

by Sandy Hirsh

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EDITOR'S SUMMARY

In addition to ongoing work on the strategic planning initiative, an important focus for the Association has been outreach to a wider audience of information industry professionals, academics and institutions around the world. The goal of the Information Professionals Task Force is to broaden the Association's scope to include practitioners in related professions, industry employers and the general public interested in information. A demonstration website is under construction with targeted content, job descriptions and links to collaborating organizations, with survey input from members in other information organizations. The International Relations Committee is tasked with promoting ASIS&T recruitment and retention of members beyond North America. Personal stories from international members, international student feedback on website development and membership dues awards will raise awareness of the benefits of Association membership for this audience.

KEYWORDS

Association for Information Science and Technology
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We are already halfway through my term as president, and I want to share with you details of some of the important work that has been taking place this year. In addition to the strategic planning initiative that I have reported on in previous columns, the Information Professionals Task Force and the International Relations Committee have been hard at work and this column is devoted to updates on their activities.

The Information Professionals Task Force

The overarching goal of the Information Professionals Task Force (IPTF) is to increase awareness and interest in the information professions, broadly defined as professionally trained workers in information intensive positions. Established in 2009, the task force has sought to better define this field, collaborate with other associations of information professionals and develop a website aimed at the general public, students, information professionals and employers. Co-chaired by **Nancy Roderer** and **Diane Rasmussen Pennington**, the focus of the current year for the IPTF has been on two activities: 1) expanding the information professionals website from a demo website (developed when I chaired the IPTF in 2013) to a public one and 2) identifying ways to make information professional practitioners feel more included in ASIS&T.

To address the website goal, **Pascal Calarco** was hired as a consultant, and he and his team have been working closely with task force members throughout the year. Work began with the development of a content strategy and information architecture for the site and moved on to revising previous content and adding

substantial new content. A key component of developing the content strategy was the creation of six user personae representing different types of potential users. The demonstration site was transferred to a WordPress platform. Working from the content strategy, existing content was reviewed, updated and revised to better address the anticipated users. We expect to have the public site ready and available for promotion before the Annual Meeting. The site in process can be viewed at <http://infoprofessionals.org/> and comments and suggestions are welcome.

In parallel with these activities, the task force reached out to other information professional organizations to identify people willing to have bios on the site and representative job descriptions. Among the collaborating associations are the Coalition for Networked Information, the Association for Information Systems, the IA Summit, Information Architecture Institute, International Council on Archives and the American Medical Informatics Association. Social media and career links from the collaborating organizations will be included on the site. The site will also highlight information professional career paths and job descriptions and will provide leads to selected educational programs, jobs and collaborating professional organizations. Contacts with other organizations, including additional international ones, are ongoing. To supplement the bios obtained through this approach, task force members have also requested assistance directly from some of their professional contacts.

To identify ways to make ASIS&T more attractive to practitioners, the task force decided to conduct a survey of people in other information professional organizations, and work has begun on survey development. The task force will use members of some of the organizations contacted for the website to get survey recipients.

International Relations Committee

The International Relations Committee (IRC) focuses on ways ASIS&T can continue to support information science academics, students, professionals and institutions worldwide.

The IRC is co-chaired by **Diane Sonnenwald** and **Mei-Mei Wu**. Members include **Fidelia Ibekwe-SanJuan**, **Irene Onyancha**, **Hans-Christoph Hobohm**, **Yan Zhang**, **Jane Greenberg**, **Yuelin Li**, **Christian Schlögel**, **Marica Sapro-Ficovik**, **Ying-Hsang Liu**, and **Xiaojun (Jenny) Yuan**.

To assist ASIS&T headquarters and the ASIS&T social media manager in their efforts to recruit and retain members, testimonials from members in Australia, China and France were collected. These testimonials provide personal stories regarding the benefits of participating in ASIS&T and are intended for use on the ASIS&T website and in promotional materials. The IRC has also been active in obtaining feedback on the new website from students in Africa, Europe and Asia. The goal of this initiative is to ensure that the new ASIS&T website reflects the global nature of the Association, rather than reflecting a North American perspective. The Board generously allocated 40 free one-year student memberships to be awarded to students who provide feedback. Ten additional matching student memberships for students in the Asia-Pacific Chapter region were obtained from an anonymous donor. The IRC has also submitted a new membership dues proposal that takes into account all categories of membership and different income levels in countries. The proposal was endorsed by SIG/III and is currently under consideration by the Board.

I highlighted the work of these two groups in this column because their work directly aligns with the goals I outlined for the year and because information professionals (practitioners) and international members are among the categories of members that ASIS&T has identified as important for the Association's ongoing success. As the only professional association that bridges the gap between information science practice and research, it is critical that we continue to attract and retain practitioners in our Association. We also want to make sure that our members, who span the globe, feel included and welcomed in our Association. I wish to thank these hard working committees/task forces for their significant contributions. ■