Sub Saharan Africa Chapter and was twinned by the Hudson Valley Chapter. She also won an InfoShare annual membership to the American Society for Information Science & Technology (ASIST). Her paper, submitted to the ASIST International Paper Competition, was published in the December 2002 International Information and Library Review.

Guisella Ruiz has come out of retirement and is working at a private school library in Costa Rica. She reports that there is a big gap in the conditions between private and government-supported school libraries. She is working to promote more support for government school libraries, which lack the resources for adequate student development.

Jadranka Stanjanovski, of the Ruder Boskovieva Institute Library in Zagreb, Croatia, has worked on several national projects, including the library network system "Croatian scientific information system (SZI)-Sciences" (<http://prirodo.irb.hr>); the digital library of scientific and professional papers, "Croatian scientific bibliography CROSB" (<http://bib.irb.hr>); and "Who's Who in Science in Croatia?" (<http://tkojetko.irb.hr>). The Croatian scientific system project, which was started in 1995 with 10 libraries from the field of natural sciences, now totals more than 100 Croatian scientific libraries, including ones from the fields of biomedicine, engineering, social sciences, and humanities. As an executive board member of the Training Centre for Continuing Education of Librarians, Jadranka is involved in the continuous education of librarians and users and has taught different seminars on database retrieval, Web searching, evaluation of Web resources, and digital libraries.

Xiumei Wang, currently a student at the University of Texas at Austin and previously at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, expects to complete her master's in one year. She is looking for conference or academic opportunities in the United States, so please let me know if you have any ideas and I will pass them on. Before she goes back to China, she would love to visit or work in Washington, D.C., or New York City.

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By Jo Ann Calzonetti and Aimee deChambeau

Aimee deChambeau, Associate Professor, Science and Technology Library, University of Akron, daimee@uakron.edu

albeit informal, tradition of working from the home. Academicians' "home" work is not usually characterized as telework. Typical work that faculty, including library faculty, conduct from home includes grading papers; preparing lesson plans, lectures, and other types of instructional materials; reading; and writing related to teaching and scholarly research. A search of the library literature indicates that discussion of telework in the library setting began in the 1980s, with a substantial

increase in discussion and case studies throughout the 1990s. Advancing computer and Internet technologies now make it possible to engage in real-time librarian-patron reference transactions from any location, not just the library. The question is whether or not it is practical and effective to do so. This article reports on the use of telework in the delivery of virtual reference services.

The Problem

The Science and Technology (S&T) Library at the University of Akron is open 93.5 hours a week and has a staff of 4.5 library faculty. The S&T Library meets the reference, instruction, and collection development needs of the university's 3,810 full-time equivalent (FTE) science students and 306 FTE science faculty. Traditionally, the S&T reference desk was staffed 60 hours a week. During the past few years the S&T library faculty perceived a shift in the way students and faculty were using the library. The Internet and increasing access to electronic resources were enabling students to work with greater ease from remote locations. Because our students are primarily commuter students, reference inquiries were increasingly coming to us throughout the day via e-mail or telephone. Research questions asked in-person at the reference desk were declining. Moreover, the questions that were being asked at the reference desk related increasingly to photocopying, operating printers, logging onto the university network from the public workstations, and other types of equipment-related and directional questions that could be answered by staff and well-trained student assistants.

A VR Trial

In December 2001 the University of Akron Libraries (UAL) undertook a three-week trial of a virtual reference (VR) software product to explore the possibilities of providing virtual "chat" reference service to library users. The software allowed students to contact a reference librarian via a link on the libraries' home page. During the VR trial period, S&T library faculty began to consider replacing "live" reference desk staffing with virtual coverage during evening hours, when fewer reference questions were being asked at the reference desk. From the outset, this was viewed as a modest project requiring no new resources and with no expectation for cost savings.²

Six goals were identified for a pilot project:

1. Extend the availability of the professional staff over more hours during the week.
2. Increase the total number of reference transactions.
3. Replace the "just-in-case" reference desk scheduling model with a "just-in-time" model.
4. Increase the ability of the reference staff to work more effectively on other projects when reference services are not needed.
5. Begin to build a database for frequently asked questions (FAQs) and create a "canned responses" list for the campuswide virtual reference project.
6. Test librarians' ability to rely solely on electronic resources to satisfactorily complete reference transactions.

Environmental Factors

In addition to the UAL trial of VR software, a variety of factors made the use of VR as a substitute for staffing the S&T reference desk a viable option.

Science faculty (including library faculty) and students at the university are sophisticated and experienced in the use of computer technology. Most students and faculty have access to computers at home or work.

The university is a member of the OhioLINK consortium, which now has a critical mass of electronic resources available to its members. These resources include indexing and abstracting databases, journals, e-books, and full text reference resources such as dictionaries and encyclopedias in a wide variety of disciplines.

During 2001 the University of Akron launched its "wired for wireless" initiative. The entire campus was wired to permit wireless access to the university network from anywhere on campus. As part of this initiative, every faculty member was given a laptop computer with a suite of peripherals (CD-ROM and floppy disc drives, etc.). The laptops could be used for university-related work off and on campus. Faculty received liability insurance, instructions on safety, and appropriate use guidelines. Consequently, S&T library faculty had well-equipped computers available to use at work and at home.

Technical Considerations

The initial pilot project was based on the use of faster, more reliable connections. From home, a cable connection provides speeds and reliability comparable to those obtained on campus. In addition, a small router at home provides some security through natural address translation (NAT), whereby the home computers' addresses are not routable on the Internet, but the router address is. The router acts as a proxy agent and helps to prevent problems such as those associated with port scanning by providing a level of indirection.

University employees and students can establish a virtual private network (VPN) connection to the university's network. This is important for solving authentication issues associated with subscription databases and secure sites on campus, such as the library patron database. The VPN connection allows comprehensive access to online resources as if one were on campus, thus providing an online work environment that is essentially the same on and off campus.

A VR Pilot

For six weeks, one S&T library faculty member worked her evening shift from her office within the library. The reference desk was not physically staffed. Signs were posted at all of the public access computers announcing that a VR librarian was on duty. Student assistants working at the circulation desk were instructed to direct users with reference questions to contact the librarian either by using the VR link from the library home page or the phone. They were also



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instructed to contact the librarian in her office by phone or the VR software if they needed her assistance.

The purpose of this initial "in-house" phase of the project was to determine the feasibility of not having a library faculty member physically present at the reference desk, not having access to any of the printed resources normally available for reference work, and guiding student assistants in handling other types of questions through the VR interface or by phone.

The experience of the six-week trial was encouraging and supported the belief that it was feasible to provide reference service from a remote location. Beginning with the summer session, the librarian worked from home as a virtual reference librarian for two hours per evening, two evenings a week, after the library closed at 5 p.m. The service began Tuesday, May 14, and ended Wednesday, August 7. Initial results from the pilot project were presented at the 2002 Virtual Reference Desk Conference.³

An Ongoing VR Program

Response from student employees, library users, and the telecommuting librarian was positive. UAL joined the OhioLINK VR project and continues to participate in the consortium. New software was purchased as part of a consortium decision. At this time there are no additional costs for using the consortium software to staff the S&T dedicated service. These factors led to the decision to continue the VR project into the 2002-03 academic year, at which time a second librarian joined the project. During the fall and spring semesters, VR was provided during two of the evenings when the reference desk had previously been staffed. During summer 2003, VR was again offered two evenings a week after the S&T Library closed at 5 p.m. The S&T Library is the only UAL library providing VR in place of desk staffing.

Question Categories

The types of questions are changing as more patrons use the VR service and as links to the service are placed in more locations on the UAL website. Questions from the pilot phase of this project can be grouped into four main categories:

- Online resources
- Circulation and patron records
- General and research questions
- Requests handled through other services

With respect to the online resources questions, most patrons were either trying to locate a particular resource or were having trouble connecting to a subscription resource from off campus and required information about authentication procedures.

Circulation issues generally centered on forgotten personal identification numbers (PINs), learning about the patron barcode number, or inquiring about items on loan.

The general and research questions during the pilot project

were less in-depth than those we are currently receiving. During the pilot phase, the typical inquiry related to completing a citation or asking if we had a particular book in the library.

The final category included questions that were better served by other departments, such as Interlibrary Loan, and would have been referrals in a traditional reference environment.

Conclusions

Telecommuting is not an exceptional workplace practice.⁴ Universities and libraries have been experimenting with the idea in various ways.^{5, 6} Undertaking this project depended on a set of factors that may not exist in all academic library settings. Factors that make telecommuting possible in the provision of reference service in the S&T Library are

- A computer-literate clientele with increasing expectations for reference service from remote locations
- Availability of a critical mass of electronic resources through UAL and OhioLINK
- University of Akron laptop program, which provided every S&T Library faculty member with the computer hardware needed to work out of the home
- University of Akron VPN
- University of Akron Libraries' participation in the OhioLINK chat reference project

A number of administrative issues had to be resolved for the VR project to work. On the issue of who would pay the home Internet connection fees, S&T faculty already had computer connectivity from home and perceived that the positive aspects of working from home would readily offset the cost of using their own Internet connection for work during a small number of hours each week. Telecommuting hours had to be factored into faculty workload. Training student employees to make appropriate use of the telecommuting librarian is critical and requires ongoing efforts. Finally, monitoring the effectiveness and quality of our service is continuous. For the future we plan to look for measurable assessment indicators and to expand the program to include additional low-use hours. For the present, the program seems to have achieved some but not all of its six initial goals:

1. We did extend availability of reference staff, especially during the summer when our evening hours are reduced.
2. It is unclear if we increased the total number of reference transactions, as we had no baseline data. This is an area for further examination as we continue to explore assessment issues.
3. We replaced our "just-in-case" physical staffing of the reference desk; however, the telecommuting librarian is still operating in the "just-in-case" mode, but in a more flexible home environment.
4. The two telecommuting librarians believe that their time is being used more effectively because student assistants now handle all equipment and directional questions.
5. A shared list of canned responses is in development.
6. We learned that the reference questions we received could be answered accurately and completely relying

solely on the electronic resources available to us. The participating librarians found telecommuting from home during those evening hours to be an employment requisite. With a positive response from employees and library users alike and with no additional operational costs, the S&T Library will continue to provide reference service during nonpeak hours using a telecommuting science librarian.

Endnotes

1. Kistner, T. "Annual survey helps debunk telework myths." Network WorldFusion newsletter, October 29, 2001. Available at <http://www.nwfusion.com/net.worker/columnists/2001/1029kistner.html>.

2. Cost saving is frequently identified as a goal for the employment of teleworkers in the corporate sector.

3. Calzonetti, J. A., and Aimee deChambeau. "Telecommuting...a Pilot Project to Extend Virtual Reference." Charting the Course for Reference: Toward a Preferred Future—a presentation at the Virtual Reference Desk Conference 2002, November 11-12, Chicago, IL. Available at <http://www.vrd.org/conferences/VRD2002/proceedings/calzonetti.shtml>.

4. e-Work Guide: How to Make Teleworking Work for Your Organization. Washington, DC: International Telework Association and Council, 2000. This resource provides a good overview of the financial and management issues surrounding implementation of telework programs.

5. "Hiring librarians to work from home." Library Technology Reports: Expert Guides to Library Systems and Services 38 (4): 18-19 (August 2002). This article discusses a telecommuting program at Keystone Library.

6. The National Center for Transit Research, University of South Florida (<http://www.nctr.usf.edu/clearinghouse/univtelework.htm>) has links to the universities listed below, which have posted telework policies for their employees. (The year the policies were posted is indicated in parentheses.)

- University of California, Berkeley (1997)
- California State University San Marcos (2000)
- Edith Cowan University, Australia (1999)
- Penn State (1999)
- Stanford University Libraries and Academic Information Resources (Draft)
- University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center
- University of Virginia (1997)
- Virginia Tech (1999)
- University of Washington (2002)

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brand talk

The Brand Promise

By Chris Olson

Last month I noted ongoing Brand Team activities and shared pointers about evaluating a logo design. This month's column introduces the new Brand Team Notes Web page, updates the status of key branding activities, and considers a critical aspect of a brand—its promise.

What's the Brand Team Working on Now?

We are proud to announce the release of Brand Team Notes, a new Web page on the association's website where you can peruse the team's latest plans and activities. The page has links to a branding resource reading list and brand activity archives, including past Brand Talk articles. We invite you to visit the Brand Team Notes Web page at <http://www.sla.org/content/SLA/assocbrand/index.cfm> regularly for news about association branding activities.

Our activities are gathering momentum as we continue to work on myriad branding initiative tasks. The team is testing the logo, tagline, and brand messages with representatives of external stakeholder groups; logo usage guidelines are in the early stages of development; and the current press pages on the association website are being transformed into an electronic press room. We are inviting the PR chairs of all chapters and divisions to help us launch the brand across the association.

What's Next?

As pointed out in earlier Brand Talk columns, the association's branding initiative requires a vision, a long-term commitment, and a set of integrated marketing and communications activities. It is our intent that everyone benefit from brand activities—on personal, organizational, and professional levels. In monitoring our efforts, you are witnessing a comprehensive branding initiative unfold, with plans and activities you can adapt and scale to your own information service marketing requirements.

Brand Thoughts

A brand is far more than a logo or a name. It is the culmination of experiences people have with a brand. This means every encounter, every brand touch point, plays a role in defining a person's perceptions, memories, and associations of a brand. Fundamental to a brand is its promise: what the brand stands for and its unique value.

Virtual SLA

Brand Team Index

Welcome to Brand Team Notes!

Here you will find recent plans and activities being initiated by the Association's Brand Team.

The Brand Team was created in late May 2003 to achieve the marketing and communications objectives outlined in the Association's Strategic Plan. The results of the Association's name change vote in June did not deter plans to change the brand image and perceptions of the Association and the members it represents. It is the team's mission to bring new meaning to the brand name "Special Libraries Association," drawing attention to the contributions information professionals make to society and the myriad roles they play in the information economy.

The Brand Team is a blend of association staff members and external resources. Staff members include Janice Lachance, Executive Director, Lynn Smith, Deputy Executive Director, Anthony Blue, Director, Public Relations, Jeff Leach, Director, Marketing, Doug Newcomb, Director, Public Policy, Natasha Jones, Marketing Enthusiast and Nathan Yungkins, Desktop Publishing Specialist. Complementing the team is Valerie Cochran, an award-winning designer, and Carmen Miller, a member of the association and an information professional with strong communications and web development skills. The team is led by Chris Olson, a marketing consultant and long-time member of the association. Team activities and plans are coordinated with the association's Board of Directors and the Public Relations Committee.

The team meets bi-weekly to plan, review and discuss branding initiatives, opportunities and accomplishments. Updates on team activities are presented in Brand Talk, a regular column in *Information Outlook*, as well as being posted on the Brand Team Notes web pages. Questions regarding the Association's branding initiative may be sent to BrandTeam@sla.org.

The brand promise is the essence of a brand and drives the relationships a brand creates with its audiences—customers, employees, peers, and other stakeholders. Recognizing and articulating a brand's promise helps an organization stay true to itself, and in line with its core strengths and competencies.

How do you identify your brand promise? You start with the unique ideas and values your organization stands for. It's not a statement of what your information service does. That's a mission statement. No, a brand promise is more emotional and inspirational. It's a simple statement that is self-explanatory and clearly defines the organization's aspirations, in an emotional and credible way. It answers the questions: Who are we? How are we unique? Why does it matter? Another way of articulating a brand promise is to summarize in 50 words or less the emotional benefit, end benefit, organizational benefit, and core service your information service provides.

The better you can articulate your value-brand promise the easier it will be to identify the essence of your brand and present it consistently to all your stakeholders, both internal and external.

Contact Chris Olson at
BrandTalk@SLA.org

Who's Who

The Online Membership Directory:

Use it to Your Benefit



Since **Who's Who in Special Libraries Online** was launched in April 2002, member usage has steadily increased. The online directory hosts a number of benefits and features. The following article summarizes some of the features and provides tips on how to take best advantage of this great resource. Remember, this is a benefit of membership, and you will need your SLA personal identification number to access information.

Here are some of the features of the system:

- Within the individual member's online profile, you can view his or her chapter, division and caucus affiliation (and that person's leadership positions). Although only limited address information is given on the search results page, the full address information, telephone, fax and e-mail is provided in the profile.
- You can search for a member by leadership position and chapter, division, caucus or section (unit) membership. You can also find the leadership of a particular chapter, division, caucus, section or committee through the committee leadership field or search for a particular leadership position through the committee position

field. If you wish, you can narrow your search to do such queries as finding all of the members of a division within a certain area, such country, state or province, city and telephone prefix.

- The search results will display the most commonly used information: the name of the member, company, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address. SLA's organizational members are always displayed first with a "," in the name field. The primary contact, if provided, for the organizational member is listed in the "attention line" in the address field.

Once the search results appear, you can locate more detailed information about a member by clicking on

his or her name. The member's fax number, the date he/she joined SLA, chapter/division/caucus affiliations and leadership positions held throughout their membership are also displayed in the search results. If you want to send an e-mail, simply click on the member's e-mail address.

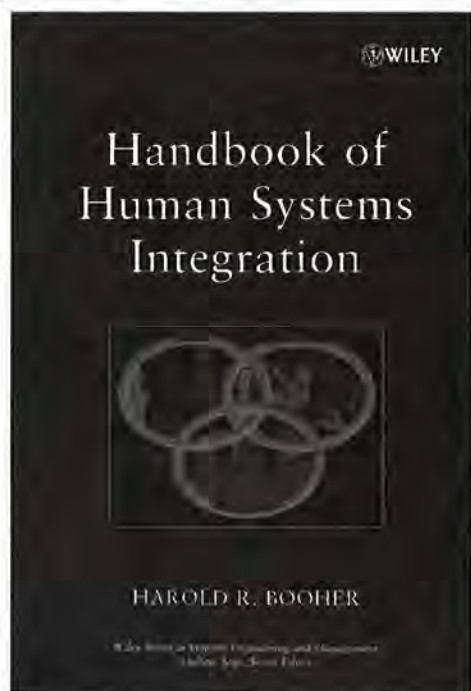
• There are four options for printing or exporting results. Whether you want to keep a print copy of your chapter, your division or any of the various search option results handy at your desk or whether you want to have it available on your PDA, there are options to meet your needs. The "printer-friendly" option is a simple word table; the "Export to PDF" opens into a printable PDF file (but make sure you select the "fit the page" option). You may also "export to Excel," but remember to add ".xls" to the file name or chose "export to comma delimited file." These

various options are available to use as a reference tool. Also remember, the information displayed is a member's directory address... not their preferred address.



For any relevant marketing purposes, SLA makes our membership mailing list available. This list, which includes a member's preferred mailing address, excludes those members who do not want to participate and produces a non-dues revenue stream to the association for the one-time lease. Those interested in marketing products and services should contact Candy Brecht at Marketing General by

telephone at (703) 706-0383 or visit virtual SLA at <http://www.sla.org/maillinglist> to place an order. Before accessing the Who's Who Online, the user must accept a licensing agreement explaining the appropriate use of the information.



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information trends

I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore . . . *a little fun with the Web-challenged.*

By Stephen Abram

In 1999, I sent out a request to a few SLA discussion lists asking members to share their best snappy responses to those colleagues who ask, "What are you going to do now that everything's on the Web for free?" They came up with a few good comebacks to those information-challenged executives who are still starry-eyed webnauts. You know the ones—they're ready to fall for the well-known Internet hoaxes and sign e-mail petitions and want to warn you about the latest virus. I have even found a few who think Nike is giving away shoes by e-mail! Amazingly, almost five years later, this shallow view still persists, so I thought it was time to revisit these replies.

Snappy Librarian Comebacks: What to say when the boss tells you that everything's free on the Internet!

Those of you who know Dilbert will recognize the InDUHvidual. Of course all snappy answers won't work in every situation, so use them with care and a sense of humor!

1. InDUHvidual: "What do we need a library for, now that everything's free on the Web?"

Snappy Librarian: "You get what you pay for!"

2. InDUHvidual: "With everything free on the Web, I guess your budget will go down, eh?"

Snappy Librarian: "I doubt it. Some estimates are that about 1/1,000th of 1 percent of all information is in electronic format—let alone on the free Web. I sure wouldn't bet the company on research done on that small of a sample."

3. InDUHvidual: "There's billions of pages of information on the Web. It's such an amazing tool! Surely that's plenty to meet our research needs."

Snappy Librarian: "How much of that points to Joe's 8-track tape collections or websites of suicide cults that tried to leave Earth on the Hale-Bopp comet? Just one of our database providers, Dialog, estimates that

there are more than 9,000 million pages of properly organized and trustworthy information in their service alone. I'll bet the company on quality content any day. We're looking for information that we can base important decisions on and shouldn't be wasting too much time sorting through heaps of Web compost. The Web is clearly an important tool, but it's not the whole toolbox."

4. InDUHvidual: "Let's get browser content to every desktop so everyone can access all that Web information, anywhere, anytime."

Snappy Librarian: "If we're talking about developing an intranet and choosing quality, organized information, then we need to talk! That strategy can deliver content and increase employee productivity. It's a great idea. One study estimated that the average employee spent at least three hours per week just looking for information and NOT finding it. If we move the huge volume of Web information of widely divergent quality to the desktop, I'd surely worry about negative productivity impacts. It's an exciting project, and we need to choose the quality mission-critical content and plan its introduction well."

6. InDUHvidual: "I'm an accountant, and we need to save money. I think we should put the Web on every desktop and stop funding library acquisitions."

Snappy Librarian: "I agree, and I'll recommend to the CEO that we also put calculators and spreadsheet software on every desktop and stop funding this huge



finance department. Clearly, if just putting the tools on the desktop can make people instantly know how to do research well, then I guess the same is true of calculators and spreadsheet software and the ability to meet the financial analysis needs of this company. My education and experience in information science is just as, if not more, valuable as your education in finance and accounting. We're an information-age company, and we'd better start getting critical information skills out to our employees or our competitors will eat our lunch."

7. InDUHvidual: "So with everything available on the Web, we will not only save money by cutting the budget for the library, but the company will save on the overall bottom line!"

Snappy Librarian: "Quite the opposite! The idea of saving money by using the Internet is a misconception. No-fee research via the Internet can be a massive time sink. Even professionally trained, expert information searchers can waste time unproductively on the Web if they're not careful! Several research studies show that the average employee can easily spend hundreds of dollars worth of company time Web-surfing to obtain information that would cost just a few bucks from an organized library or information service."

8. InDUHvidual: "When you said you were getting magazines and newspapers on the Web, I thought to myself 'Wow!' Now all those great articles are free."

Snappy Librarian: "No, not any more than magazines are free at the newsstand. And finding the right article can be like searching for a diamond—you mine lots of rock before you find one. A free gem or great article is rare indeed. Quality has a price tag attached, even though delivery may be via the Web. And then, we know our specialized research needs aren't generally based on the sorts of magazines and content scope that can be financed through advertising-based websites, anyway."

9. InDUHvidual: "Now that everyone has computers on their desks, they can search for their own information on the Web, and we won't need professional searchers anymore."

Snappy Librarian: "Sooooo... before I leave the company, let me compile a guide that tells people which database to search in and which kinds of questions to ask, and I'll include Web addresses too. Maybe I should do a course to try and transfer my many years of professional searching experience and education to everyone in a few hours. Of course, since the companies and the available databases and the Web addresses are constantly changing, the guide would need to be updated pretty regularly. Hmmm, looks like I'll still have a job after all."

10. InDUHvidual: "Now that we've set up an intranet that gives everyone desktop access to the information that's important to each of their jobs, what's left for you to do?"

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Snappy Librarian: "Well, not much really, once I finish setting up the customized alert services so that all users get exactly what they need to have delivered proactively every day. Of course, then I train them on how to use these services, and how to evaluate the sources of information so they'll know what's safe to rely on when making decisions that affect the company's bottom line. And once they're set up and know how to use all the info that's delivered they should be fine . . . until a computer malfunctions or a server goes down, a database changes owners, a URL moves, or a password expires, and then I might need to do some fixes. By then there will be some new services that I'll need to evaluate and introduce to them before I go."

11. InDUHvidual: "Now that everything's free on the Internet, why should we pay to buy information?"

Snappy Librarian: "Just because the Internet is 'free' doesn't mean that all the information that is available through an Internet connection is free. What makes you think that long-standing companies, like Dow Jones and Dialog, are suddenly giving away their information for free? What do you think they're paying their employees with—virtual money? Someone still compiles and organizes all those statistics; and since they still want to eat, those companies are sure as heck still charging us."

OR, perhaps a snappier comeback: "What makes you think that good, reliable information is free? Can you

imagine our company giving away our knowledge or products for free, and then not paying anyone? 'Sorry, folks, no more money for paychecks. We wanted to jump on the Internet bandwagon, so now we're giving everything away to our customers for free on the Web!'"

12. InDUHvidual: With the Web removing the need for librarians, what are you going to do with your career?"

Snappy Librarian: "There's another way to look at this. Scientists know a little bit about statistics but KNOW they need a statistician for advanced work. I'm sure that just because they know a little bit about finding information, they don't think they can find all of the best. I'm betting that the information age and the knowledge economy will need loads of librarians and information professionals. My profession is about the art, craft, talent, and skill of making information dance in ways that have an impact on our organization and society."

13. InDUHvidual: "Everything's free on the Web."

Snappy Librarian: "Yeah, but so is garbage. I'm not going to quit buying my food at the supermarket and just pick through the neighbor's compost heap. Every once in while you find something of value at the side of the road—but it's not a tenet to live or run our company by."

14. InDUHvidual: "Now you can borrow everything for free over the Web from all these great universities and research library collections like Harvard and CISTI!"

Snappy Librarian: "Yeah, reminds of the time when someone suggested we borrow all of our library books from other libraries through interlibrary loan! We can't depend on the kindness of strangers. Harvard's priorities are not ours, and we need to focus on our research and corporate priorities. I'd hate to tell the CEO that we have to wait for some sophomore to return the book he needs today."

15. InDUHvidual: "Everything's free on the Web!"

Snappy Librarian: "Really? Show me."

Of course, all of the snappy replies above are meant to be tongue-in-cheek. But, as usual, a small grain of truth underpins the sardonic. I suggest that delivering your line with a broad conspiratorial smile or sweetly innocent gaze without the least hint of sarcasm will go a long way to bring your InDUHviduals into the knowledge era.

When I first put out the call for stories, I expected to get a few. Within days my e-mail was loaded! I was genuinely surprised at the depths of humor, despair, and outright anger (there was the odd anecdote that was unprintable!) at what is seemingly a universal special librarian experience: some InDUHvidual misunderstanding our role, profession, and contributions. It can only serve to remind us that nothing substitutes for following the precepts of special librarianship underpinned by our core values:

- Strong relationships with our users—not just polite contact
- A messianic focus on service
- An understanding of our strategic purpose by our funders
- An endorsed strategic plan tied to the enterprise's goals and objectives
- A strong and exciting vision of where we're going and flexibility in getting there
- Recognized understanding of our organization and our industry or sector
- Excellence in both internal and external communication: marketing, sales, public relations, and management
- Recognized strengths in combining technology in a balanced way with content and service—bridging the technology-people gap
- Reinforcing our contributions for success to the executive team
- And maintaining a sense of humor—we'll always need it!

So, there is no need to be as mad as hell unless you need to get mad to find the energy to defend and move forward. The race is there for the tortoise to win, and always has been, as long as we stayed focused and follow the plan and our principles.

As a wise person once noted, the best revenge is living well...

P.S. One small note about my column in July's Information Outlook. A kindly reader has corrected my "history" sources and notes that "Josephus and his troops did not defend the fortress of Masada; he only documented what happened there based on accounts of the Romans and from what he was told by two women who hid themselves along with their children and were able to escape after the Jews of Masada committed suicide rather than fall into the hands of their enemy. After his lack of success in Yodfat (Jotopata) in the north of the Land of Israel, he hid in a cave with 40 of his men, and he and another were able to escape. This was about four years prior to Masada (73 CE) and before the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem (70 CE)." Thank you for the added information. Josephus was known as a wonderful storyteller, so, besides serving as a great lesson in content preservation, this has also helped to educate me in the arcane art of trusting primary and secondary sources. SA

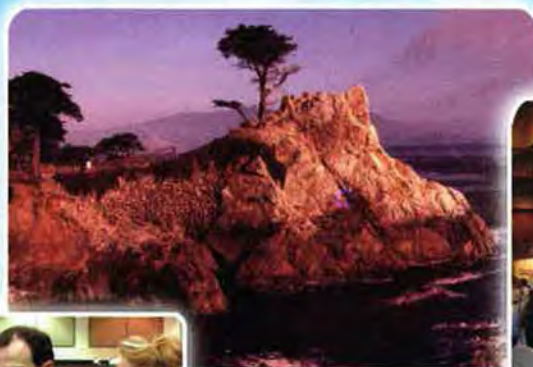
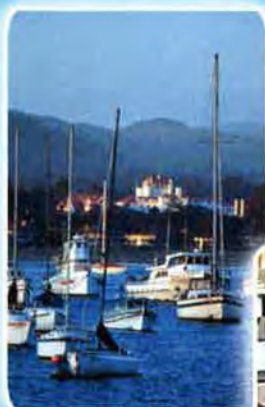
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Performance Documentation
and Preservation in an Online
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October 10
New York, NY
<http://tla.library.unt.edu/symposium.html>

**Ohio Educational Library Media
Association (OELMA)**
October 15-17
Columbus, OH
<http://www.oelma.org>

**American Society for
Information Science &
Technology (ASIST)**
October 20-23
Long Beach, CA
<http://www.asis.org>

**SLA 2003 Fall Board of Directors
Meeting**
October 23-25
Washington, DC
<http://www.sla.org/calendar>

**North Atlantic Health Sciences
Libraries, Inc. -- Lighting the
Future**
October 26-28
Sturbridge, MA
<http://www.nahsl.org/2003/index.htm>

**8th Interlending and Document
Supply International Conference
Breaking Barriers: Reaching
Users in a Digital World**
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Canberra, Australia
<http://www.nla.gov.au/ilds/registration.htm>

**SLA Virtual Seminar
Knowledge Management**
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November 2003

Internet Librarian
November 3-5
Monterey, CA
<http://www.infotoday.com/il2003/default.htm>

**Northeast Document
Conservation Center
Off the Wall and Online:
Providing Web Access to Cultural
Connections**
November 4-5
Las Vegas, NV
<http://www.nedcc.org/owolnv/owol1.htm>

**SLA Virtual Seminar
The Visible Librarian: A
Marketing and Advocacy Primer**
November 19
Learn from anywhere in the world!
<http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar>

December 2003

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December 2-4
London, UK
<http://www.online-information.co.uk/online/conference.asp>

**SLA Virtual Seminar
Business and Planning**
December 3
Learn from anywhere in the world!
<http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar>

January 2004

**Association for Library and
Information Science Education
(ALISE)**
January 6-9
Philadelphia, PA, USA
<http://www.alise.org/conferences/index.shtml>

ALA Midwinter
January 9-14
San Diego, CA, USA

**Digital Information Exchange:
Pathways to Build Global
Information Society**
January 21-23
New Delhi, India
<http://www.cenlib.iitm.ac.in/sis2004/index.html>

SLA Winter Meeting
January 22-24
Albuquerque, NM
<http://www.sla.org/calendar>

March 2004

SCIP
March 22-25
Boston, MA, USA
<http://www.scip.org/boston/index.asp>

May 2004

**Medical Library Association
(MLA)**
May 21-26
Washington, DC, USA
<http://www.mlanet.org/am/index.html>

June 2004

SLA Annual Conference
June 5-10
Nashville, TN
<http://www.sla.org/nashville2004>

July 2004

**American Association of Law
Libraries (AALL)**
July 10-14
Boston, MA, USA
<http://www.aallnet.org/events/>

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