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[Chair's column: Linda Heichman](#)

By Linda Heichman

As spring nears, I am reminded of new beginnings, re-energization and renewal. These themes are particularly applicable to LACASIS this year. The chapter welcomed several relative newcomers to our Board and Advisory Council last October, namely Rachael Clemens, Chair-Elect; Christina Salazar, Secretary; and Margaret Hogarth, Program Recorder and E-Publicity Coordinator. Our website has a fresh new look thanks to energetic Webmaster Marla Gunasegaram. We launched our first issue of e-OASIS, spearheaded by dynamo Louisa Verma [[more](#)]

[Guest article: Human Society vs. Cyborg Society: As I See Them](#)

By Benedict A. Oladele, Ph.D

As a practicing librarian of 25 years standing from Nigeria, I have had the opportunity to experience at close range information activities and the application of information technology to information management on the continent. Coming to the U.S. therefore as a Fulbright scholar has given me the opportunity not only to see the other side of the picture but to also study the extent to which Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have impacted on the information service delivery capacity of think tank libraries in the States. [[more](#)]

[LACASIS/SLA-SCC Joint Holiday Party](#)

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[LACASIS Awards Dinner](#)

By Margaret Hogarth

The LACASIS Awards Dinner was held at the UCLA Faculty Center on January 13, 2003. [[more](#)]

[ASIS&T 2003: Business Meeting Summary](#)

By Amy Wallace

The business meeting opened with a report from outgoing President Trudi Bellardo Hahn. Cecelia Preston gave the Treasurer's Report. Dick Hill presented the Executive Director's Report. Samantha Hastings, the incoming President, wrapped up the meeting. [[more](#)]

[ASIS&T 2003: Death of the User](#)

By Margaret Hogarth

The Death of the User panel at the ASIS&T Conference started out with Howard Rosenbaum, of Indiana University, pointing out that the concept of the user has had a rich and fruitful life in library and information science (LIS), influencing both design and practitioners. This has helped us to understand how people interact with computers, shows what makes an interface easy to use, and has improved ergonomics. The problem with "the user" as a concept is that many information and communication technologies (ICTs) are developed for a wide variety of users and are costly failures. Many of these systems are balky and need continuous patching. [[more](#)]

[ASIS&T 2003: Sunday Keynote Plenary:](#)

By Margaret Hogarth

LACASIS News

Bulletin Article on the ASIS&T Joint Chapter Virtual Program

After a planning and implementation period of about a year and a half, our first virtual program was held in December 2002. The development and programming of the e-conference was through the joint efforts of the Los Angeles and New England Chapters of ASIS&T. Read the full story in the December/January 2004 ASIS&T Bulletin at: <http://www.asis.org/Bulletin/Dec-03/virtual.html>

LACASIS members donate to the SIG III Digital Scholar's Fund.

A special thanks to the following LACASIS members who contributed to this year's Digital Scholar's Fund and International Papers Contest. An additional \$300 was sent to SIG III due to member contributions bringing the total donation to \$600. Read more about the SIG III International Paper Contest at the SIG III website: <http://www.asis.org/SIG/SIGIII/>

- Marianne Afifi
- Dudee Chiang
- Marcia Henry
- Karen Howell
- Roberta Horowitz
- Linda Rudell-Betts
- Bo-Gay Tong Salvador
- Louisa Verma
- Amy Wallace

Jodi Forlizzi spoke on "Interfaces for People: Design for Emotion, Image, and Sound." Anne Gilliland-Swetland spoke on "Digital Asset Management and Electronic Archives." Brian Detlor spoke on "Library Portals and Enterprise Intranets." [[more](#)]

[ASIS&T 2003: Usability in Practice](#)

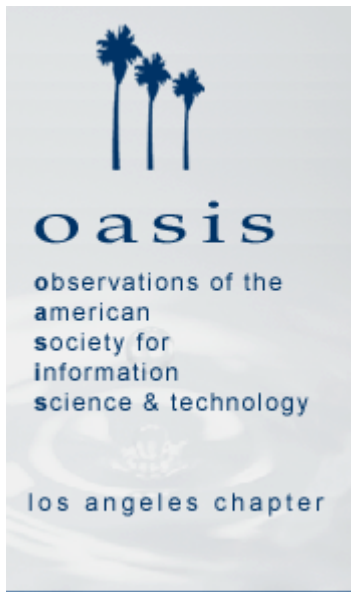
By Margaret Hogarth

Randolph G. Bias, the University of Texas at Austin spoke on "The Dangers of Amateur Usability Engineering." Barbara M. Wildemuth, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill spoke on "Identifying Critical Usability Problems from Discount Usability Testing." Allison Druin, University of Maryland spoke about "The Roles Children Can Play in the Technology Design Process." Sandra G. Hirsh, Hewlett-Packard Laboratories, spoke of "Application of Usability Findings into Design." [[more](#)]

[ASIS&T 2003: Notes from the 2003 ASIS&T Annual Conference](#)

By Ann Coppin

I attended the American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) Annual Conference held in Long Beach on October 19-22, 2003. The theme of the meeting was "Humanizing Information Technology: From Ideas to Bits and Back." The following is a summary of my notes from a few of the sessions I attended. [[more](#)]

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From the LACASIS Chair

By Linda Heichman

As spring nears, I am reminded of new beginnings, re-energization and renewal. These themes are particularly applicable to LACASIS this year. The chapter welcomed several relative newcomers to our Board and Advisory Council last October, namely Rachael Clemens, Chair-Elect; Christina Salazar, Secretary; and Margaret Hogarth, Program Recorder and E-Publicity Coordinator. Our website has a fresh new look thanks to energetic Webmaster Marla Gunasegaram. We launched our first issue of e-OASIS, spearheaded by dynamo Louisa Verma.

Two New Programs Planned

This year we will host a few different types of programs, including a half-day workshop on OpenURL on Friday, April 2. Complete details and registration for this workshop can be found at the LACASIS website: <http://public.csusm.edu/lacasis/>. LACASIS will be co-sponsoring (along with ISI and UCLA) the 2003 Samuel Lazerow Memorial Lecture for more information visit: http://is.gseis.ucla.edu/news/2003_lessig.htm.

Awards Given

As always, the strength of LACASIS comes from its members. We are thrilled that once again this year LACASIS won several awards at the ASIS&T Annual Conference:

- Chapter of the Year (with the Southern Ohio Chapter),
- Chapter Electronic Publication of the Year (LACASIS website) and
- Chapter Print Publication of the Year (OASIS).

Individual LACASIS Members were selected for two other awards:

- Cretsos Leadership Award (Amy Wallace)
- Chapter Member of the Year (Louisa Verma)

Cheers and congratulations to Amy, Louisa, and to the entire chapter membership!

We wouldn't be able to sustain such a fantastic group of members, leaders, officers and Advisory Council members and provide a rich calendar of events and programs year after year if it weren't for the enthusiasm and energy of each and every one of our members.

All the best to you during this vibrant season and may the wonders of spring bring new life and invigoration into your world.

Linda

Linda Heichman (lheichman@fullerton.edu) is the current LACASIS chair and Business Librarian at Pollak Library, California State University, Fullerton.


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Human Society vs. Cyborg Society: As I See Them

By Benedict A. Oladele, Ph.D

As a practicing librarian of 25 years standing from Nigeria, I have had the opportunity to experience at close range information activities and the application of information technology to information management on the continent. Coming to the U.S. therefore as a Fulbright scholar has given me the opportunity not only to see the other side of the picture but to also study the extent to which Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have impacted on the information service delivery capacity of think tank libraries in the States.

It is interesting to find that while libraries in Africa are constrained by a paucity of information, their counterparts in the U.S. seem to suffer from an avalanche of information overload. This state of affairs is certainly not unconnected with the existence of enabling environment and the influence of ICTs as tools for information management. Among the think tank libraries, findings show that ICT has impacted more positively in the areas of OPAC, Circulation, Collection Development, resource sharing and reprography but weak in the areas of reference and alerting services. On the whole, the technologies have impacted positively on information service delivery to the extent that there exists a first order effect on the research initiatives and activities of readers, most of whom are research scholars, fellows, faculty and graduate students.

In terms of impression, the high profile nature of the influence of ICTs on American society is visible enough for all to see. Activities and operations of routine nature have been automated so much that the human thought systems and orientations have been affected in a number of ways that beat one's imagination. Consequently, new habits and culture have emerged in much the same way the old ones have been redefined. By way of illustration, it is a common feature to see someone apparently oblivious to her or his environment driving or walking alone down the street talking and grinning at an 'invisible spirit'. One quickly discovers that the person was simply making a cell phone call. This is something of a culture shock, given the chaotic nature of traffic, which calls for extra caution and safety for pedestrians and vehicle users. Furthermore, the individual without necessarily leaving the comfort of his or her home can either talk to or email someone, participate in ICT-mediated discussion group, monitor e-governance related activities, transact e-commerce deals, submit e-education papers, participate in e-journey to spirituality, e-dating the supposedly paragon of beauty who may as well be a robot or even e-marriages to mention a few of the e-possibilities. In all these activities, the notions of time, distance and spatial barriers are completely eliminated and herein lay the true meaning of the concept of global village. The allure of these e-possibilities are so overwhelming that the individual seems not to have any option than to get enmeshed in their raging hysteria. The question that seems to beg for an answer is what are the opportunity costs of this pervasive hysteria. Beneath this hysteria, though inadvertently, there is a gradual displacement of the American human society by an ever-emerging cyborg society, which is that plastic and impersonal world that is characterized by the prevalence of information technologies and societal over-reliance on them as platforms for human interactions.

In the human society, personal touch, humanness, warmth, discretion, judgment, and flexibility are cherished core values. Communication and particularly interpersonal conversation readily becomes the fluid that animates the society while facial expressions and body movements or signs all serve to enhance the quality and value of such communication. The unspoken messages or hidden words of the interactions are contained in those signs and it takes a discerning mind to decipher them. In the cyborg society, on the contrary, relationships are close yet distant, cold, emotionless and rigid. Interactions are defined by individual capacity to access technologies including the level of resourcefulness individuals can muster to exploit them. In most cases, decision-making in the cyborg world is more inclined towards mechanical and legalistic frameworks leaving parties to interactions little or no room for discretion. At this level, the dividing line between the human being and the robot becomes very thin or blurred.

Issues and interactions are seen and discussed only through the prism of technologies instead of the human angle just as relationships are depersonalized. This is not to denigrate the importance and relevance of information technologies in the contemporary society. Their invention is certainly one development that has given new meaning to human capacity and imagination.



Past LACASIS co-chair Bo-Gay Salvador with UCLA Fulbright Scholar Benedict Oladele

In utilizing ICTs, there is always the risk for the society, just as is now happening in the U.S., to abdicate its responsibility by sacrificing without knowing, its core values in such a way that human thinking and behavior are conditioned by a combine interaction of hard and software. The consequence of such development is the emergence of a cold and soulless society. It is at this crossroad that the intervention of information professionals becomes very crucial more importantly on the need for them to stand in the vanguard of advocacy for moderation in the human-machine interface. Society needs to maintain a delicate balance between human and machine-mediated interactions. In particular, more research activities are required in order to understand the nature, dynamics and the social effects of ICTs on the human society. The human society cannot afford to surrender its core values to technologies rather technologies must be used to reinforce the values for the sustenance of the society.

Benedict A. Oladele, PhD (oladele@international.ucla.edu, benolak8@yahoo.com) was a recent Fulbright Scholar doing research at the James S. Coleman Africa Studies Center, University of California at Los Angeles

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Guest Speaker Kelly Lange: LACASIS/SLA-SCC Joint Holiday Party

By Margaret Hogarth

LACASIS and the Southern California Chapter of the Special Library Association hosted a joint holiday party at the elegant Los Angeles Athletic Club December 11, 2003. Following vivacious conversation and cocktails, Kelly Lange regaled us with the story of how she got her start as a news anchor.

Born in Merrimac, she went to college in Massachusetts, and got her credentials at UCLA. In the '60's, the KABC radio station held multiple contests throughout California looking for a ladybird to ride in the news helicopter and give the traffic report. Hugh Hefner was one of the judges. The contest moved from mall to mall where long lines of hopeful ladybirds auditioned in a trailer, one going so far as to dress in a space suit. On her second try, disguised with her hair tucked into a hat and a new pseudonym, Kelly energetically spun off her own funny traffic copy. She was hired! A subsequent contest named her Dawn O'Day. Her costume was a skin-tight silver lame jumpsuit. To get into the suit, she had to "hook the zipper on a nail and jump off a chair." Ladybird served at promotional functions such as accompanying VIP clients in the news helicopter.

In order to get into television, the competition was fierce and many great-looking people had relatives in the industry, but Kelly found success through hard work, talent, and moxie (and perhaps, a tad bit of embellishment).

For many years, Kelly anchored the 11 o'clock news. The staff would gather afterwards to evaluate the show, and so Kelly wouldn't get home until around 2 am. To unwind before falling asleep, she'd read mystery novels. After reading so many, she felt that it might be better use of her time and talents if she began writing her own. So she started writing her own mystery novel in 1995. At that time of night, police, hospitals and fire departments are always open and have some one on call who is usually willing to answer questions. She would do her research by telephone as she was writing through the night. Soon she realized that the difference between interviewing as a journalist and interviewing as a mystery writer was that people are reluctant to talk for the news, but absolutely love being interviewed for fiction. At times it is hard to stray from writing news, but Kelly finds fiction very liberating. She kills off a boyfriend who dumped her, draws liberally from real life (if not, she just makes it up, it is fiction after all). All of her books are set at the fictional Channel 6 News in Burbank with news anchor Maxie Pool. Maxie walks Kelly's walk, talks Kelly's talk, but gets away with so much more.

Kelly sold signed copies of her books, very timely during the holiday season, and kept us laughing and interested.

Margaret Hogarth (mhogarth@fullerton.edu) is Interim Library Web Coordinator at CSU Fullerton Pollak Library.


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LACASIS Awards Dinner

By Margaret Hogarth

The LACASIS Awards Dinner was held at the UCLA Faculty Center on January 13, 2003.

Outstanding Members

This year's LACASIS outstanding member award winners were Louisa Verma and Rachel Clemens. Louisa Verma, has been chapter Treasurer, worked on the LACASIS/NEASIST Joint Chapter Virtual Program, been a good helper and taken a lot of interest in the chapter. Rachael Clemens, the current Programs Chair and past coordinator of the annual workshop, also received an outstanding member award. She did a tremendous job with our workshop and bolstered membership.

Margaret McKinley Scholarship

The winner of 2003 Margaret McKinley scholarship was Joanne Orsatti of the University of New South Wales, Australia. The two runners-up were Lisa When, University of Hawaii at Manoa, and Wi Peng Yue also of University of New South Wales, Australia. The winner receives an all expense paid trip to the ASIS&T Annual conference, the two runners-up receive free ASIS&T membership for a year. Our scholarship has international reach!

Contributions to Information Science Award

The Contributions to Information Science Award is for individuals who have made a significant contribution to the field, who have commitment and vision of a significant singular accomplishment. This year's award went to Dr. Tefko Saracevic, Professor, School of Communication, Information and Library Studies, Rutgers. He was the president of the American Society for Information Science (ASIS) in 1991 and is the Editor-in-Chief of Information Processing & Management.

Tefko Saracevic, Biographical Information

Dr. Saracevic studied electrical engineering at the University of Zagreb, Croatia and completed his Master's (1962) and Ph.D. (1970) studies in information science at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. He was promoted to Professor II (the highest academic rank at Rutgers University) in 1991. He has served as Associate Dean since 2003. He tests and evaluates use of information retrieval systems, and performs user and use studies and studies of user-derived values of information systems. He has received research grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Health, Rockefeller, UNESCO, and the Department of Education. Dr. Saracevic has been extremely active in ASIS&T, serving as President in 1991, receiving the Gerald Salton Award in 1997, the ASIS&T Award of Merit in 1995, he has been awarded the JASIS Best Paper award, and is editor-in-chief of Information Processing and Management. More information about Dr. Saracevic's work can be found at his website: <http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~tefko/index.htm>.

Human Information Behavior in Digital Libraries

Dr. Saracevic spoke on Human Information Behavior in Digital Libraries. With over 6,000 digital libraries worldwide, there are many practical developments. Digital libraries are defined by content, organization, access, and use and also in terms of institutions. There are three basic components: the producers who make the tools, the libraries themselves and consumers; these factors mesh together to form the digital library. As digital libraries approach maturity, we can begin looking at human information behavior and how humans fit in. What processes and variables do we include in this study? What methods, models, context and effects do we look for?

Most digital library research has focused on technical aspects, such as how to handle images, maps, and multiple collections. Human information behavior is investigated far less. Dr. Saracevic has reviewed these studies in his lab; some studies looked at how humans behave or seek information, how engineers seek information, or problems with OPACs. Most deal with some aspect of evaluation with the human side is stuck in as an afterthought. However, human information behavior is very much a part of digital library evaluation.



Dr. Saracevic

In these studies many questions are asked and examined:

- How do we describe the user populations?
- Who uses digital libraries and why?
- What is the nature of the users' tasks and queries?
- What knowledge and learning was needed?
- What was expected and preferred?
- What features did the digital library offer, and which were being used?
- How frequently were these features being used?
- Can we predict any patterns of use?
- How was the digital library being accessed, and from where?
- How often was it accessed and was access repeated?
- What kind of time and effort does browsing in the digital library require?
- How many items are used, and for what purpose?
- What social practices are associated with their use?
- How easy is the interface to use?
- How effective are the features?
- Did patrons find what they were looking for?
- What kinds of hindrances, barriers or frustrations do users face when using this digital library?
- How much needs to be learned in order to use the digital library?
- What was actually downloaded as opposed to what was browsed?
- What was the relevance of results retrieved? How useful were they?
- What was the satisfaction level?
- What impact did the results have on the users?

There is a huge difference in the way that individuals use digital library features, because each person is unique. For individuals using the same database, the overlap in search terms is only 25%. The overlap in retrieved results is 17-18% and general overlap in the study was 2%. Digital libraries typically produce these kinds of results.

Overall results were interesting. About 50% of use of digital libraries is repeat use. Access varies according to the nature of desired materials. Users vary in terms of skills and understanding. Some features may not be used. Dr. Saracevic compared the features available in a catalog and what is actually used in the catalog. The first two screens of the interface are most commonly used. There ought to be a significant effort in the education of users. Online tutorials are not being used; maybe telepathy will work! As our computer-savvy children grow, Dr. Saracevic believes this will change. Professors are some of the worst users of digital libraries. Academic digital libraries are seeing soaring use. Numbers of reference questions are declining, yet the use of reference services on the Web is going up. The 80-20 rule no longer applies; Dr. Saracevic suggests that 90% of questions are being answered by 10% of the collection.

There are many barriers to usability since effectiveness varies greatly. Frustration is easily triggered because people measure patience in nanoseconds. If it can't be found right away, it doesn't exist. Believe it or not, some people actually download and print the entire collection--even though print costs are skyrocketing and we are killing trees at an alarming rate.

Outcomes are interesting. Most queries do not lead to viewing, although Dr. Saracevic is not sure why. Text materials by themselves are not very interesting or appealing. The most successful digital library in the world is the Library of Congress' American Memory Collection (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/ndlmps.html>), a very judicious collection. The value of this collection is that it contributes to education and, as a result, the Library of Congress is saying that their primary objective is education.

Dr. Saracevic notices similarities between digital libraries and academic libraries. When people use digital libraries they talk with each other about it, something that is not seen with articles. People love to engage in the social practice of complaining.

Studying information behavior in a digital library context is hard but not impossible. We do not have many good general models. Look at the basic components: users, tasks and contexts. Evaluate outcomes: are they happy or frustrated? Tasks feed back into themselves. Human information behavior in digital libraries is quite different than that in traditional libraries. Behavior is related more to technology. Research in this area is still in its infancy and is not being funded. No research agency is interested in this issue but it is necessary for the understanding in how to build better digital libraries and services.

Special Thanks

A special thank you to sponsors Barbara Nye and Cindy Nunes of ICTUS Consulting, LLC (<http://www.ictus.com/about.html>) for helping to make this event possible, and to the Metropolitan Water District, and the Getty

Trust.

Margaret Hogarth (mhogarth@fullerton.edu) is Interim Library Web Coordinator at CSU Fullerton, Pollak Library.

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Business Meeting Summary: ASIS&T Annual Conference 2003

By Amy Wallace

Outgoing President Report

The business meeting opened with a report from outgoing President Trudi Bellardo Hahn. She reported that 2002/2003 was a good year for the American Society for Information Science and Technology. Both the Information Architecture Summit and Annual Conference were well attended. She discussed several upcoming projects and events. STI SIG and NEASIS will collaborate on the Summit on Digital Archives for Science and Engineering Resources. In 2004 ASIS&T will launch a redesigned website based on member survey results and a digital library that allows members to electronically access all publications. The society will also focus on services to international members, expanding job placement services, offering institutional memberships, and raising the visibility or restructuring the Special Interest Groups.

Treasurer Report

Cecelia Preston gave the Treasurer's Report. She noted that this was a good year financially for the society despite the overall bad economic climate in the United States. ASIS&T was able to put \$ 22,000 into its reserves. It was also able to allocate funds to the website redesign and digital library projects.

Executive Director Report

Dick Hill presented the Executive Director's Report. He reported that the new membership system that would allow members to update and track membership information online was not yet a reality. All membership information has been transferred to the new system, but the reports generated have not been very reliable. The staff at ASIS&T Headquarters will continue to work toward making the new and improved membership system operational. He talked about how the Digital Library Project may take a bit longer than expected because members desired an updated thesaurus before the system went live. Dick mentioned two other projects key projects. The society recently acquired the asist.org domain for a fraction of the cost that it was offered three years ago. It is also looking to partner with universities to offer discounted courses.

Incoming President Report

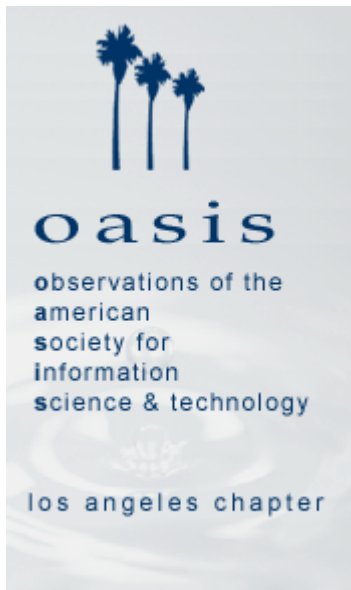
Samantha Hastings, the incoming President, wrapped up the meeting by saying that she will focus her efforts in three areas:

1. Membership Databas
2. ASIS&T Digital Library completion, and
3. Redesigned website launch

She also stressed that she is looking forward to reading the conference evaluation forms to see which topics, conferences, and projects are of the

most interest to ASIS&T members.

*Amy Wallace (amy.wallace@csuci.edu) is Head of Public Services,
California State University at Channel Islands University Library*

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Death of the User: ASIS&T Annual Conference Session

By Margaret Hogarth

The Death of the User panel at the ASIS&T Conference started out with Howard Rosenbaum, of Indiana University, pointing out that the concept of the user has had a rich and fruitful life in library and information science (LIS), influencing both design and practitioners. This has helped us to understand how people interact with computers, shows what makes an interface easy to use, and has improved ergonomics. The problem with "the user" as a concept is that many information and communication technologies (ICTs) are developed for a wide variety of users and are costly failures. Many of these systems are balky and need continuous patching.

Therefore, as the title of this panel suggests, the panelists were focusing on the question: Does the concept of the user still have value? The panel's concluding response was "yes," but not the traditional concept of the user, which was felt to be "socially thin." It would be better to use the social informatics approach in the context of design, implementation and user. The one-size-fits-all concept doesn't scale well. It doesn't take into account social affiliations, environments, interactions, or identities. ICT use is shaped by a constellation of these dimensions for particular types of actors in particular types of settings.

Elisabeth Davenport, Napier University, found the term user was not specific enough; is it the seeking user or asking user? The user concept is confused by human computer interaction (HCI) usability approaches. Five years ago hard-core technical studies dominated the field. User models were insensitive to the world of work context, with key terms like situation and environment not well defined. Five years later, there is an abundance of data and the field has been transformed. Methods that focus on small studies won't allow us to grapple with important issues. We must move beyond bibliometrics to include socio-spatial mapping and its associated techniques. These techniques can be applied to a greatly extended range of phenomena data. There is also a need for middle and long-range projects to explore recommender systems and the influence of oligopoly.

Content curation is now a dominant activity in scholarly publishing, shifting in focus from using information to establishing a presence with the aim of being visible and used. In this environment of constant surveillance the user may be left behind - the Matthew Effect. Without remediation users may never catch up due to effects of networks, their significance for socio technical interactions and the migration of cognitive modeling into the machine.

Leah Lievrouw, University of California, Los Angeles, believes there are similarities between bibliographic tradition and social network analysis. While focusing on biotechnology and communication, Ms. Lievrouw has noticed the blurring of the lines between the notions of information and using information. User connotes an instrumental idea but doesn't capture the relations that users have in their communities and in the technical

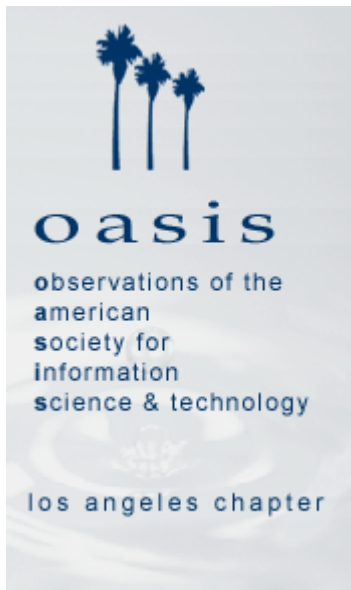
world. Users are acted upon, cannibalized, watched and are watching. The physical body and mind have been informationalized.

Classic biotechnology until the middle 19th century was craft knowledge. Modern biotechnology included microbiology, and the industrial production of the chemical products of microbe metabolism. New biotechnology is wedded to the science of genetics and to enterprise applications: patents, investment capital and tax laws. In this world organisms are redefined radically as information and are reset in terms of codes and translations. The metaphor is no longer metaphor but information. In this context, users become information, also. Interrelationships may be intelligent but the activities we as users engage in are not well directed. Instead, users are simply being in the world, as co-determiners or elements in it. These are actors, ensembles, and actor network theory. We are so bound up in networks, networks look like what we think the world is. If this is so, we are informational entities, nodes in a network. This raises serious questions about agencies. Are users agencies? What has agency? This model raises questions about power and the ethics of information. What information shall be private or not? When are persons defined as informational? What informational entities are entitled to freedom?

Ron Day of Wayne State University pointed out the death of the user as an individual and rise of the user as a social being, paralleling materialist post-structuralism. Text is an informational object, but it is also information emitting information. Users form not only communities of practice but also communities of interpretation. The static user is a mental structure, a conduit metaphor. Users should be seen as dynamic or expressive models, not as a network, but as an expressive being. Actors and agents act and are embedded socially. The user is instrumentalized.

This panel was stimulating, very theoretical, and gave the large, intense audience much to discuss and ponder.

Margaret Hogarth (mhogarth@fullerton.edu) is Interim Library Web Coordinator at California State University Fullerton, Pollak Library.

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Sunday Keynote Plenary: ASIS&T Annual Conference

By Margaret Hogarth

Interfaces for People: Design for Emotion, Image, and Sound

Jodi Forlizzi, Carnegie Mellon University, believes that interaction and emotion should define behavior of products. Needs are not static, but change as we reprioritize our values. We can't predict how people interact with a product, but can create the conditions for an intended experience, allowing for unintended responses. Products should allow for a meta-experience including: look, function, behavior, and interaction. The product Ms. Forlizzi developed is "the hug," designed to address human emotional needs, a plush interactive pillow-sized object that can communicate remotely through a docking device. It not only transmits remote touch, but also voice communication. The video example showed how a grandmother and granddaughter remain close on a daily basis through their "hugs" even though they live far apart. "The hug" sends embraces, voice messages and acknowledgement at pre-programmed times.

Digital Asset Management and Electronic Archives.

Anne Gilliland-Swetland, Department of Information Studies, UCLA, promotes enterprise-driven digital asset management with a worldview. We should continuously assess and manage the investment in archives. Parameters are needed for archive object selection, rights management, metadata, tools for users to manipulate, management as value declines, record keeping and requirements for other big picture views. This applies to institutional content, electronic records, and museums. The potential is for multi-versioning of asset-based products. Archivists' intellectual role is broad and continuous: meet legal requirements, multi-version products, generate revenues, act as custodians, preserve, monitor compliance, broker secondary user access, create, capture, organize, and pluralize throughout the information life cycle.

Library Portals and Enterprise Intranets

Brian Detlor, Information Systems, McMaster University, defines a portal as a launching site for a particular audience, providing a path to all content and services through one access point. Library portals and enterprise intranets are portals for knowledge, allowing colleagues and patrons to create, use and redistribute information and work smartly. Systems should signal the value of knowledge in an integrated information environment. Library portals should be user-centered and customizable, enabling the use, creation, re-purposing of information and knowledge, and provide opportunities for collaboration and community.

Recommendations for portals include:

- No jargon
- The structure of the website should not mimic the physical library structure
- Make the interface snazzy and comfortable

Common elements to library portals include:

- search engines
- directory browsing
- category browsing
- useful websites
- newsfeeds, stock reports, or competitor reports
- personalization
- automated content classification
- provision of metadata

Brian Detlor's new book *Towards Knowledge Portals: from Human Issues to Intelligent Agents*, is due from Kluwer Press in 2004

<http://www.business.mcmaster.ca/msis/profs/detlorb/book.htm>

Margaret Hogarth (mhogarth@fullerton.edu) is Interim Library Web Coordinator at CSU Fullerton Pollak Library.



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Usability in Practice: ASIS&T Annual Conference Session

By Margaret Hogarth

Amateur Usability Engineering

Randolph G. Bias, the University of Texas at Austin spoke on "The Dangers of Amateur Usability Engineering." One myth about usability is that it is common sense. If it were, why are there so many sites with poor usability, whose visitors leave in frustration? A second myth is that good intentions and an awareness of the user are all one needs to design effective interfaces. The information professional must also know how task analysis, heuristic evaluation, co-discovery, information processing, perception, cognitions, learning memory, motivation, decision-making, mental modeling and descriptive and inferential statistics factor in. She must also know which method to use and when. Usability engineering should include research methods and statistics with visits to working labs and courses in information architecture and digital media design. Certification is best, but there is no widely-acknowledged certification for usability professionals. Computer science curricula teach students how to add features but not how to conduct usability studies.

Mr. Bias has several suggestions for the usability amateur. Learn the tools. Respect usability elders. Learn when to call in professional engineers to help understand needs. Don't oversell usability. Tie usability to costs so that poor usability is discovered before the product is out the door. Beware of continuing to add features to products without testing. Demonstrate that the work is cost justified. Assume you'll need to invest in tooling staff up. Above all, help others do well.

Identifying Critical Usability Problems

Barbara M. Wildemuth, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill spoke on "Identifying Critical Usability Problems from Discount Usability Testing." Ms. Wildemuth recommends the use of scenarios featuring prototypes of a system that are small and scaled. The interface should be included but doesn't need to actually show all of the functionality. Scenario use is low cost. When studying a task, how do we examine it when the process is in the user's head? Ask the user to use the simple think-aloud protocol. Usually this technique requires some kind of data capture, such as video on the face, keyboard and screen capture. Software can integrate all three. This technique uses few participants, just 5 or 6. Only those portions of the interface where the problem occurs are analyzed. A touch screen is effective for this task.

Sample selection can be a potential pitfall. Seek variety in attributes that will make a difference in how they use the interface. Don't let an invested party such as the designer gather data. Have structured tasks for the user to perform. Also allow free use.

When analyzing data, look for the severe usability problems, the show stoppers, errors that are difficult for the user to address, or errors that are difficult to prepare for. Once the data are in, prioritize problems.

Make changes in the design, fixing the worst problems first. Iterations, usually 4, are to be expected.

It's difficult to avoid pitfalls. Take care in designing the evaluation and implementation of the evaluation. Fix the errors before the next round. Designing the task is a big challenge. For example, can you guess what the best directive word was for a test using a touch screen? Tap. If you use text on paper the scenarios need to be robust and realistic.

Children and the Technology Design Process

Allison Druin, University of Maryland spoke about "The Roles Children Can Play in the Technology Design Process" Ms. Druin incorporated children into the design process for a digital library. Children come into the lab for co-design sessions. The atmosphere is approachable: no raising hands, use first names, and informal clothing and environment such as sitting together on the floor. Techniques include sticky-note sessions and low-tech prototyping (pipe cleaners, paper, and tape) with an emphasis on development, not revision. Children are used as informants. Expectations are set, brainstorming is inclusive and team reflection is encouraged. This method is an onion layer model: user--tester--informant--design partner. In this way, the user can inform the design process from the beginning, much like Scandinavian co-design. This can be costly. There is an underlying dimension to each role with an extensive relationship to the developer. Progress and discovery is through indirect feedback, dialogue and elaboration. The results of the study are magical and obvious. One can search for books by how they feel and by their color. There is grass in the library so a boy can sit on it and read. Ms. Durin used a very impressive application to present her material: <http://www.kidpad.org>, the work of Alan Kaye, one of her advisors. Her presentation is available at <http://www.icdlbooks.org> .

Application of Usability Findings

Sandra G. Hirsh, Hewlett-Packard Laboratories, spoke of "Application of Usability Findings into Design." Ms. Hirsch studied how researchers use library portals using a variety of assessment methodologies, including focus groups, surveys/user acceptance tools, and usability benchmarks, heuristics and prototypes.

Usability is in every context. It allows us to carry out tasks intuitively and independently. It shows the best ways to make systems useful. It enables users to do what they need to do. It shows how people respond to systems effectively. It incorporates information seeking and information use.

Ms. Hirsch used three types of usability testing. Observational usability testing involves one-on-one interaction and the think-aloud protocol while performing specific tasks. Behavior is observed while the user is visiting 5 disparate sites. Usability feedback and design results showed that search and navigational elements need a standard framework. Labels must be descriptive, without use of jargon or metaphors. The look and feel should be consistent throughout the whole site. Be careful about the depth of the navigational structure. Keep mouseovers near referring text.

Paper mockups were used to remove library jargon from the site. Users were asked to describe what they expected to find under each label. Feedback showed that the label "Recommended Sites" on the portal implied approved information, while "Other Web Links" did not engender confidence in users. Users did not want an unwieldy list.

Survey and user acceptance testing involves regularly capturing user

perceptions and satisfaction. Testing showed that the blue buttons used for their main website choices were essentially invisible to their users. Testing results mandated changing these buttons to much smaller radio buttons with the word "view," which were more effective. Janet Fraser encourages us to create a culture of usability.

Usability testing gets past the argument that we are dumbing down our sites. She has found that those who do web-based instruction draw out more from subjects. However, she cautions against going into teach mode. Ms. Hirsch urges us to articulate the role of usability testing in the whole design process.

Margaret Hogarth (mhogarth@fullerton.edu) is Interim Library Web Coordinator at CSU Fullerton Pollak Library.

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Notes from the 2003 ASIS&T Annual Conference

By Ann Coppin

I attended the American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) Annual Conference held in Long Beach on October 19-22, 2003. The theme of the meeting was "Humanizing Information Technology: From Ideas to Bits and Back." The following is a summary of my notes from a few of the sessions I attended.

Plenary Session

The Plenary Session's theme was Humanizing Information Technology: New Directions in Information Science Practice. Of the three speakers, I found the presentation by Brian Detlor of McMaster University on "Library Portals and Enterprise Intranets" most interesting.

His presentation is available at: <http://www.business.mcmaster.ca/msis/profs/detlor/>.

Some of Detlor's key points are:

1. We are moving toward knowledge portals that engage people so as to provide collaboration and communication, not just content. Portals will make us work smarter.
2. Library portals are more than web-based front ends to the catalog. They are virtual communities that are not based in design on the physical basis or hierarchy of the existing physical library
3. Enterprise portals enable an organization to unlock internal and external stored information with a single gateway. Personalization features are important.
4. Knowledge portals support information content and search and retrieval as well as collaboration and communication. They are there to support knowledge work and can signal the potential value of information.

Death of the User

The session "The Death of the User" was aimed more at the academic ASIS&T member. The user concept was useful in the past with its focus on the exchanges of interactions between the person and the system they are using. However, many information and communication technologies (ICTs) with user-centered design do not work well for their intended audiences. The speakers felt the concept has reached the point of diminishing returns and suggest the use of social informatics. Basically this means looking at people, information and communication technologies (ICT), and the contexts of ICT design independent of use.

Usage Research

The overview of recent research projects given by Carol Tenopir in the session "What Can We Learn From Usage Data?" was very interesting. This was a summary of research reported in "Use and Users of Electronic Library Resources" <http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub120/pub120.pdf>

According to Tenopir, conclusions of a study are dependent upon the method used in the study! The types of methods include:

1. Log Analysis - cover what groups do, but do not give the motivation behind the action
2. Interviews/survey/journal - find opinions; what the individual and group say they do and why, but people do not always do what they say they do
3. Critical/last incident - focuses on what individual say they do and why, but these incidents may not represent usual practice
4. Observation/experiment (typically just a few people included in study) - shows what an individual does in a controlled or natural setting and why, but being small and controlled may not represent what actually is done
5. Citation analysis - shows what authors cite, but not everyone is an author.

Ann Coppin (ann.s.coppin@jpl.nasa.gov) is Technical Reference Librarian at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory Library.



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1. Get permission to post the photos to the website from each person in the photo (I will assume that any photo sent is with the permission of the people in it).
2. List the names of the people in the photo in the email that it is sent in.
3. Send only 1 or 2 photos that you think best depict the event.