

## ASIS&amp;T ANNUAL MEETING PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

**SIG CON Research Symposium****[Insert Title Here: Make Sure to Satisfy Titular Colonicity]**

by Kenneth R. Fleischmann, Adam Worrall, Theresa Dirndorfer Anderson, Sean Goggins and Gary Burnett

## 2015 Annual Meeting Coverage

**EDITOR'S SUMMARY**

Bringing comic relief to the 2015 ASIS&T Annual Meeting, SIG CON opened with discovery that the alleged nephew of the group's figurehead, Dr. Llewellyn C. Puppybreath III, and speaker at the 2014 meeting was an imposter of dubious character. With the purloined ceremonial wand accounted for, the 2015 symposium opened with a presentation on the I-Index, an anti-establishment altmetric, eschewing group recognition in favor of individualism and self-citation. A paper on the correlation among computer science doctorates, rising arcade revenues and climate warming in Australia highlighted the income and career opportunities available to techies relocating to Oz. Analysis of ASIS&T members' social media posts revealed a skewed distribution of posters, topics and irrelevant content, especially by Association leadership. The session also featured a Monty Python character reporting on fatal answers at the Bridge of Death, multiple personalities of Dr. N. E. Doofus and a séance with illustrious ASIS&T members spanning the spectrum from living to dead.

**KEYWORDS**

Association for Information Science and Technology	career development
special interest groups	social web
self citation	content analysis
altmetrics	humor

The 2015 SIG CON symposium, the annual event offered by ASIS&T SIG/CON, got off to an unusual start when, with ceremonial wand in hand, Gary Burnett, convener of the previous year's session, passed along an announcement from the family of the SIG's figurehead, Dr. Llewellyn C. Puppybreath III. It seems that the family had gotten word of the 2014 session's keynote talk by a man purporting to be Dr. Puppybreath's long-lost nephew Aloysius. The family strongly disavowed any connection whatsoever to the speaker, took legal action to retrieve the ceremonial wand and demanded an apology. Dr. Burnett offered a heartfelt apology, noting that he had harbored his own doubts about the credibility of the speaker, who appeared looking quite disheveled and carrying a wine bottle from which he drank regularly during his presentation. Since the wand had disappeared the previous year along with the imposter and was never properly passed along, Dr. Burnett formally presented it to Ken Fleischmann to officially begin the 2015 symposium.

Sean Goggins opened the symposium with his talk, "Revolutionizing Alt Metrics: Introducing the *I-Index*." Goggins explained that scientists and researchers face increasing scrutiny from citizens, especially in the United States. Much of this scrutiny emerges from anti-intellectualism. Scholars,

Kenneth R. Fleischmann is associate professor in the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin. He can be reached at [kfleisch@ischool.utexas.edu](mailto:kfleisch@ischool.utexas.edu).

Adam Worrall is assistant professor in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta. He can be reached at [worrall@ualberta.ca](mailto:worrall@ualberta.ca).

Theresa Dirndorfer Anderson is senior lecturer in the Connected Intelligence Centre at the University of Technology Sydney. She can be reached at [Theresa.Anderson@uts.edu.au](mailto:Theresa.Anderson@uts.edu.au).

Sean P. Goggins is associate professor in the School of Information Science & Learning Technologies at the University of Missouri. He can be reached at [gogginss@missouri.edu](mailto:gogginss@missouri.edu).

Gary Burnett is professor in the College of Communication and Information at Florida State University. He can be reached at [gburnett@fsu.edu](mailto:gburnett@fsu.edu).

historically, look to various intellectually social measures to determine scholarly impact. For example, all scholarly measures of impact rely on some form of determining how many other people cite the work and typically explicitly discount self-citation. In US Culture writ large, however, rugged individualism is how a life's work is measured: Are you bold enough to break from the pack and do something different? And if you succeed, it does not matter that you were not cited in the *New York Post*, the *National Enquirer* or even in *The Onion: America's Finest News Source*. What matters is that individuals made it – on their own. The *I-Index* is a proposed new measure of scholarly impact that is designed to explicitly reflect how society values novel contributions and disruptive innovations. In contrast to the *H* (or *Hirsch*) *Index* [1] if a scholar is citing his or her own work, the index rises. Also, the more highly cited the work that a scholar cites, the lower their *I-Index*. Epistemologically, the new index recognizes that citing articles that are already highly cited merely makes one part of a “Herd of Nerds.” In closing, Goggins proposed developing hamsters with laser beams attached to their heads as a model for this new type of uniquely American scholarship.

Next, there was another unusual guest appearance, this time by the old man from scene 24 of that revered work of scholarship, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* [2]. The old man asked each audience member seeking to cross the Bridge of Death the three questions. Sadly, there were a few new additions to the list of dearly departed ASIS&T members by the end of the proceedings (cause of death: being launched from the Bridge of Death due to failure to correctly answer any of the three questions).

Immediately thereafter, Theresa Anderson restored order with her paper, “Information à Data: Climate of Readiness for Data Science?” This paper reported on research undertaken in collaboration with the Australian Branch of the Puppybreath Institute for the Study of Markets Under Government Supervision (MUGS). The work was presented by MUGS researcher Kylie O’Reilley, who introduced the audience to the work of the institute and their motto: Never miss an opportunity to cash in on a trend.

It was in fact the global demand for data science skills that inspired the O’Reilley-Anderson collaboration in the first place. Intrigued by survey data projecting the top four careers in demand in the United States as video game

designer, data scientist, sustainability consultant and solar sales consultant [3], the team undertook to investigate potential opportunities for the Australian market. When the team noticed there were some interesting correlations between computer science doctorates and total revenue generated by arcades [4], they suspected they were on to something big that could harness the strategic advantages of being in a location where solar sales consultants, data scientists and video game designers might all be drawn on to develop new job growth in response to Australia’s changing climate conditions.

The authors presented data from the United States about correlations between mathematical and computer science doctorates awarded in relation to sunlight levels [4], taking the audience through their thought process as they asked questions of this data. Given that Australia is the driest continent, has high levels of sunlight (especially in the current state of drought and rising temperatures) and is increasingly needing to create new data measures to account for the dramatic change in climate, they surmised there was a strong likelihood that even more technical doctorates would be produced if we moved everyone doing their program to Australia. The team’s findings support a startup program that could harness the combined advantages of Australia’s open spaces policy that allows for the migration of high-level technical people and the rising temperature and drought conditions prompted by climate change. In short, the team concluded there is indeed a favorable climate for attracting all four industries.

Next was a presentation by N. E. Doofus from Sum Where University. During the talk, it became immediately apparent that Dr. Doofus was exhibiting at least eight separate personalities (each of which, entirely coincidentally, corresponded with a different physical manifestation).

After that, Adam Worrall presented “Asking for a Friend: An Analysis of ASIS&T Social Media Followers.” In his last contribution as an ASIS&T social media contributor – albeit without the express written consent of ASIS&T social media manager Diane Rasmussen Pennington or Major League Baseball – Worrall sampled 150 Facebook posts, 150 Twitter tweets and 12 LinkedIn posts (the latter not a sample, but the population) from those who had liked the ASIS&T Facebook page, followed the @asist\_org Twitter account or were members of the ASIS&T LinkedIn group,

respectively. Frequency analysis of posts, mentions and hashtags and of the content of “typical” posts (identified using RANDOM sampling: Really Awesome Noggins Determine Original Messages) was presented.

Through frequency analysis, Worrall identified a long tail distribution (analyzed using Klikki, 2007 [5]) among Facebook posts with a median of two posts per week and clear evidence of the most frequent poster, who happened to have lead off this evening's talks. Twitter posting frequency in the sample was less frequent, for reasons that were not entirely clear. However, hints were found in the popular press [6] as to why Twitter was not as popular among ASIS&T members. ASIS&T members frequently mentioned the @asist\_org and @pewresearch Twitter accounts, along with @RealBenCarson and @realDonaldTrump. Worrall concluded some ASIS&T members did not deserve scholarships to West Point and that, perhaps, a wall should be built to keep those members out.

Through the content analysis, Worrall found ASIS&T members sampled mentioned Bates more frequently than Hjørland (for context see Hartel, 2011 [7]), but this was due to the presence in the sample of tweets from ASIS&T executive director Dick Hill mentioning his love of the *Bates Motel* TV series.

“Typical” posts identified using RANDOM sampling included a post from past ASIS&T president and current ALISE president Sam Hastings asking, “Can any of you help me find a suitable service opportunity in LIS? Asking for a friend.” Another “typical” post was a tweet from outgoing ASIS&T president Sandy Hirsch: “New @asist\_org Strategic Plan: Do whatever @lcpuppybreath tells us to.” We thank those who gave their permission for their “typical” social media posts to be shown to the SIG/CON audience.

Next, the audience conducted a séance with illustrious ASIS&T members (living, dead, undead and mostly dead). See Reiner, 1987 [8]. Audience members who correctly guessed the ASIS&T members got to drink from the fire hose, c.f., Levey, 1989 [9].

Finally, Ken Fleischmann concluded an otherwise memorable evening with a thoroughly unmemorable paper, which will be remembered only for its three identically adorable conclusions.

In concluding, it is important to note that no animals (including ASIS&T members) were harmed in the making of this production and that all characters and events described – even those based on real people – are entirely fictional [10]. ■

### Resources Mentioned in the Article

- [1] Wikipedia.org. *H Index*. Retrieved October 24, 1929, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H-index>
- [2] Gilliam, T., & Jones, T. (1975). *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. United Kingdom: EMI Films.
- [3] CNN.COM. (October 1, 2012). Best new jobs in America. Retrieved April 14, 1865, from <http://money.cnn.com/gallery/pf/2012/11/01/best-new-jobs-in-america/index.html>
- [4] Vigen, T. (2015). Spurious correlations. Retrieved June 28, 1914, from <http://tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations>
- [5] Klikki, K. (2007). A practical model for analyzing long tails. *First Monday*, 12(5). Retrieved September 6, 1901, from <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1832/1716>
- [6] Meyer, R. (November 2, 2015). The decay of Twitter. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved March 15, 44 BC, from [www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/11/conversation-smoosh-twitter-decay/412867/](http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/11/conversation-smoosh-twitter-decay/412867/)
- [7] Hartel, J. (September 4, 2011). Newsflash: Bates & Hjørland debate [SIG USE listserv message]. Retrieved July 2, 1881, from <http://mail.asis.org/pipermail/siguse-l/2011-September/000533.html>
- [8] Reiner, R. (1987). *The princess bride* [Motion picture]. United States of America: Twentieth-Century Fox Film Corporation.
- [9] Levey, J. (1989). *UHF* [Motion picture]. United States of America: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, Inc.
- [10] Parker, T., Stone, M., & Garefino, A. (1997). *South park* [Television series]. United States of America: Comedy Central Productions.