

bulletin of the
**INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY
DIVISION of SLA**



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Publisher: Ty Webb tywebb75@hotmail.com
Editor: Michael Kim kimsm@okstate.edu



**INFORMATION
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ITE Chair's Letter

[Ty Webb](#)

Welcome to another one of Michael Kim's great issues of b/ITE, including articles on RSS, candidate responses to technology issues, and descriptions of the conference programs that Heather Hlava Kotula has planned for us for June 2004 in Nashville.

This issue is arriving on your desktop at the start of a hectic time of year, but then, these days, it seems as if things are always hectic, doesn't it? Have you noticed how, when things get really tough at work, when we are presented with a problem that seems as if it doesn't have a solution, when management presents a challenge and we're feeling overwhelmed, that somehow we seem to find our answers through SLA?

As I was looking over my membership-renewal form for SLA, I started remembering all the times that the Association has helped me through the years. I remembered times that the networking enabled me to contact the right person at the right time. I remembered the CE courses that gave me the knowledge I needed to attack a new challenge. I remembered the negotiations for additional personnel, and those for advancement in my own career, that were successful because of the skills I had learned through conference sessions and professional reading. And I thought of all the growth opportunities SLA has provided for me at the chapter, division and association levels.

Okay, enough. I'm getting off of the soapbox now. Just let me say that I think we are so very fortunate to have this Association as part of our professional lives. Enjoy this issue of b/ITE and all that it has to offer!

[Ty Webb](#), ITE Chair



Editor's Byte

[S. Michael Kim](#)

The final issue of b/ITE for 2003 is here to wrap things up from the year 2003, with the Holiday season just around corner.

This issue of b/ITE features the special topic, "RSS? What is it?" As you read in the featured articles, RSS has a lot of potential.

Also, there are answers from SLA Board candidates regarding SLA and Information Technology. They took time from their hectic schedules to answer our two questions, and we are grateful for that. In addition, this issue features a sneak preview of 2004 Conference in Nashville and announcements of the 2004 ITE Awards programs.

Next issue of b/ITE will feature special articles about Internet spam. Of course, I am not referring to edible SPAM™ which you may find at the grocery store! I would like to have articles about history of SPAM, its impact on the economy and on worker productivity, and a review of spam-blocking programs we could use. We are bombarded by spam e-mails daily, and we should know what it's about so we can "can the spam." As always, EBSCO will generously provide a \$25 book gift certificate to each accepted author. Again, special thanks to Karalyn Kavanaugh for arranging this sponsorship!

Happy Holidays!

[S. Michael Kim](#),
b/ITE editor



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-Special articles: RSS? What is it?



RSS -Syndication for Real People Right Now

[Marie C. Kaddell](#)
LexisNexis*

* Marie Kaddell is an currently an Information Professional Consultant at LexisNexis. Before going to LexisNexis, she was a Project Manager for a system integration company that specialized in information management solutions for libraries, archival institutions, and news organizations. She has her MLS from the University of Maryland School of Library and Information Science and is a graduate of UMUC, where she earned both a Master of Science in Technology Management and most recently, her MBA.

What is RSS?

RSS – it's turning up everywhere lately but what's it all about and what can it do – most especially what can it do for you? First off, what does RSS stand for anyway? Depending upon the version of RSS and the person that you make this inquiry to, you might get any of the following answers - **Rich Site Summary**, **RDF Site Summary** or **Really Simple Syndication**. From my perspective, Really Simple Syndication encapsulates the beauty of RSS best. RSS is an eXtensible Markup Language or XML-based format for syndicating news and content and in our high-tech world it might indeed be deemed "really simple". Employed by major news sites, news-

focused communities on the web, and weblogs of all sorts, it creates the ability for small and large entities on the web with news and content to share with others to get the word out and broaden their audiences with ease and efficiency.

RSS changes everything – and begin to level the playing field. Before RSS, syndication in print was attached to top tier columnists – William Safire, Dave Barry, Dear Abby, and Miss Manners are syndicated. The rest of us had to make due with a limited audience of friends, family, coworkers, and strangers met in grocery lines and on the metro if we wished to share our views on life and our areas of expertise with others unless we were generating a newsletter, regular email update, or that dreaded of all communications – the holiday update letter. In other media, such as radio and television, top personalities and shows are syndicated for our listening and viewing pleasure. However, for the majority of us, unless the *Times* or *Post* picks us up on a whim, we become high-powered daytime radio talk show hosts, or we get in on the ground floor cast of a new *Seinfeld* or *Friends*, there's not been much hope of any of us of being syndicated for any reason - prior to RSS that is.

Side by side with RSS are the RSS-aware programs or aggregators, and together they create an information and news distribution model that breaks new ground. News aggregators such as DayPop (<http://www.daypop.com/>) and NewsIsFree (<http://newsisfree.com/>), break with the old school syndication model which related to licensed content and was built on established business relationships and instead present an open-ended web model that gives an alternative to more traditional approaches to sharing data such as APIs or database dumps. RSS allows a news site to syndicate content without any third parties involved

and makes the ramp up process for syndication relatively easy. When syndication is bundled together with aggregation, distributed content and reuse of that content on a large scale can be facilitated for big and small entities alike. RSS addresses problems that webmasters needed to solve such as building traffic and obtaining and distributing news but it also empowered the individual content creator – such as an individual creating regular weblog entries - at the same time. The reason is simple - syndication and aggregation create the capability to create and distribute information well beyond occasional web visitors, casual acquaintances, co-workers, and disinterested family members assembled around a dinner table. With RSS, the New York Times and the solo librarian alike can create news and content for syndication. Suddenly the Fourth Estate got a bit more crowded.



How Does It Work?

RSS is a text-based format – an XML format - for sharing data. Jonathan Eisenzopf in his article, *Making Headlines with RSS* (<http://www.webtechniques.com/archives/2000/02/eisenzopf/>) refers to RSS as an “XML grammar for sharing data”. RSS files contain data placeholders identified by starting and ending tags, similar to HTML tags. RSS files can also be called feeds or channels. These RSS feeds or channels contain a list of items such as a title, description, and url (link to a website). Channels can also contain metadata. Each RSS channel or feed can contain from 1 to 15 items inside it. Here's an example of what the XML might look like for a channel:

```
<channel>
<title>Joe Library – An International
Affair</title>
<link>http://joelibrary.org</link>
<description>You’ve never seen reality
like library reality</description>
</channel>
```

Once the RSS text file has been created, it's time to register with the aggregators and take advantage of the opportunities that syndication represents. Once registered with aggregators, your feed is available to other sites, who can display your feed and simultaneously drive readership and traffic your way. You are now syndicated and traffic is now being directed to your site that wouldn't have paid it a visit – excellent as it might be - prior to your RSS feed days.

What are the benefits and uses?

As M. Muffat states in **RSS: A Primer for Publishers & Content Providers** (http://www.eevl.ac.uk/rss_primer/#fundamentals): "The use of RSS benefits everyone involved - for publishers and content providers details of new content can be accessed by a much broader audience, for web site producers new content can be easily integrated into web sites or portals, and for end users easy access to new content is greatly facilitated."



A news aggregator can make keeping up with news sites and weblogs you usually visit individually a snap. In fact, you don't necessarily have to restrict yourself to news feeds. Anything that can be broken into discreet units of information can be a candidate for syndication using RSS. For instance, my copy of [Userland Radio](#), a reasonably priced desktop weblog tool with a newsreader included, not only came set to go with a number of top news


feeds but also a nifty Word of the Day feed.

The aggregator will track changes in the RSS feeds for the sites you select and display new items from them for you in an aggregated format. Some newsreaders are web-based and others are stand-alone programs that must be downloaded like Userland Radio. Some examples of newsreader programs are: [Aggie News](#), [AmphetaDesk](#), and [Bloglines](#). I'm currently using [Bloglines](#), one of the free readers with great success. It's also worth taking a look at [Fyuze](#), [Fastbuzz](#), and [MyWireService](#), all in beta at this point in time. Some aggregators are free but others like [NewzCrawler](#), [NetNewsWire](#), or [Userland Radio](#) must be purchased. [Userland Radio](#) for instance, bundles powerful weblogging capabilities with its aggregator functionality, making it an excellent tool for bloggers.

Aggregators answer the dilemma we all face in the age of information overload, how to keep up with the new content we want to follow without all the surfing usually involved in keeping up. J.D. Lasica in the article, **News That Comes to you** (<http://www.ojr.org/ojr/lasica/1043362624.php>) sees news aggregator programs as turning your desktop "into a voracious media hub, letting you snag headlines and news updates as if you were commanding the anchor desk at CNN." Librarians, with their need to grab information for a multiplicity of requirements, can immediately see how aggregators can work for them both in accessing information and publishing information.

If you've picked out a news aggregator and now want to identify some feeds to subscribe to so you can try this whole concept out, there are several good sites to visit that help you find RSS feeds. To find library-related news feeds try the Open Directory Project (<http://dmoz.org/Reference/Libraries/Libr>

[ary and Information Science/Weblogs/](#)), and LISFeeds.com (<http://www.lisfeeds.com/>) and while you're there take a look at what Steven M. Cohen's introduction to RSS for Non-Techie Librarians (<http://www.llrx.com/features/rssforlibrarians.htm>). If you are looking to subscribe to a few non-library related feeds check out syndic8 (<http://www.syndic8.com/>).

Of course, information professionals are already tying in to the power of RSS. For instance, Ray Matthews at the [Utah State Library](#) has developed a helpful RSS tutorial (<http://gils.utah.gov/rss/>) chock full of state government, and business examples of RSS at work, and also has a weblog with a focus on RSS in government (<http://www.rssgov.com/>). Whether you are in government or not, this site is well worth a look. Librarian blogs like the Shifted Librarian (<http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/>), and Gary Price's Resource Shelf (<http://www.resourceshelf.com/>) are now displaying the XML icon  on their sites, signaling to even the uninitiated that they are indeed a syndicated source. And librarians aren't just using RSS for publication, they're also using it to keep up with information they would normally have to grab via normal web surfing, and they are doing it in a fraction of the time it used to take. An efficient distillation of information can be theirs with the added benefit of no pop up ads, flash pages, or other distracting elements often found of the standard news website. Steven Cohen in *RSS for Non-Techie Librarians* (<http://www.llrx.com/features/rssforlibrarians.htm>) sums it well in this description of his experience of moving from web surfer to RSS feed convert:

In order to keep current, like many librarians, I had all of the web sites that I visited daily bookmarked (about 50) in my browser at work

and I would painstakingly visit each site throughout the day. Of course there were days that visiting each site was not possible (on very busy days I was lucky to get to one). And if three days went by without reading these favorites, I would get too bogged down trying to catch up. This was all before I was introduced to the wonderful world of RSS (Rich Site Summary) feeds. Now, I get almost all of the content I want from all of these sites delivered to one place as soon as the site is updated, saving precious time. The most amazing part is that I am notified when any of the sites I subscribe to are updated within minutes. And I didn't have to be an experienced techie to set-it-up.

RSS data doesn't have to turn up on your desktop, ready to read in a handy news aggregator. RSS data can turn up on your cell phone, or your PDA, or even Outlook Express (with a program like [nntp/rss](#)). Want a ticker for your news headlines? – consider [wTicker](#). Want one more toolbar on your browser – one that will give you headline with a click of a button? – take a look at [ToolButton](#).

Where is it going?

RSS may be simplicity itself – relatively speaking – but its simplicity is not reflective of its strength. As noted by Andy King in his article, *The Evolution of RSS* (<http://www.webreference.com/authoring/languages/xml/rss/1/9.html>) "Widely adopted standards can create synergistic "meta-opportunities" for value-added services that span domains of knowledge." This can include KM, content management, and portals. Rusty Coats, a syndicated writer

(<http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/content/832.cfm?id=832>) sees classified ads a next logical step. Raymond Yee in his presentation on ***What RSS Might Mean for Libraries and Learning Environments*** (http://iu.berkeley.edu/rdhyee/Filer/filetre e/2003/cdl_rss.pdf) discusses the idea of syndicating learning objects with RSS. Princeton University Libraries blog, ([inSilico](#)) suggests we "imagine being able to display the current issue's TOC next to the PULinks logo in the online catalog, or having the RSS feed the EJournal page automatically without having to maintain a separate database or a kludged catalog record! That's the power of XML..." Clearly with regard to RSS, possible applications are many and expanding all the time.

In Conclusion

F. Andy Seidl in his article ***RSS: Disruptive Technology Hiding in Plain Sight*** (<http://myst-technology.com/mysmartchannels/public/item/12485>), identifies RSS as a disruptive technology or disruptive innovation – the kind that is dismissed by entrenched players in the market because it doesn't meet their established needs but is embraced by emerging players – causing the status quo to flip and sometimes sinking the established market leaders in the process. Remember the impact digital watch technology had on Swiss watchmakers? Consider the initial prognosis for the very Web upon which we delight today. In fact, RSS technology – initially ignored by some big players – is now the most widely used format for distributing new headlines on the web.

The impact of RSS is substantial because it changes the consistency of the web – allowing and encouraging interdependency and increasing the value of sharing content as integrated into sites other than

where that content was originally created. As Andrew B. King of ***WebReference.com*** notes in his article, ***WebRef and the Future of RSS*** (<http://www.webreference.com/authoring/languages/xml/rss/intro/3.html>) – "RSS democratizes news distribution by making everyone a potential news provider". Indeed it is clear that RSS coupled with news aggregators and any of a number of serviceable news readers allow an individual or a Fortune 500 corporate alike to be syndicated content creators. As David Winer, involved in the early life of Userland and RSS, succinctly states, " It's all part of the democratization effect of the Web."



- Special articles: RSS? What is it?

RSS – A Really Simple Solution for the News Needy

[Greg Kaplan](#)*

Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll

* *Greg Kaplan is the Internet Services Librarian at Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP, a law firm headquartered in Philadelphia, PA. A 2000 graduate from Drexel University's College of Information Science and Technology, he worked at his college's Computing Resource Center as LAN administrator. Greg earned Master of Science degrees in Information Systems and Library Science. In addition to contributing to The Virtual Chase,*

[<http://www.virtualchase.com>], Greg maintains several Philadelphia-based not-for-profit web sites. In his spare time, Greg is an accomplished, competitive sculler.

RSS, also known as "Rich Site Summary" or "Really Simple Syndication", is a technology that provides an easy way to access information resources which are frequently updated. The use of RSS feeds has recently gained popularity, in part, from the increasing number of web loggers, or "bloggers".¹ RSS syndication, also known as "news feeds" or "feeds", are often published in conjunction with a corresponding blog.

RSS is a "lightweight" way to broadcast information. An RSS feed is usually a news headline, with associated links to the full text of the news item(s), and the date and time of the item. Because RSS is based on existing web technologies, and is available for the most commonly used desktop computing platforms, it is easy for content producers to adopt and use it. Those seeking additional means or alternatives for finding and reading information can easily utilize RSS.



RSS feeds are created with the eXtensible Markup Language (XML). Anyone who has basic experience with authoring HTML content can create an RSS "feed" easily.

```
<item>
  <title>sample headline</title>
```

¹ Festa, Paul. *Battle of the Blog*. cnet news.com. <http://news.com.com/2009-1032-5059006.html> [11/07/2003]

```
<link>http://www.sampleheadline.com/sampleurl</link>
  <description>here is descriptive text about the sample headline. It may be as short as a few words, or contain the full text of a news item</description>
  <pubDate>Fri, 31 Oct 2003 15:46:00 PST</pubDate>
</item>
```

Commercially available RSS authoring tools are also available, for those with less experience in web programming.

Unlike RSS authoring tools, RSS feed-reading applications--"aggregators" are required for reading RSS feeds. Aggregators such as "Amphetadesk", "RSSReader", and "Tofu RSS Browser" are free downloads for personal use; "Detod", an online aggregator which does not require installation of any additional software, is also free.² Stand-alone aggregators tend to have small "footprints", and are as simple to use as a web browser. Aggregators work in conjunction with users' web browsers: when a user clicks a hyperlinked feed in their newsreader, their web browser goes to the URL to which the RSS feed was pointing. Most aggregators provide users with the ability to track multiple feeds simultaneously, and can be set to retrieve feed updates at user-specified intervals. Web sites such as "News is Free", "DayPop", and "NewsGator"³ allow users

² Amphetadesk.

<http://www.disobey.com/amphetadesk/> [11/01/2003]; RSS Reader <http://www.rssreader.com/> [11/01/2003]; TofuRSS Browser

<http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/20368>; Detod <http://www.detod.com> [11/01/2003]

³ News is Free <http://www.newsisfree.com> ; DayPop <http://www.daypop.com> ;

to search for feeds based on criteria such as source, author, topic and more. Such web sites also provide searchable and browsable directories of feeds.

RSS is a good alternative to subscribing to a multitude of current awareness newsletters, visiting multiple web sites, and having to weed through many online news sources. Email newsletters have differing publication cycles and do not offer content targeted to the individual subscriber and they might offer little content of value in each edition. RSS, from a single interface, provides users with the ability to review multiple headlines, from different sources, at their convenience. Think of it as an aisle in a grocery store, which has only the items you need, when you need them, every time you visit that aisle.



RSS may be attractive to IT departments who struggle with combating spam and viruses, and/or users who receive a large number of emails daily. RSS provides an advantage over email current awareness sources in that users can access all of their news resources from a single tool. This removes the need for creating email filters, or having to weed through a cluttered inbox. RSS requires users to actively use their news aggregators to view their selected news feeds. This means they get what they want, when they want it. RSS feeds cannot be mistaken for spam, and as of yet, do not contain malicious code or act as a vector for computer viruses, etc.

³NewsGator <http://www.newsgator.com> [11/01/2003]

Another one of the benefits of using a news aggregator, either online or as a stand-alone application, is the high level of customization available. Think of a topic—there is probably an RSS feed for it. Many of the RSS search engines, including the aforementioned, provide reviews of feeds, with quality and utility assessments. Since most news aggregators can be set by the user to refresh selected feeds at user-specified intervals, authors have only to modify their RSS feed to provide new information to their readers. Conversely, when using email for news delivery, a new message must be sent out every time the author wishes to make additions or changes. This quickly generates a large volume of email for both content producers, and for those who read many and varied news sources via email. RSS syndication is desirable for sites that change their content continuously, for informational sites with a large reader-base. Authors who do not want their content stopped by an email filter, or inadvertently deleted as spam, will also like the RSS delivery format.

Let's look at an example of RSS serving the current awareness delivery needs of legal professionals. The feed produced by Genie Tyburski for *The Virtual Chase*, "TVC",⁴ is a resource for "legal professionals conducting research on the Internet...[which] offers articles, guides, teaching materials, an alert service and more, on Internet research strategies and resources."⁵ *TVC Alert* is a daily, weekday publication, distributed by Tyburski via a free, email subscription. It provides the same content as the *Daily Research News* on TVC. Tyburski produces the RSS feed

⁴ *The Virtual Chase Alert*.

http://www.virtualchase.com/RSSFeeds/tvcalert_rss.xml [11/01/2003]

⁵ *The Virtual Chase*.

<http://www.virtualchase.com/about.html> [11/01/2003]

for *TVC Alert* when she produces the daily newsletter and updates the *Daily Research News* page.

The *TVC* feed has all the same content as the daily newsletter, but in a "digest" format: the feed provides a news headline, the date of the news item, and a brief descriptive sentence. Tyburski links a news headline in the *TVC* RSS feed to the full text of the news item on the *TVC Research News* page. *TVC Research News* often provides links to other, relevant sources. Subscribers of *TVC* news feeds can access the full text of an item, directly from the source, in three direct and easy steps: from their RSS aggregator, to *TVC Research News*, and then to the news source(s). Tyburski sometimes links, from *TVC Research News*, several different news sources for a single story, making the news feed for *TVC Alert* a valuable tool for efficiently conducting research, or keeping current with legal news and related issues.

Tyburski believes that the image and ad-free technology of RSS is a big plus for those with limited time, or for those who may receive a lot of email and do not want their news to get "lost" in their inbox. She also notes that RSS is a good tool for tracking multiple news sources. However, Tyburski notes that there are few detracting issues with the use of RSS:

- subscriber anonymity means that authors may be unable to tailor their content to their readership;
- the fast publication process of creating RSS feeds may increase the possibility for more errors than might appear in a newsletter or web page;
- subscribers are required to check their aggregator for updates, instead of being alerted by an email new-message-indicator;

- RSS feeds may be provided by blogger-hobbyists, without authority or credibility.

Yet, there are still many advantages to using an aggregator instead of email for obtaining the latest news. For instance, some authors provide frequent updates to RSS news feeds, whereas they might generate email updates less frequently. This is a very important issue for those who require the latest news.

Gary Price, author of the *ResourceShelf*, a web site that provides "resources and news for information professionals"⁶, publishes his newsletter once a week. However, he often updates his RSS feed several times a day. Price, like Tyburski, cautions that RSS may have some problems with delivering reliable information, efficiently. And, like Tyburski, he notes that using RSS places the responsibility on the user to check for news updates in their aggregator. Price continues to provide updates to his syndicated content, frequently, with the understanding that his reader-base likes the RSS delivery option.

RSS is a mature tool for current awareness delivery. It provides benefits that email, web, or other tools like a "news tickers" cannot. The XML technology on which RSS is based is becoming more pervasive. XML has an established developer base, which has voluntarily adopted recommendations for its development⁷. Recommendations for the authoring of RSS feeds are currently being evaluated, and will become


⁶ *ResourceShelf*.

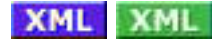
<http://www.resourceshelf.com/>
[11/02/2003]

⁷ Pilgrim, Mark. *What is RSS*.

<http://www.xml.com/pub/a/2002/12/18/dive-into-xml.html> [11/07/2003]

available soon⁸. RSS is both end-user customizable and computing-platform independent. RSS is simple to deploy, and simple to use. It is a practical technology in use and in demand⁹.

Look for RSS icons, such as: 



and try it out!



- Special articles: RSS? What is it?

Personalized Content - The future of RSS

Steven M. Cohen*
Library Stuff

Steven M. Cohen is the creator of Library Stuff, a weblog dedicated to resources for keeping current and professional

⁸ Atom as the New XML-Based Web Publishing and Syndication Format. XML Coverpages.
<http://xml.coverpages.org/ni2003-10-22-a.html> [11/07/2003]

⁹ Proceedings of Internet Librarian 2003.
<http://www.infotoday.com/il2003/tuesday.htm#tracka> [11/04/2003]

development. He is also the contributing editor for the Internet Spotlight column of Public Libraries magazine. He can be reached at
<http://www.librarystuff.net/contact.php>.

By now, many librarians, especially those that deal with technology everyday, are familiar with RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and its uses for delivering content from thousands of sources into one place. Those not familiar with RSS may want to read my article entitled, "RSS For Non-techie Librarians", which appeared in June of 2002 in LLRX (<http://www.llrx.com/features/rssforlibrarians.htm>) or "Using RSS: An Explanation and Guide", which appeared in the December 2002 (v.6, no.12) issue of Information Outlook.

The purpose of this article is not to provide another overview of RSS, but to take the technology to the next level with various methods of customization features that have recently become available. The ability to personalize content that comes into a news aggregator (ie Newzcrawler - <http://www.newzcrawler.com>) provides for a higher percentage of the content to be relevant to the reader. In fact, the percentage will double. Take for example Wired News, a popular magazine and web presence. While Wired does provide an RSS Feed for its content (<http://www.wired.com/news/rss>), they have also given the opportunity for users to run a search of its content and receive an RSS Feed for that search. Thus, the user will only receive RSS content from Wired if the keyword appears in any of the new articles that are added to the database. Customizing the feeds allows for less content to come across your aggregator, which means less time looking through the information, which then leads to more time spent with our customers. It's a win-win situation.

One of the major themes associated with customizable RSS Feeds is via the news engines. While many of the most popular news engines (i.e. Rocket News – <http://www.rocketnews.com> and World News (<http://www.wn.com>) have not jumped on board with RSS, Yahoo and Moreover **do** have RSS Feeds attached to their sites. Jeremy Zawodny has created a search interface for Yahoo news (<http://jeremy.zawodny.com/ynews-search-rss.php>), which, when queried with any keyword, will provide the results in RSS format. In addition, one can subscribe to any keyword search in the Moreover database by replacing the keyword(s) in the following URL (<http://p.moreover.com/cgi-local/page?k=circuit%20city&o=rss>). One would hope that, in the future, more news engines will start providing their search results via RSS.

RSS can be customized utilizing other search engines as well, specifically those that query weblog posts. Some of these engines include Feedster (<http://www.feedster.com>), Daypop (<http://www.daypop.com>), and Waypath (<http://www.waypath.com>). I have been especially impressed with Feedster as it supports multiple Boolean operators as well as numerous other commands. Sticking with weblogs, Technorati (<http://www.technorati.com>) queries over 1.2 million weblogs for weblogs that link to other weblogs and provides the results in RSS format. For example, using Technorati, I can get updated whenever any one of those 1.2 millions weblogs links to my weblog (A nice ego booster, I might add).

One customizable feed that I could not live without in my daily work is [HubMed](#), which will query the Pubmed database and provide the results in RSS format. For example, if I do a search for AIDS in Hubmed, the resulting RSS Feed

(<http://www.pmbrowser.info/pmrss.cgi?q=AIDS>) can be placed in my aggregator and when a new abstract is added to the database, I will know about it within the hour. Again, since RSS is new compared with other content delivery methods, there are only a handful of places to find customizable feeds, especially within academic databases.

RSS has started to flourish in the more mainstream Web media, like Amazon and Ebay. Onfocus has created a search interface using Amazon API (<http://www.onfocus.com/bookwatch/AmazonRSS.asp>) which will query the Amazon database and provide the results in RSS format. One can also get RSS Feeds for searched on Ebay (<http://www.ebaygeeks.com/desktopmodules/ebaygeeks/ebay2rss.aspx>).

Again, the customization aspect of RSS is fairly new. One would hope that more content providers start to understand the power of RSS. As this form of content delivery becomes more mainstream, I believe that providing personalized feeds will be the norm rather than the exception. As more feeds become available for syndication into a news aggregator, the possibility for information overload will become a reality and one of the most efficient solutions to this growing problem is personalization.



Get Ready for Nashville!

Heather Kotula,
ITE Program Planner 2004

ITE has a great conference lined up for you – cutting edge CE courses, thought-provoking program sessions, and exciting networking opportunities! Please note that times are subject to change slightly, but here are the basics. Make sure you have included the division business meetings when you make your travel plans:

*** CE Courses:**

Taxonomies for Indexing - A Hands-On Approach

Saturday, June 5, 2004 8:00AM - 12:00PM

Built and deployed correctly, a taxonomy is a great guide to a Web site, especially the underlying databases. It improves searching by providing precise, relevant results to a search query. How do you create one? What is the workflow? Who should do it? How long does it take? This session covers the rules for thesaurus construction, explores terms and source materials, and explains each part of the thesaurus record. In the second half of this workshop, we will have a hands-on exercise to create a mini-taxonomy. Speakers: **Alice Redmond-Neal**, Training Director, Access Innovations, Inc.; **Dr. Jay Ven Eman**, CEO, Access Innovations, Inc.

TechStorm: A Strategic Planning Facilitated Workshop

Sunday, June 6, 2004 8:00AM - 12:00PM

For the third year running, TechStorm is available to information professionals who need to develop strategic plans incorporating key future technologies and the potential impact on their organizations. This half-day workshop stretches the thinking of participants to consider new technologies and their applicability to information control and services. Through facilitated discussions, participants interact with colleagues and brainstorm new ideas for finding and using technology to apply in their own environments. Last year's participants commented: "I found it extremely thought provoking, had lots of good ideas, great discussion...it inspired and refreshed my thinking."

Speakers: **Jane Dysart**, Dysart & Jones Associates; **Stephen Abram**, Vice President, Corporate Development, Micromedia ProQuest

*** Conference Program Sessions:**

Mining the Invisible Web for Competitive Intelligence

Monday, June 7, 2004 12:15PM - 1:30PM

Learn new tactics, tools and techniques for ferreting out the wealth of invaluable CI information located on the invisible web, including specialized search engines, methods for finding specialized data, and resources for images, streaming media and other non-HTML content.

Speaker: **Mary Ellen Bates**, Principal, Bates Information Services

Data Visualization - Imaging Information

Monday, June 7, 2004 3:45PM - 5:00PM

How can we make sense of large amounts of data? Data visualization is one possible solution. By visualizing data in diagrams or pictures, researchers can detect patterns that enable them to better analyze information. Science, business, and industry can all profit from this data analysis technique.

Speakers: TBD

Moderator: **Georgia Higley**, Library of Congress

Religious, Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in the Special Library

Tuesday, June 8, 2004 7:30AM - 8:45AM

Annual Diversity and Mentoring Breakfast - Is religious, ethnic and cultural diversity working for you in career and professional development? Hear professionals discuss how Corporate America is addressing diversity. Learn to be a diversity asset in your organization. "Have a Mentoring Moment," meet the Diversity Leadership Development Program (DLDP) Award Winners, and collect some valuable handouts to take home with you. This will be the highlight of your conference experience - don't miss it!

Speakers: TBD

Moderators: **Erma Dell'Aquila**, Morgan Stanley, **Cheryl A. Hansen**, Engineering Systems, **Mary L. Crompton**, Site Librarian, Northrop Grumman Corp., **Terri Brooks, Director**, Library Services, Investment Company Institute

The Semantic Web: Modeling the new web with Librarian input

Tuesday, June 8, 2004 9:00AM - 10:15AM

The Semantic Web will bring structure to the meaningful content of Web pages. The father of the Web - Tim Berners Lee - is leading an effort to redefine the web and is holding a spot for librarians everywhere at the forefront of the project. Join Eric

Miller, activity lead for the Semantic Web project and Dav Robertson, Chief Of Library and Information Services Branch at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, in discussing the active role librarians will play in the future of the web.

Speakers: **Eric Miller**, Activity Lead, W3C World Wide Web Consortium's Semantic Web; **Dav Robertson**, Chief, Library and Information Services

Branch, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

Moderator: **Thomas**

Clark, Research Librarian, Sun Microsystems



Content Management Standards: Standards Updates and the Special Librarian

Tuesday, June 8, 2004 12:15PM - 1:30PM

In a networked environment, knowledge organization structures such as taxonomies, thesauri, and other semantic tools make the data, information, and knowledge alive. This popular annual session, Standards Updates, covers the activities in standards and what activities are in progress that will affect special librarianship in the workplace. This year the session focuses on the standards for content management, including: (1) NISO's recent activity of developing a standard for the construction of controlled vocabularies such as pick lists, synonym rings, taxonomies, and thesauri; (2) W3C's activities on Semantic Web, an extension of the current Web, in which information is given well-defined meaning, better enabling computers and people to work in cooperation; and (3) W3C's new candidate standard, Web Ontology Language (OWL), to be used to publish and share sets of terms called ontologies, providing advanced Web search, software agents and knowledge management.

Speakers: **Marjorie M. Hlava**, President & Chairman, Access Innovations, Inc.; **Dr. Amy J. Warner**, Taxonomy & Metadata Designer / Information Architect, Lexonomy, Inc.
Moderator: **Marcia Lei Zeng**, Kent State University

Up All Night - The 24x7 Librarian

Tuesday, June 8, 2004 2:00PM - 3:15PM
Online chat and digital reference are the latest advances in reference today, offering the user convenience and the information provider the chance to connect to users beyond the library walls. Join the experts of 24x7 reference as they discuss best practices and future enhancements.

Speakers: **Diane Kresh**, Director, Public Service Collections, Library of Congress; **Susan McGlamery**, 24/7 Reference
Moderator: **Georgia Higley**, Library of Congress

Is the Thinking back in Linking? An update on the Open URL Standard

Wednesday, June 9, 2004 1:15PM - 2:30PM

Industry-wide collaboration in support of reference linking is essential to managing the flow of scholarly communication. Reference linking provides a seamless navigation between bibliographic and full text databases, speeding the research process and ultimately accelerating discovery across all scholarly disciplines as well as in business. Linking to full text is rapidly changing the way that we access information and the rights we need to negotiate to implement the linking locally. NFAIS made a declaration of Linking Guiding Principles in October 2003. The NISO Open URL committee has been active in creating documenting and presenting standard-based techniques to support linking. These standards support

the implementation of interoperability standards to define the possible levels and permissions in support of linking across many heterogeneous systems. This panel brings together those creating systems, publishers implementing the standards, and those creating the standards. Each will present the opportunities and challenges from their own perspective, the current status of linking and how it will affect their customers - SLA members! Come hear how your job will be easier with the implementation of linked resources and how to use them.

Audiences: All Attendees

Speakers: **Matt Dunie**, President, CSA, Inc.; **Oliver Pesch**, EBSCO, Inc.; **Herbert Van de Sompel**, Los Alamos National Laboratories; **Tony Hammond**, Elsevier

Moderator: **Marjorie M. Hlava**, President & Chairman, Access Innovations, Inc.

*** Networking Opportunities and Business Meetings**

ITE Welcome To Nashville! Open House

Saturday, June 5, 2004 8:00PM - 11:00PM

Join the Information Technology Division to celebrate SLA's arrival in Nashville. Greet your friends and colleagues and meet some new ones. Fun and games - with prizes! Relax a little before the conference rush begins.

DITE 2003 - 2004 Board Meeting

Sunday, June 6, 2004 2:00PM - 4:00PM
Members of the 2003 - 2004 board of the Information Technology Division will meet. All ITE members are welcome to attend.

Mystery Night with Jane Kelly at the ITE Open House

Sunday, June 6, 2004 8:00PM - 11:00PM

Mystery, murder, and mayhem! Join the Information Technology Division and ITE's

own mystery author Jane Kelly. Jane, the author of three mystery novels, will be our hostess for the evening. Speaker(s): Jane Kelly, Independent Consultant



Stars of Music and Starships

Monday, June 7, 2004 8:00PM - 11:00PM

Join ITE for a fun-filled evening of Science Fiction and music industry idols! You never know who will show up, but this is one Open House you don't want to miss!

DITE Business Meeting and Awards Tea

Tuesday, June 8, 2004 3:45PM - 5:00PM

All members of the Information Technology Division are invited and encouraged to attend the DITE Annual Business Meeting and contribute to the division's activities. Division awards will be presented at this meeting.

ITE Goes Native Open House

Tuesday, June 8, 2004 8:00PM - 11:00PM

When in Nashville, dance! Join ITE for some line dancing instruction, and then stick around for a little practice.

DITE 2004 - 2005 Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 9, 2004 11:30AM - 12:45PM

Members of the incoming 2004 - 2005 ITE division board will meet to discuss plans for the upcoming year. All members of the ITE division are welcome and encouraged to attend.



SLA Board Candidates Answer!*

* Two identical questions were given to the nine SLA Board candidates. Answers are listed in the order they were received and minimal editing has been done. You may find the bios of each candidate from SLA website:

<http://www.sla.org/content/SLA/Structure/board-index/04Candidates.cfm>

-Editor

Daniel B. Trefethen

Candidate, Director

daniel.b.trefethen@boeing.com

1. *What can SLA do for its members to improve awareness of developing technologies and the potential affects of those technologies on our profession?*

SLA needs to continue efforts to assess the potential and the pitfalls of new information technology. One good example is the series of responses crafted by Steve Abram to the management refrain, "Everything is available for free on the Internet." SLA members need to be prepared for these opinions with balanced, informed answers that convince management of the value-added nature of information professionals. One of the reasons I joined ITE was this "canary in a mine shaft" attitude, as demonstrated by

the Hot Tech and Dead Tech series of conference programs. I look to ITE to make SLA members smarter about the effects of information technologies on their work (and their worth).

2. How can SLA use information technology to improve services to its membership?

As a web site designer and content owner, as well as a publisher of a weekly electronic newsletter, I know that there's always room for improvement in the electronic delivery of information. I would like to see SLA continue to improve the navigation of its web site. I am encouraged by the use of "push" technology tools such as the SurveyMonkey polling tool and the Board.communicate newsletter. The most immediate IT challenge for the Association is the seamless transition of information delivery services while we are in the process of moving the headquarters. As anyone in IT can tell you, shifting physical locations and assets is an exercise fraught with peril. The Board will need to work closely with staff to assure that IT functions, as well as other functions, do not suffer during the transition.

Daille Pettit

Candidate, President-Elect
pettitdg@jmu.edu

1. What can SLA do for its members to improve awareness of developing technologies and the potential affects of those technologies on our profession?

One of the things that SLA can do for its members to improve awareness of

developing technologies and its affects is to continue to offer the services that it is doing now that are of value. These include providing a venue for cutting edge technologies at our annual convention; offering professional development opportunities in these areas; and being responsive to members' interest in technology. I suggest, however, that SLA form an ad hoc advisory board of members, perhaps partially drawn from ITE, to keep the board and the staff abreast of the latest technology. This group could make recommendations on professional development and program offerings, plus suggest ways SLA could improve its own technology.

2. How can SLA use information technology to improve services to its membership?

SLA has done some good things technologically over the years – I think SurveyMonkey is great, for example – and staff is very aware of the importance of keeping technologically up-to-date. Cost, of course, is always a factor, and the association needs to balance extra cost with increased service. However, in addition to listening to the members (through an advisory board as I suggested in question 1 or through other means) and implementing as many suggestions as possible, the association should do more to help the local chapters develop programming to assist their members "keep up" with technological changes.

Pamela C. Rollo

Candidate, President-Elect
pamela.rollo@lexisnexis.com

1. What can SLA do for its members to improve awareness of developing

technologies and the potential affects of those technologies on our profession?

Most of us within the Association want to broaden and increase our membership and I think that this is the best way to improve the overall Association's awareness of technology. If one of the most valued benefits attested to by membership is networking then a sure way to investigate and judge the effects of technology is through welcoming new talent and providing them a platform for learning and communicating their knowledge and opinions. This recruitment would have to be creative but could begin with targeting self-employed or members of small emerging firms and approaching those technical professionals; they are looking for colleagues. Much of their work is compatible and complementary to our current interests for continuing learning, collaborative workspace and knowledge management. When they see the quality of our other interested professionals whom we can already claim as members, and the content knowledge available, they would immediately see the benefit of joining. The best way to create awareness to bring together knowledgeable people.

2. How can SLA use information technology to improve services to its membership?

As current members of ITE know, SLA is busy designing and testing a new Intranet for members and testing communities of practice. Historically, the Association has introduced Virtual Membership and has also made several improvements making communicating with the Association easier. Frankly, I think it's very challenging to use technology in a way that doesn't sometimes make processes more impersonal or less convenient. What I would love to see is the Association making communication among members

increasingly personal with the introduction of collaborative workspace, not just a place to leave documents but a platform which would enable members to work together on a single project in real time. A series of Webinars on members using new technologies and speaking to the benefits and frustrations of installation and usage would be absolutely great as well.

Trudy Katz

Candidate, Division Cabinet Chair-Elect
trudy_katz@mastercard.com

What can SLA do for its members to improve awareness of developing technologies and the potential affects of those technologies on our profession? How can SLA use information technology to improve services to its membership?

Information Professionals in the business world have long advocated building relationships with our Information Technology colleagues. With the current trend of outsourcing the IT positions to other countries, we are now losing these relationships. It is imperative that we build new infrastructures to keep abreast of developing technologies.

Personally, I have implemented several projects using ideas I gathered from fellow Information Professionals either through informal networking or through attendance at various conferences. I also read our professional journals but I find my own successes through listening and asking questions.

Face time at the annual conferences is wonderful. However, due to various constraints these educational activities can be limited. I believe we need more delivery channels. And SLA should be using the latest technologies to deliver

this information to the membership. Not just discussion lists and virtual seminars but more robust activities that can accommodate real-time communication. I would certainly look to the ITE Division as a source for these ideas. As a past-chair of this division, I personally know the talent and expertise of its membership.

Patricia Cia

Candidate, Chapter Cabinet Chair-Elect
pcia@shaw.ca

What can SLA do for its members to improve awareness of developing technologies and the potential affects of those technologies on our profession? How can SLA use information technology to improve services to its membership?

Focusing on the practicalities of providing excellent service to our clients means that tracking developing technologies is difficult. Acquire and reviewing all the requisite publications require funds and time we do not have.

SLA can help by providing a forum for those who are involved with, or aware of, developing technologies through their work or personal interests. Sessions at the SLA annual conference including new technologies is a start; however time constraints of these sessions result in too general and quick overviews.

Ideas for augmenting the conference sessions:

- a) Regular column in Information Outlook that focusing on information technology, either highlighting new technologies or concentrating on a couple each month.
- b) Section of the association web site consolidating association (i.e. Information

Outlook), division, and chapter contributions to the topics. Include links to vendor white papers which may provide another perspective for our members

Chapter and division bulletins contain excellent summaries of professional development sessions or focus articles on a variety of topics including information technology which often scores high in membership surveys. Members may not focus their attention on technology, but they are interested in what is being developed and how they can adopt and adapt that technology to their situations.

These forums are part of improving awareness of developing technologies. The companion is making members aware of their availability. Using and making members aware of newer communication tools (such as broadcast e-mails) make members aware of the message and demonstrate how technology at all levels can make our jobs easier. Over the past years SLA has experimented with a variety of new technologies. SLA can help our members learn and grow by continuing to be open to new technologies and communicating their availability to our members.

Lyle W. Minter

Candidate, Director
lmin@loc.gov

1. What can SLA do for its members to improve awareness of developing technologies and the potential effects of those technologies on our profession?

SLA members like you in the IT Division ARE the association. It's not the headquarters staff who make up the association, but it's each of us individually and collectively in our workplaces, local

chapters, discussion lists, divisions and at the annual conference who ARE the association. We are the best source of what technologies are hot and how well they work because we're on that famous "bleeding edge," being there in the trenches and doing the work. We can join discussion lists and post information about what we're seeing on the web and in the literature, and what we're hearing from the vendors. We can post our comments about what we're doing at our own work sites to implement the new technologies and we can let others know how the different information services compare with each other. We can be in constant touch with our vendors to let them know what our customers need and how we feel they can improve and enhance their products. We can suggest topics or volunteer to speak at local chapter and conference programs, or we can teach a class. We can BE the Association that will help us mold our future!

2. How can SLA use information technology to improve services to its membership?

Let's say that the questioner means how SLA headquarters staff can use IT to improve membership services. Since we are striving to become a virtual association, we must have the best possible web page. We've made a lot of progress in this direction in the last couple of years but more can be done. Most important of all, members can give the SLA headquarters staff constructive feedback and suggestions about the web page and other programs and services to provide for a continuous improvement loop to benefit all members. For instance, ITE Division's piloting and debugging of the Communities of Practice platform is a great example of how we can use individual member expertise to benefit other members worldwide. As I understand it, CoP will provide an online

member interaction tool, and an additional forum for networking, sharing best practices, and getting access to up-to-date industry news. We could also use RSS technology to establish a web aggregator on the SLA homepage to provide members with the latest news from a variety of open web sources. We can capture webcasts of professional development programs on major topics which members can access at any hour that is convenient for them.

Susan Klopper

Candidate, Director

smklopper@yahoo.com

1. What can SLA do for its members to improve awareness of developing technologies and the potential affects of those technologies on our profession?

SLA has excellent outlets for dialoging with its membership about emerging technologies and their impact on the way we do business: Information Outlook, annual and regional conferences, virtual seminar series, publications, the Research Committee, and more. This is an issue of immense, immediate, and practical impact on the profession and its realities are being played out in many of SLA's member's workplaces right now and, in many cases, already influencing decisions about which career paths we choose to follow, or not. I would like to see SLA take the initiative to partner with members, other information professionals and organizations, vendors, educators, the corporate sector, and technology drivers to spearhead gathering this knowledge and use it to influence library education, educate employers, and provide direction and alternatives to information professionals. This is a very practical and

visible way that SLA can demonstrate its role as a leader in shaping our profession's future.

2. How can SLA use information technology to improve services to its membership?

Technology can be a powerful enabler of learning, teaching, communicating, networking, and sharing. SLA could use technology platforms and applications to nurture communities of practice, create dynamic knowledgebases of practices and lessons learned, create opportunities for global interactive learning and sharing, and more. The question of what SLA could do with technology is the easier one; the tougher question is how does the association best gauge membership willingness, acceptability, and tolerance for embracing these technology outlets. Perhaps more importantly, integrate these opportunities into a palate of offerings that acknowledges that it is an alternate mode of communication and participation, but does not have to be a substitute for the face-to-face. In other words, SLA should focus on creating a balance between the many ways that technology can be used to close time and distance gaps without undermining the membership's need to develop and build on relationships.

Dianna Magnoni

Candidate, Director

dianna.magnoni@olin.edu

1. What can SLA do for its members to improve awareness of developing technologies and the potential affects of those technologies on our profession?

Keeping on top of technology trends has been a challenge for our association and our profession for years, and will remain a challenge. SLA should continue to foster conversations, exchanges of knowledge, and learning across formats, geographic boundaries and time zones. SLA should also pursue new and continued partnerships. The Information Technology Division is a natural partner for the association in developing timely and relevant CE courses and conference programs. While SLA has called on this relationship in the past, I believe the bond can be strengthened. Chapter units are also good geographic partners. Beyond our membership, SLA should partner with technologists to deliver information and learning opportunities to our members. Element K and Ziff Davis University are two possible partners that leap to mind immediately. Deeply discounted courses through these vendors could be an enormous benefit to our members. SLA already works with the library schools to deliver learning opportunities. Bringing together the educational expertise of the library schools, the association benefits of the Research Committee, along with the Professional Development Committee and the Competencies document and matrix, a team could be constantly monitoring the impact of emerging technologies and delivering products to help our members not only understand the new technologies, but adapt quickly and nimbly to changes.

2. How can SLA use information technology to improve services to its membership?

The use of technology to provide services to our members is an area that our staff, our board, and our units have been developing for some time. We have seen increased communication from the board and headquarters with SLA Communicate

and Board Communicate. The association web site is currently in a design review with a recognition that different audiences use the site in unique ways. Committees and units are getting more work done electronically. A major upgrade for membership is the Communities of Practice (CoP) software. The potential collaboration and communication benefits of that software are just now being explored, with the Information Technology Division leading the way. I think we'll see enormous benefits from CoP in the next two to three years. Along the same lines, the association Competencies are being taken a step further this next year. A matrix is being developed that will allow members to interact with the competencies on a personal level, tracking courses, currency, gaps and strengths. The virtual seminars have been a positive step, and distance education should continue to develop and grow. I believe we should celebrate how much we have accomplished in the use of technology to deliver services, and use our successes to brainstorm, build, and deliver even better services.

Katherine Bertolucci

Candidate, Division Cabinet Chair-Elect
isisinform@aol.com

What can SLA do for its members to improve awareness of developing technologies and the potential affects of those technologies on our profession? How can SLA use information technology to improve services to its membership?

I do not want to complain, but the email with these questions was delivered to me four days after the deadline. This was discovered on the same day that SLA called to say a coding glitch had accidentally removed me from the position of Information Futurists Caucus Convener.

Both are dramatic reminders that digital information is the most ephemeral media. That's why digital preservation is such a good idea and digital voting booths are such a bad idea. We live in an era where emails get lost in the ether and human beings get lost by coding. Yet we trust our history and our democratic rights to the IT department.

Many SLA and ITE members have used digital technology far longer than the general population. Even though my first computer had a CP/M operating system, there are SLA members who are much more technologically experienced and capable than me. They have a unique viewpoint on the uses and abuses of information technology. Digitization is changing every aspect of society. Chapter, Division and Association level programs investigating the broader implications of technology would help to inform our membership about the social parameters of a fully digitized society.



ITE Now Seeking Nominations for 2004 Awards

Stacey Greenwell

Member Services, Chair

The Information Technology Division of SLA is now accepting nominations for the following awards, to be presented at the 2004 Annual Conference in Nashville:

The Outstanding ITE Member Award



The ITE Executive Board would like to recognize members' outstanding efforts on behalf of the division. Do you know someone whose contributions to ITE should be recognized? Please send your brief nominations, describing recent Division-related activities to Stacey Greenwell, ITE Member Services Chair, at staceyg@email.uky.edu. Please include "ITE member award" in your subject line. The deadline for submissions is **April 9, 2004**.

Please note that current ITE board members are not eligible for this award. Please see the Division's web site for a list of current members:
<http://www.sla.org/division/dite/index.html>

Outstanding Technology Programming Award

ITE is looking for the most inspired, cutting edge, and innovative chapter technology programming of the 2003-2004 programming year. We'd like to highlight your great programs and events in our Division newsletter, b/ITE. This will not only get you association level publicity, but you'll help spread your chapter's creativity to the membership at large. Because the best programming involves a high level of time and focus, we'd like to recognize your chapter's accomplishments. Examples of great programming range from technology fairs sponsored by chapters to cutting edge and highly relevant presentations such as deep archiving or digital visualization, to innovative workshops and continuing education events. Programming will be judged on its creativity and impact on membership.

The second annual Outstanding Technology Programming award will be presented to a chapter or region at the 2004 Annual Conference in Nashville. The award will consist of an electronic certificate for display on your web page as well as \$500 in seed money to develop further technology programming. ITE will announce the award winner at our annual business meeting. The winning chapter president and program planner will be invited to the meeting to accept the award. We will then re-announce the award during Chapter Cabinet, making the presentation of the check and a hard copy of the virtual award at that time.

Send your program abstract, date, location, and any publicity materials to Stacey Greenwell, ITE Member Services Chair, at staceyg@email.uky.edu. Please include "chapter technology program" in your subject line. The deadline for submissions is **April 9, 2004**.

Joe Ann Clifton Student Award

The Executive Board of ITE has authorized the Division to offer an award as follows:



- Student membership in SLA for one (1) year.
- Expenses to attend the SLA Annual Conference to not exceed \$1,500 and limited to the following:
 - a. Economy class round-trip airfare to the Annual Conference.
 - b. Basic student registration for the Annual Conference (including the ITE Business meeting).
 - c. Lodging for the duration of the conference.
 - d. Transportation (taxis and buses) during the conference.
 - e. Meals for the award winner during the conference.
- Recognition and presentation of the winning paper at the Annual Business Meeting of the ITE. Winning paper to be published in *b/ITE*.

This award is to promote participation in the SLA Annual Conference by a deserving library science student. The monetary portion of the award will be awarded only if the winner is present at the designated conference.

DEADLINE: The deadline for submission of papers will be **January 9, 2004**. Submit your paper to Stacey Greenwell, ITE Member Services Chair, at staceyg@email.uky.edu. Please include "student award" in your subject line.



Submission Requirements:

1. Applicants will be judged on the content of a paper written on a topic of the applicant's choosing pertaining to the use of information technology. Preference will be given to a paper which addresses a problem in practical rather than theoretical manner. Applicants should use a style manual of their choosing.
2. Applicants **MUST** be enrolled in an accredited MLS or MIS program at the time of the award competition. Previous winners will not be eligible for the award.
3. Entries may be existing papers which the applicant has written or is preparing for a class, but which have not previously been published in the journal literature. One paper per applicant, please!
4. ITE reserves the right not to award the prize in a given year if it is the opinion of the judges that no submissions are worthy of the award.
5. ITE will retain 1st serial publication rights of the winning paper.

For all three awards above, please send nomination/submission materials to Stacey Greenwell, ITE Member Services Chair, at staceyg@email.uky.edu (preferred) or mail to Stacey Greenwell, Electronic Resources, 2-1 William T. Young Library, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0456.



-Joe Ann Clifton Student Award Honorable Mention

Partial reflections: the issue of incomplete digital archives on fee- based subscription databanks

Eli Edwards*

San Jose State University

** Eli Edwards is a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at San Jose State University. Eli also works in the Acquisitions Department of Stanford University Libraries. She has been a member of SLA (and the News Division) since 2001 and is interested in news librarianship and digital preservation.*

Online databanks have long been powerful and dependable tools for advanced information seekers. But the information technology revolution has greatly increased the popularity of these instruments: faster computers with larger storage capacity, high-bandwidth connectivity within and between networks, the growth of the Internet and graphical interfaces has allowed for more productive digitizing of information and more efficient information-seeking by a wide range of users, whether dedicated information brokers or middle-school students. Digital archives of newspaper, magazine and journal content are becoming significant sources of revenue for major publishers, in addition to being the first resort of increasing numbers of researchers. Moreover, information seekers (librarians, scholars, students, professionals, laypeople) see electronic databases as digital versions of the historical record. Quint asserts, "When searchers use a

database archive, they expect it to be as complete as possible. We all know that no full-text archive is really complete ... Nevertheless, we do rely on the service to provide a consistent level of coverage." (Quint, "Stop the Trash Trucks," 2001, 18) Unfortunately, many librarians, scholars and other searchers feel that the integrity of online databases is threatened by recent and growing gaps in digital archives. One major (and highly controversial) factor in the phenomenon of missing content in online databases is the *New York Times Co. v. Tasini* case.

The Pre-Tasini Environment

According to Kennedy, newspapers began archiving content digitally in the 1970s as electronic clippings – for in-house storage and access by editorial staff (editors, reporters and news librarians). (2002, p. 51-52) Online database vendors soon began licensing this material for outsider use. In many newsrooms, librarians not only managed the migration of data to aggregators and vendors but also became major users of content from other newspapers and magazines. However, "news organizations, with their intense focus on preparing the next day's publication, were for many years mostly unaware, and to some extent unimpressed, by the implications of online distribution." (Kennedy, 2002, p. 52) The general assumption among the publishing industry was that the digital landscape was the same as the print medium, a medium that had been clearly defined by decades or even centuries of experience.

However, there was one recent and notable change in copyright law. In the Copyright Act of 1976, Congress gave freelance writers all rights to their content although publishers retained the right to revise/reformat an edition in print or non-print media (such as microfilm). (Kennedy, 2002, p. 51) In the 1980s, freelance writers began to find their material on online databases, even though

their publishing contracts had made no provision for resale or digital distribution rights. In 1993, under the banner of the National Writers' Union and its president, Jonathan Tasini, 11 freelancers sued major newspapers and database aggregators in federal court for copyright infringement. The District Court found in favor of the publishers/defendants; on appeal, the decision was overturned in favor of the plaintiffs. By the time the case reached review by the Supreme Court, five writers dropped out of the case.

The Court decided the case on June 25, 2001 in favor of the plaintiffs in a 7-2 decision (Stevens and Breyer, dissenting). The Justices rejected the defendants' argument that the content sold to and accumulated by database aggregators constituted a digital archive similar to microfilm archives and are covered by the privileges of publishers to revise collective works. In its majority decision, the Court found:

(1) the massive whole of the databases in question is not recognizable as a new version of the databases' every small part, (2) the articles in the databases in question may be viewed "as part of" no larger work at all, but simply as individual articles presented individually, (3) an asserted analogy between the databases and microfilm and microfiche is wanting, (4) the result is not changed merely because users can manipulate the databases to generate search results consisting entirely of articles from a particular periodical edition, and (5) the publishers' warning that a ruling for the authors will have "devastating" consequences by punching gaping holes in the

electronic record of history is unavailing. ("*New York Times Co. v. Tasini*," 2002)

According to the Court, these digital archives are, by their nature, stripped of the context of the originals. The digital archives are not wholly distinct, thus the rights to the freelance content of the archive belong with the original right-holders, i.e. the creators. Thus the publishers did not have the right to redistribute freelance material without the express permission of the content's authors.

The Post-Tasini Environment

Most newspaper publishers added language to standard freelance contracts to cover digital redistribution, but some media companies removed an unknown number of freelance articles from 1973 to 1994 or beyond from online databases. Reports of removal from newspapers include the following:

- The *New York Times* removed an estimated 115,000 articles from LexisNexis and its web-based archive – mostly articles from the Travel, Op-Ed and Book Review sections. (Lasica, 2001, "Willingful Infringement")
- The *San Diego Union-Tribune* removed material from 1984 to 1999 – whether from freelance or in-house writers – from all online databases. Other Gannett Co. newspapers were also temporarily removed from LexisNexis for review in light of the *Tasini* decision. (Kennedy, 2002, p. 55)
- Philadelphia Newspapers – a publishing group that includes *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Philadelphia Daily News* – reportedly removed 33% of its online archive of 2.5 million articles. ("*Fallout from Tasini*," 2002, p. 71)

Database companies have responded to the *Tasini* decision in various ways. Factiva has a section on its website called "Content Watch" that includes updates of *Tasini*-related removals of articles. (Quint, "*Tasini*", 2002, p. 10) LexisNexis sent a letter to content providers after the Supreme Court ruling, asking them to identify material for removal from its database. (Lasica, 2001, p. 4) In October 2001, the company sent another letter, this time to inform news librarians that whole titles (from the Gannett chain) would be temporarily removed from LexisNexis. (Kennedy, 2002, p. 56) LexisNexis also provides updates on *Tasini*-related removals in its online content guide. (Quint, "*Tasini*," 2002, p. 10) Dialog, however, has no general response. Quint earlier reports that a help record in Dialog for the *San Jose Mercury News* and *Contra Costa Papers* include a warning of missing articles due to the *Tasini* aftermath. ("Stop the Trash Trucks," 2002, p. 4) Later, she finds that while the removal of files are announced immediately after log-in to Dialog Classic, no explanation is given for the removals. (Quint, "*Tasini*," 2002, p. 10-12)

Reactions among the information and research communities

The major defendants in the case are still in arbitration with the NWU over damages. Most observers, however, are growing pessimistic over the possibility of removed content being restored to online databases. Librarians, scholars and other researchers are frustrated with the current situation and find that there is plenty of blame to share among the parties of the suit. Garman argues in 2000 that a ruling in favor of freelance writers would have a "crushing impact" on information access via online databases and that the "challenge [of information professionals] is to consider how to reconcile authors'

rights with the need for continued access to the information that is our stock in trade." (Garman, 2002, p. 7)

During the *Tasini* case, *amici curiae* briefs were filed on both sides by groups of historians. ("Fallout from *Tasini*," 2002, p. 71) The American Library Association (ALA) and Association of Research Libraries (ARL) filed an amicus curie brief with the Supreme Court on behalf of the plaintiffs, while the Special Libraries Association (SLA) remained neutral throughout the case. In the wake of the Supreme Court decision, researchers are finding that the gaps in online databases are affecting their work. According to ALA's *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*, "Almost twenty years' worth of newspaper history, a vital source of information for those studying history, politics, society, the media and other subjects, is affected." (2002, p. 70) Historian David M. Kennedy of Stanford University, who supported the freelancers, says of the current situation, "This was exactly the fear of those of us who signed the brief – that this would create an inferior online source ... To the extent that articles are not available or there's a disparity between the electronic and paper record, that just complicates my research program." (p. 70) Social-science researchers who use online databases for content or trend analyses or other forms of mass media data mining find that gaps in online databases significantly impacts their research. According to Steven J. Tepper of Princeton's Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, each hit he finds or misses is crucial: "[Missing one relevant article] really biases the results – the difference between twelve cases and eight cases can be really important when you are doing statistical analysis." (p. 70)

In an article immediately following the decision, Quint suggests that if full-text availability of freelance content was disabled on various databases, the

inverted files based on the original full text could still be used to show researchers exactly where the gaps exist within a given source. ("Stop the Trash Trucks," 2001, "Another Solution") Months later, she finds that there is no uniform system across all databases that can notify users of gaps in their archives. On the contrary, Quint argues that the reluctance of database vendors to develop and distribute useful statistics and 'come clean' with their users ultimately undermines the credibility of those vendors. "[T]he greatest casualty imposed on the information industry by Tasini may turn out to be the loss of traditional full-text vendors' reputations." ("Tasini, 2002, p. 8) She continues, "Librarians, information professionals, and their clients can't wait months or years to start coping with the negative effects of *Tasini*. They need to act now." (p. 12) Moreover, Quint fears where clients may turn for information if online databases losing their credibility.

If people come to find commercial sources unreliable, if addicts of the free and open Web find that service to which they pay top dollar cannot deliver what they have promised, if uncertain users seeking the comfortable security of an established brand-name publications cannot even maintain a reliable inventory of their own archives Well, how long before disenchanted, disillusioned (or should we say re-illusioned) users decide they could do just as well floating across the Web picking up information as they go? ("Stop the Trash Trucks," 2001, "Ungored Oxen")

Conclusion

The online database industry has gone through major evolutions since its early stages in the 1960s and 1970s. But despite the tremendous growth of the 1990s, database vendors are also in a precious situation. The determination of rights and privileges for online content, whether born digital or converted for electronic use, is an ongoing and contentious battle. The vendors also walk a fine line between content providers and end-users, many of who are both providers and seekers of information. In order to retain the integrity of their databases, vendors must actively and honestly manage the user expectations by acknowledging problems and how they affect the process of information seeking in online environments.

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