



Trudi Bellardo Hahn
2003 ASIST President
User Education Services
University of Maryland Libraries
1103 McKeldin Library
College Park, MD 20742
301-405-9254
th90@umail.umd.edu

I would like to use this, my last president's column, to reflect on some of ASIST's accomplishments this past year (note that I did not say "my" accomplishments – nothing here reflects my sole efforts). I also would like to suggest some directions for ASIST in the near future.

The past year flew by, as I knew it would. Nevertheless, a lot happened. I will not recap all the meetings, SIG and chapter activities, publications and other accomplishments that are well documented elsewhere; instead I would like to highlight some developments that were not so visible, but nonetheless are important for the continued health and viability of ASIST. This is only a sample; my apologies to others who could not be squeezed in this space.

Survey of Members

A Web-based survey was announced to all ASIST members individually in May. Given that ASIST does not have valid e-mail addresses for some members, the response of nearly 900 was gratifying. The results are being scrutinized closely and reported elsewhere.

2003 Annual Meeting Changes

Responding to members' suggestions, the 2003 Annual Meeting will start on Sunday and end Wednesday evening. Most of the awards will be presented at a luncheon on Tuesday; only the "secret" awards will be announced at the president's reception Wednesday evening. The member survey results included other suggestions related to Annual Meetings, which the Board of Directors will consider for the future.

New Model for Summits

Summits are a recent innovation for ASIST (the most notable and successful example has been the Information Architecture summit, held four years running now). Thanks to the joint efforts of the New England Chapter and SIG/Scientific and Technical Information Systems, we will have a different sort of summit in November on the MIT campus on the topic of digital archives in science and technology. This model for chapter and special interest group collaboration on a summit may be a powerful one for others to emulate, perhaps even for in a summit to be held in Europe.

International Members

Julian Warner, the international liaison to the Board of Directors, led a working group that submitted a thoughtful white

paper of many issues related to international members. The analysis covered the value of international connectedness to both the international members themselves and to ASIST, new options to increase the number of international members, procedures to attract such members and strategies for moving these issues forward. The Board is giving these topics serious attention.

Mission and Goals for CE

Recognizing information professionals' needs for ongoing and cost-effective educational and learning opportunities, Liwen Vaughan chaired a subcommittee of the Education Committee that developed a fresh mission, goals, objectives and guidelines for ASIST continuing education. This document will spur increased activity in a wider range of technology use to make CE programs as accessible as possible.

Expansion of Placement and Job Services

Abby Goodrum headed a task force that is recommending a Web-based employment database (based on job board software) and augmentations to the Placement Center at Annual Meetings. Some of these changes will be evident at the 2003 Annual Meeting in Long Beach; others will be implemented in the coming year.

New Options for Institutional Memberships

Beverly Colby is leading a task force considering new institutional membership packages that will be mutually beneficial to ASIST and to organizations where many people in this field are working.

Greater Flexibility and Visibility of Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

The SIGs as a collective group, through SIG Cabinet, have embarked on a discussion of how to move from the traditional SIG structure to a more flexible and responsive one that meets members' diverse needs. SIGs represent the interests of their members – the communities of focus, which have a wide variety of informational and administrative requirements. The SIG Cabinet is also exploring expanded ways to communicate the interests and activities of their respective communities to members and prospective members. As always, they seek continual input on services offered.

Revamping the ASIST Web Site

As the young members might say, the current ASIST Web site is *so* 1990s. Thanks to a task force of the Board of Directors and volunteers from a Washington, DC, Web design team headed by Stacy Surla, we are getting a major site inventory and heuristic evaluation, including data from users' focus groups, which will result in a complete overhaul of the site.

ASIST Digital Library

An ASIST digital library, indexed by a new ASIST thesaurus, has been discussed for several years; it is likely that
(Continued on page 3)

From the Editor's Desktop



Irene L. Travis, Editor
*Bulletin of the American
Society for Information Science
and Technology*
Bulletin@asis.org

We begin a two-part special report in this issue on advances in biological informatics, focusing on the integrative challenges of biodiversity informatics and neuroinformatics. Guest Editor Bryan Heidorn has furnished six articles to which we have added a timely and pertinent announcement of the release of the *Biocomplexity Thesaurus*, an effort led by Jessica Milstead, winner of the ASIST 1999 Watson Davis for her many outstanding contributions to information science and to ASIST. I am very grateful to Bryan for pulling together such a fascinating collection of papers.

In our other feature article, "Copyright's Digital Dilemma Today," Lee Strickland provides a quick and highly informative tour of the litigation surrounding the MP3 file-sharing controversy. He issues an urgent warning about widespread

potential liability for copyright infringement (yes, this means us!) with significant penalties attached, given the present aggressive enforcement actions of the Recording Industry Association of America. In the next issue he will review the most current legal developments regarding other kinds of e-copying, including the TEACH Act of 2002, to complete this survey.

The International Column features Julian Warner's views on recent decisions in the United Kingdom about the use of citation analysis in the Research Assessment Exercises that evaluate publicly funded university research. Julian is the international liaison to the ASIST Board of Directors.

Finally, out-going President Trudi Bellardo Hahn summarizes ASIST's accomplishments during her presidency. There are many significant changes underway from plans to revise the ASIST website to changes to the SIG administrative structures, the *Bulletin* and the Annual Meeting. This President's Page is definitely required reading.

I would like to thank Trudi for her varied and thoughtful reports and all our other contributors this year for their widely appreciated columns and articles. ASIST members provide most of our copy, and we rely on your efforts. I hope to see many of you in Long Beach. Please remember to pack your ideas for the *Bulletin* with your sunscreen. Westward Ho!

President's Page

(Continued from page 2)

it will become a reality soon. Until logistical and financial arrangements are finalized, however, it would be premature to announce it. I am excited, however, at the progress that is being made.

Revamping the ASIST *Bulletin*

For a few years we have been examining the idea of replacing the *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* with a new magazine focused specifically on applications of information science and technology, targeted at a wide audience. Given the current economics of publishing, it is unlikely that we will launch an entirely new publication in the near term. Nonetheless, the *Bulletin* editor, Irene Travis, and her Advisory Board will use the survey results to increase the appeal and usefulness of the current *Bulletin*.

Member Needs That Never Change

My year as president confirmed for me that in a long historical view of scientific and scholarly societies, some things never change. The recent survey confirmed these unchanging member needs:

1. Members need to learn about new developments in the field. We need to affiliate with others whose interests

and work are similar or related to our own. Whether at face-to-face meetings, via electronic lists or reading publications, we recognize that connecting with others in our field inspires us, reinforces our shared paradigms, values and goals, and keeps us current.

2. Members need to network with others when we are seeking jobs or other professional opportunities or are seeking to hire people. We want also to connect with those who will commiserate about our common challenges and who will validate what we do.
3. Members need a sense of professional community and belonging to a recognized and significant field of study and research and development.
4. Members need to build skills, including such general skills as communication and leadership, as well as specific technical and research skills.
5. Members need recognition in the form of awards and other forms of credit, acknowledgment, appreciation and respect for our professional accomplishments.

My year as president has flown by, but it has been one of the most satisfying and gratifying experiences of my career. I regret that it is nearly over, but I am delighted to be passing the gavel to a strong, experienced and dedicated ASIST leader, Samantha Hastings.