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FreePint is a global network of people who find, use, manage and share work-related information. Members receive this free twice-monthly newsletter, which is packed with tips, features and resources.

Joining FreePint is free at <http://www.freepint.com/> and connects information practitioners around the world with resources, events and answers to their tricky research and information questions at the FreePint Bar, our free online forum: <http://www.freepint.com/bar/>.

The FreePint Newsletter is available online in several formats and can be read, saved and forwarded at <http://www.freepint.com/issues/>.

Editorial



When tradition meets progression the outcome can be explosive. Anyone in the information industry knows it. New and long-established organisations are constantly exploring new ways of transforming themselves to meet fresh demands and definitions, and information job descriptions are morphing on a regular basis to keep up.

That's why so many people attend events like the annual SLA conference

<<http://www.sla.org/>>. As it wrapped up this year in Baltimore, Maryland, US, we surveyed some of the international attendees, asking them why they went. They told us why SLA matters and how it might become even more progressive (see "Impressions of SLA"). For more insight on the evolving information jobscape, read Phillipa Robertson's article "Career Transition: the Way to the Future", in the current Jinfo Newsletter <<http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>>.

Christine Hamilton-Pennell documents the bumpy modernisation of another traditional sector: academic publishing. In "On the Verge of Revolution", she explains how to navigate and understand open-access publishing, a new economic model developed in response to spiralling publication costs and the need for immediate access to research. Where the trend is headed is uncertain, but scholars and researchers must deal now with validating so much new content.

Over the past few years, FreePint has devoted a great deal of space to documenting revolutions in information enterprises, and you can bet we're changing just as quickly. Our sister publication, once known as two separate periodicals (VIP and VIP Eye), merges this month into a single, supercharged VIP magazine <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>>. Its premium monthly content provides unique, in-depth insight on industry trends, as well as knowledgeable and unbiased reviews of premium business information products. We're also adding to our geographic reach, with enhanced coverage of information job opportunities in Jinfo. For the next two months, employers and agencies can list Australia and New Zealand vacancies for free (learn more at <<http://www.Jinfo.com/support/aunzjobs.html>>).

Of course, I can't talk about change without introducing myself as the new editor of the FreePint Newsletter. I've been interacting with information for my entire professional life (learn more about me and my background at <<http://www.onopoly.com/support/team/>>), but through FreePint I'm gaining a new perspective on the practice. Every day I work with experts around the world to help me understand this quickly shifting industry, and 'twice a month' FreePint delivers that information to you. As much as you count on us to inform you, we count on you to guide us. I invite you to write to me with suggestions, comments and observations on what you're seeing on these pages and in your work. Look below for our latest discoveries, and stay with us as we continue to document this industry's radical growth.

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Arthur Weiss is managing partner of AWARE specialising in competitive-intelligence training, research and analysis. Based in the UK, he can be contacted via his web site at <http://www.marketing-intelligence.co.uk/>.

Submit your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>

My Favourite Tipples

by Arthur Weiss

When I'm looking into web sites in my work, as a competitive-intelligence researcher, there are a number of sites that help me dig a bit deeper. The following are at the top of my list:

- Faganfinder URLInfo <<http://www.faganfinder.com/urlinfo/>> is a toolkit with translation, who is lookups, links to Alexa, search-engine utilities, blogs and more. A real 'Swiss army knife' of a site -- and my favourite tipple.
- Netcraft <<http://www.netcraft.com/>> provides a number of tools for looking at web hosts. My most-used tool is the "SearchDNS" tool that allows you to find web sites containing selected keywords or characters.
- Domain Tools <<http://www.domaintools.com/>> is another site-analysis toolbox. On this one I like the ReverseIP look-up facility, although other options in the toolbox are also useful.
- All-Net Tools <<http://www.all-nettools.com/toolbox>> gives a range of options for looking at sites, as the previous three sites do. This also gives access to anonymous search tools, phone number look-ups, currency and language conversions, and more.
- The previous tipples should help uncover ingredients that make up your competitors' web presence. However, to live and enjoy life requires more than just information. RecipeZaar <<http://www.recipezaar.com>> is my favourite cookery site, and after all that digging you deserve something good to eat.



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{ the ugly truth }

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Recruiter: East Kent Community Training Alliance.

<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5466>

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Use your electronic publishing, analysis & project mgt skills in this project planning role at a specialist vendor.

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5473>

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Recruiter: Instant Library Recruitment

<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5492>

Corporate Knowledge & Information Manager

This role will be key to managing the council's wider information and knowledge strategy.

Recruiter: South Bedfordshire District Council

<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5409>

Information Executive

Researcher to deal with quick and in-depth topics relating to inward investment in a newly created vacancy in Central London.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5440>

Special Project Archivist

Work on improving access to the records of the joint work of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John.

Recruiter: British Red Cross

<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5463>

Senior Research Associate

A leading consultancy firm requires a senior research associate for a 6 month contract.

Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.

<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5469>

Records Manager

Lead within the organisation on electronic records management, and manage our on- and off-site storage facilities to a high standard.

Recruiter: British Red Cross

<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5464>

FreePint Bar

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Monique Cuvelier serves as editor of the FreePint Newsletter. She has contributed many articles to dozens of publications in the UK and US, CFO, CIO Insight, eCommerce Business, and also wrote about business and technology for The Western Mail, Wales' national newspaper. She has launched and run several online and print publications. She can be reached at <monique.cuvelier@freepint.com>.

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Finding companies and the people who run them is a massive undertaking, as anyone on the FreePint Bar knows. Several members are looking for ways to track industries, companies and business leaders. Read below for specifics, and then lend your experience -- or ask for help -- at the Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar/>>.

- The payment systems industry is wide and various, and one Bar member is wondering what kinds of companies compose the sector. Some FreePinters suggest checking with Electronic Payments International, Trade Online Project or the British Bankers Association. Find details at <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b46998>>.
- One way to understand an industry is to track the companies in it. Free news alerts are an easy solution, and one FreePinter is looking for options. Digitallook.com is one suggestion, as are press cuttings agencies, Google Alert and FT.com. If you know of others, make your recommendations on <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b47602>>.
- Another Bar member needs to know specifically about Japanese companies in Scotland. Options abound, as other members are demonstrating, including Key Scottish Enterprises, the GlobalScot Network and Japan Society of Scotland. Know of others? Share at <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b44947>>.

- If you're more interested in the people who run those companies, look to <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b38846>> to help someone who's looking for lists of the rich in Europe. There's a wealth of resources out there, including Ireland's The Sunday Tribune, Estonia's Aripaev, Die 300 Reichsten in Switzerland, The Rich List in Poland and many others.
- Let someone else do the hard work for you and access free company and industry research on DocuTicker <<http://www.docuticker.com/>> and ResourceShelf <<http://www.resourceshelf.com/>>. Or make your next brilliant hire at Jinfo - vacancies in Australia and New Zealand can be listed for free until the end of August <<http://www.jinfo.com/support/aunzjobs.html>>.

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[Provisional]

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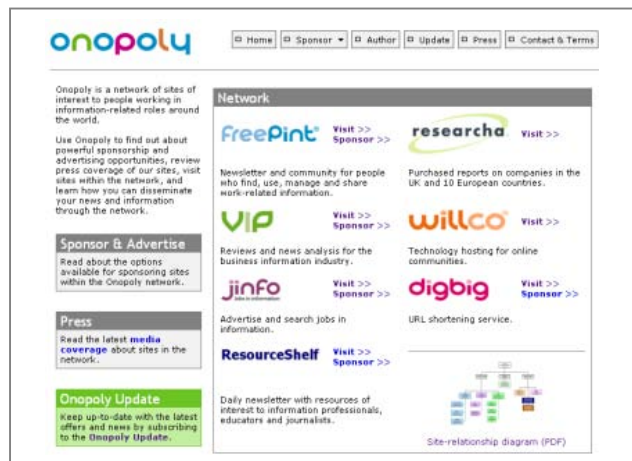
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"On the Verge of Revolution - Open-access Publishing"

By Christine Hamilton-Pennell



Christine Hamilton-Pennell is an information professional in Denver, Colorado. She holds a Master's degree in Library and Information Services from the University of California at Los Angeles and a graduate certificate in Developing Web-Based Learning Environments from the University of Colorado at Denver. She has developed online courses for the library and information community, and has completed literature reviews for seven state-wide studies examining the impact of school library media centres on academic achievement. She has also published in a variety of professional and scholarly journals. The research for this article was part of a tutorial on scholarly publishing, developed for the University of Colorado library system. She can be reached at <hamilton-pennell@earthlink.net>.

Online technology has revolutionised how scholars communicate with each other. It is also changing how publishers do business. Those of us who rely on published papers as information sources, submit scholarly papers for publication, or have other interests in the economies and trends of publishing, can't afford to remain in the dark about how online technology affects both content and its availability.

But there's good company in the dark: So many new variations of scholarly online publications are now in the marketplace that it can be extremely challenging to understand the distinguishing characteristics. Yet part of our job as information professionals is to understand, to make good choices and to provide sound advice to others on how and when to rely on each form.

What's online?

Online isn't what it used to be, back in the days when it was news to have access to scholarship via online databases. Today, 'online' can mean library databases like ProQuest, or it can mean an open-to-all web-based publication; it can mean a subscription-based web publication, or it can mean the web-based subset of a printed journal. With the widespread adoption of web-based publishing of various kinds, the definition of 'online' has become less specific.

Most commercial and professional society publishers now provide some form of online access to their journals, usually through online subscriptions. Many journal websites offer limited free content as well (usually tables of contents and abstracts). Publishers frequently license their content to online library databases such as ProQuest or EBSCOhost, or partner with services such as HighWire Press, which produces the online versions of high-impact, peer-reviewed journals and other scholarly content.

Online scholarly publishing is definitely in flux, and it's not yet clear which digital models will survive the shake-out. But one online development arguably holds the greatest potential for revolutionising scholarly publishing: the push for free and open access to scholarship and research.

What is open access?

According to Peter Suber, open access project director at Public Knowledge, a public-interest advocacy group in Washington D.C. focusing on information policy: "Open-access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. What makes it possible is the interest and the consent of the author or copyright holder" [1].

In the open-access model, authors retain copyright to their scholarly works but must bear more of the costs of disseminating it.

Open-access publishing was developed in response to spiralling journal subscription costs and the need for free and immediate access to research results in scientific, technical and medical fields. The library community has embraced the open-access concept through initiatives such as the Association of Research Library's Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and support of repositories such as BioMed Central [2].

The publication costs for OA literature shift from the user (subscriber) to the content producer (author). In other words, OA journals charge fees for dissemination of the content, not access to it, as in the traditional subscription models [3]. The two primary delivery vehicles are OA archives or repositories and OA Journals:

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- OA archives contain un-refereed preprints or refereed postprints, but do not offer peer review. The archives typically belong to either universities or disciplines (for example, ArXiv.org <<http://arxiv.org/>> for physics), and there are negligible costs to maintain them.

- OA journals are peer-reviewed electronic publications that involve editors and reviewers in much the same way as traditional print journals. The essential costs of producing the journal are recouped through author fees [usually US\$500 (approximately GBP270) to US\$2000 (approximately GBP1090)] or sponsorships from universities or professional societies. Educational institutions may pay the publishing (dissemination) fees, and these charges are usually reduced or waived for authors in transitional countries [4].

Economic impact

Commercial publishers, as well as professional societies, are concerned about the move toward open-access publishing. They believe it leads to an untenable business model that threatens the viability of niche journals. Nevertheless, they recognise that OA is here to stay, and may even become the dominant scholarly publishing model [5]. They are experimenting with different business models, including online subscriptions offering free access to content after an embargo period (usually two to twelve months).

Since there are no costs incurred for licensing, rights management or subscription administration, it should theoretically cost less to produce an open-access journal than its traditional counterpart. But a study of the economic impact of open access shows that it is too early to tell whether full open access will be a viable business model. Most full OA journals are not generating surpluses and most depend on revenues from grants, authors, and institutions and on volunteer labour [6].

For commercial publishers, the changes associated with online publishing in general are having a greater influence on their operations than the OA movement, but it has definitely had an impact [7]. Scholarly societies often support the concept of OA but are concerned about the loss of subscription revenues that support their other activities [8]. The Medical Library Association studied the impact of providing open access to its journal and found that revenue from subscriptions dropped sharply after its introduction. On the positive side, OA did not affect the number of association members and actually increased the readership and reach of the journal [9].

Quality control

Questions have been raised about the quality of articles published in open-access journals, since many more articles can be published online than in print journals, and authors can self-publish. In point of fact, serious e-journals perform quality checks, and most commentators see no reason why the traditional refereeing system with editorial boards can't be used in the online environment. The quality of content in scholarly journals is more a function of the quality control system in place than the publishing medium [10].

Some proponents of open access have argued that, in reality, the traditional peer review and publication process has not assured quality control or 'efficient scientific exchange' [11]. Much important information probably gets lost in the process because it is essentially a thumbs-up or thumbs-down approach that rejects the majority of submissions [12]. Instead, open access allows for a variety of new forms of quality control [13]:

- Open peer review offers a general debate about a manuscript
- Mixed systems allow a combination of open and anonymous peer review
- Different levels of quality control and refereeing standards can be used for different types of papers

- Labelling can indicate the level of quality control or screening a manuscript has received
- Ex-post quality control allows for correcting errors, attaching reader comments and ratings, and better citation and use-tracking calculations

In short, open access has the potential to revolutionise the current peer review system by allowing it to become 'a multi-dimensional communicative process', instead of a unidirectional activity [14].

Future trends in OA

In the scientific, technical and medical fields, there have been several recent initiatives to make the results of publicly funded research freely available online. These include repositories such as BioMed Central <<http://www.biomedcentral.com/>> and the Public Library of Science <<http://www.plos.org/>>. In 2005 the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) requested that its grantees upload manuscripts to an online repository no later than 12 months after publication. Unfortunately, researchers have been slow to comply. A year after this voluntary policy took effect, NIH estimated that fewer than 4 per cent of eligible manuscripts were uploaded, and there is now a push toward a mandatory policy [15].

National legislation has been introduced in the United States that would require every federal agency that sponsors more than \$100 million annually in research (a total of 11 agencies) to establish an online repository and make its grantees deposit articles within six months of publication [16]. There is also increasing pressure from outside the U.S., particularly in the European Union, to have mandatory posting of publicly sponsored research in centralised, free online repositories [17]. A European Commission report released in April 2006 urged European agencies funding scientific research to guarantee open access to research outputs [18]. Research Councils UK (RCUK), the umbrella group for Britain's research councils, is still working on its own policy a year after releasing a draft policy on open access that would have required scientists funded by

the research councils to deposit papers in an online repository. The report was welcomed by supporters of open access but generated hostility among some commercial journal publishers and professional societies. RCUK has been involved in ongoing discussions with publishers, scientists, government departments and other groups in an attempt to refine its position [19].

There is no question that these worldwide movements toward open access are putting pressure on commercial and professional society publishers. It is still too early to determine what direction these developments will lead.

Some commentators predict that open access will inevitably become the norm for scholarly communication, and that 'once a critical mass of scholars publishes in open-access journals, their colleagues will follow' [20]. They envision an all-electronic, unified publication archive for all pre-prints and refereed papers that provides for different levels of quality control review and labelling [21].

Others in the scholarly community, particularly those in the humanities and social sciences, see a different scenario. They believe that for the foreseeable future, print and electronic journals will coexist in a complementary fashion. Print journals are still the preferred scholarly publishing format in many of those fields. 'Economic and functionality concerns are pushing scholarly journals toward electronic media, while traditional views of the prestige and importance of publication for the advancement process act as a counterforce' [22].

Staying on top of change

By giving 'teeth' to the legislation for adding content to OA repositories, we will certainly see an increase in materials available through OA in the United States and European Union; other regions may soon follow suit. In the meantime, researchers, authors and users of information from scholarly publications should ask the following questions when evaluating an information source or publication outlet:

- Is the publication an unrefereed preprint or has it undergone some form of quality review? Repositories of preprints allow access to the literature at a much earlier stage, but peers may not yet have vetted it.
- What form of quality control does the publication employ to scrutinise the content of papers that are submitted? Most quality journals -- both print and online -- still use a formal review process involving an editor and peer reviewers or an editorial board to review content.
- Do the peer reviewers or editorial board comprise noted scholars in the field? When evaluating the validity of content, it's important to know the expertise of those who have reviewed it. It's especially helpful if reviewer comments are included along with the paper.
- Which version of the paper are you accessing? Because many OA sites provide access to revisions and different versions of a paper, it's important to know which version you are viewing, and whether revisions or corrections have been made at a later date.
- What organisation or institution has sponsored the OA publication or archive? If an OA journal is not sponsored by a university, learned society or government research agency, it's especially important to review the credentials of the editor.

Read more about open access

For more information about open-access publishing, check out these resources:

Directorate-General for Research, European Commission, Study on the Economic and Technical Evolution of the Scientific Publishing Markets in Europe, 2006 <<http://digbig.com/4hrnh>>.

"Framing the Issue: Open Access." Association of Research Libraries <http://www.arl.org/scomm/open_access/framing.html>.



Detailed review of Silobreaker in June VIP

Silobreaker claims to make sense of unstructured news flows to provide contextual intelligence. Does the product match the hype? VIP provides an in-depth review. Plus, comment from Greg Simidian, MD, Perfect Information.

<<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>>

Kaufman-Wills Group, The Facts about Open Access: A Study of the Financial and Non-Financial Effects of Alternative Business Models for Scholarly Journals. Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (2005) <<http://www.alpsp.org/publications/pub11.htm>>.

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[12] Nentwich, 192.



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<<http://www.freepint.com/suggestionbox.htm>>

[13] Ibid, 184-189.

[14] Ibid, 193.

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What is Jinfo?

Jinfo is a database of information-related job vacancies.

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"Competitive Intelligence"

Written by Rainer Michaeli

Reviewed by Christine Wunderlin



Christine Wunderlin is co-managing partner at MarketSmart Research Services, a research services company concentrating on delivering high-quality public source research. Previously, she was employed at LexisNexis, a leading provider of information and services solutions, and Lands' End Inc., one of the leading mail-order companies in the United States. Her roles in these companies ranged from advising business leaders to better understand their business rivals, vendors, competitive and market forces, to designing and implementing a CI function. She is a past board member of SCIP (Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals), and a 2005 SCIP Catalyst award winner. Christine was educated at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

In his German-language book "Competitive Intelligence", Rainer Michaeli shows readers how to ethically and legally integrate competitive intelligence (CI) into their company and how to convert CI from theory to practice. Whether you are a CI novice trying to find information on how to develop and operate a CI centre or a seasoned CI practitioner looking for applications of CI or case studies, this book is for you.

Competitive intelligence is the process of obtaining and analyzing competitive information from publicly available sources to help achieve the objectives of an organisation. Unlike business espionage, which develops information by illegal means like hacking, CI uses public information that can be legally and ethically identified and accessed.

Rainer has organised "Competitive Intelligence" so it can be used as a reference guide, as well as a textbook for class or self study. It is easy to navigate, has an extensive index and has a detailed glossary that lends itself to targeted search on methods, terms or statistics. Its 600 pages have 24 case studies and professional articles, 37 of the most important CI methods and 200 graphs and charts, which allow the reader to understand the breadth and depth of competitive intelligence.

The book plunges novices into this depth by providing help with anything from the empirical question, 'What is CI?' to, 'How do I conduct CI in my company, and what do I need to do to move it from a lone CI manager to integrate it with my firm?'

In answer, chapter seven discusses the six steps necessary to develop and operate a CI centre. It explains several factors that must be addressed in order to successfully establish and maintain one, including, but not limited to, the management of information, the organisation and function

of the centre within the organisation, choosing the right personnel, integration into the organisation's decision-making process and software to support the CI cycle.



What readers will not find is a cookie-cutter approach to CI. There are no templates or outlines to copy, just factual information to provide the backbone of a successful function, no matter where. Chapters two and three detail the psychology of the intelligence analysis, as well as the competitive intelligence cycle. Other chapters talk about HUMINT (human intelligence or primary intelligence gathering) or risk analysis. This gives readers some ideas of how to collect information and what kind they should be collecting. The case studies throughout the book give examples of how to apply this newly learned knowledge in any company.

Seasoned CI practitioners or academics, on the other hand, can learn advanced techniques in CI, including dynamic analysis, scenario analysis, war gaming and risk analysis. These topics are covered in chapters five, six and seven. The book touches on studies in different industries with industry case studies from the pharmaceutical, automotive, financial, telecommunications, orthopaedic and utilities sectors. This helps address a big part of any CI practitioner's job, which is to read about other disciplines and studies so they can apply appropriate examples to their industry.

I found this book to be of tremendous value to me, as a seasoned CI practitioner. It ties concepts directly to real-world applications. It also outlines a plethora of topics that can be labelled 'CI,' as well as concepts and applications that can be duplicated in your own industry.

"Impressions of SLA"

With contributions from Jill Hurst-Wahl, Tara Murray, Jane Macoustra, and Joann Wleklinski



Every year, thousands of information professionals attend the SLA conference <<http://www.sla.org/>> in hope of honing their understanding of a complicated and shifting industry. But as the association has been repositioning itself in recent years to adapt to an evolving field, FreePint wondered how much of the effort was trickling down to Baltimore. We asked what makes this conference important? Is it still valuable, especially given the added competition from other associations' conferences? What can SLA do in coming years to maintain its edge?

We asked you these questions via an online survey, the results of which are summarised below. We also asked a handful of information professionals for their expanded thoughts about this year's conference. What we heard was a reliance on networking, a few suggestions for improvement and overall satisfaction. Read on to see what you and your colleagues have to say about this event.

Survey summary

FreePint asked members who attended SLA to complete a brief online survey of their impressions and thoughts. Our respondents are not a statistically significant sample, either of the thousands of SLA attendees or all the FreePinters who are also SLA members, but their comments provide insight into the value of this annual event.

Our respondents were fairly evenly spread in terms of how many SLA annual conferences they had been to. Twelve per cent told us that this was their first time, and 12 per cent have been to 7 to 9 previous annual conferences. The rest of the respondents were evenly split (approximately 24 per cent each) among 2 to 3 conferences, 4 to 6 conferences and 10 or more conferences.

We asked respondents to tell us what motivated them to attend the event. Nearly all (93.4 per cent) ticked the option for 'opportunity to learn at conference sessions'. The second most common motivation was 'forum for networking with colleagues' (81.3 per cent). A little more than half (56.3 per cent) were motivated by the efficiency to meet with many different vendors at a single time/place. Only 25 per cent were motivated by specific keynote speakers listed in the promotional materials.

We asked respondents to rate their agreement with different statements of satisfaction with the SLA experience. Their responses indicate that they gained great value from the event, particularly in terms of networking. The average ratings, on a scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 4 (completely agree), were as follows:

- I had good opportunities to network with colleagues: 3.75
- I gained the benefit I expected from attending SLA: 3.69
- Overall, SLA was good value for money and time: 3.56
- I plan to attend SLA again next year: 3.5

One of our open-ended questions also elicited a number of personal comments about the unique networking value of the event. Respondents' comments included the following:

'The greatest value was the exposure to so many interesting people from all corners of the globe, who are involved in very exciting and innovative practices within the profession'.

'The conferences are a great way to re-charge. The energy is amazing, and the ability to interact with thousands of others who do the same thing is priceless'.

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'Reconnecting with friends and colleagues is particularly important for those of us who work as consultants'.

'Networking was most valuable experience at the conference. I got to meet up with old acquaintances and make new acquaintances'.

Respondents had their quibbles with the details of the event as well; a couple commented that the keynotes could have been more inspiring, while another wished that more meals had been included in the registration fee.

Finally, we asked respondents to tell us a bit about their work and their use of information. Their answers demonstrate yet again how diverse the field of 'information' truly is. Listed job titles include several that are library-specific, but also:

* Head of Content * CEO * Public Relations * Membership Database Associate * Consultant * Principal * Lead Information Specialist * Managing Director * Knowledge Centre Manager

Respondents are located in the UK (London and other regions), Israel, Canada and several regions of the US.

Attendee interviews**Jill Hurst-Wahl**

Hurst Associates, Ltd.
<http://www.HurstAssociates.com/>

I've been to every conference since 1992. I'm now an old timer. Every year I ask myself, 'Why do I continue to go to this? Should I diversify by going to other conferences?'. It's a tremendous commitment, because I work for myself and pay for it out of my own pocket. And it is work. It can be relaxing and fun, but it's not a vacation.

But SLA is the community I belong to. There's a point where I think what you get out of the conference changes. I used to feel guilty if I didn't go to as many sessions as I possibly could. Now I justify it by once a year having the chance to catch up with these people. I value the networking.

One question that gets asked is: 'What do the keynote speakers have to do with the information profession?'. I liked Walt Mossberg and Gwen Ifill. However, I think it would be nice to have a keynote who was a real information professional. It would be nice if there was a balance.

The hard part is that the conference is planned more than a year in advance. It would be useful if parts of the conference could be more flexible, so if something were a hot topic three months in advance, the conference could be changed to include it.

Tara Murray

Information Core Director Population Research Institute The Pennsylvania State University
<http://www.pop.psu.edu/>

I went for the sessions and the networking. This year, I got more out of networking and interacting with more people from different divisions and chapters. I find that useful on a professional- development level. When you work for a small library, you don't always have those opportunities.

I will be the programme planning chair of the Social Science Division for the 2008 Seattle conference. Leadership responsibilities come with training wheels, and you can work with someone who's been there. I get a lot of feedback. That's really valuable to me.

I've noticed a difference in myself at work. I'm more comfortable leading meetings and negotiating with people. My writing skills have improved too. You learn to

develop different writing styles for different audiences. You learn what style generates different responses.

The biggest problem with these conferences is the sessions always overlap. There wasn't one block of time when there weren't five other sessions I wanted to go to. At a conference this size, I don't know what SLA could do to make it better.

Jane Macoustra

Tai-Pan Research

<<http://www.tai-panresearch.com/>>

Firstly, I went because I'm president of the SLA Asian Chapter, and I've never met the rest of the Asian board members, and I really wanted to meet them. Secondly, I wanted to bring my skills up to date and make sure I knew as much as everybody else in the profession.

I got something out of all of it. I've collected a stack of business cards like you've never seen. I worked really hard to make new contacts for future collaboration. People were coming up to me asking for information, because I'm on the Asian board. Asia in particular got a lot of attention at the conference because it is a hot topic right now.

I'll keep going to the SLA conferences because I pick up a lot of new information on products, such as Japanese and Chinese product reports. I think the Asian market is very new and I don't think the explosion in these markets has occurred yet. I expect to see a lot more Asian information in the future as those markets open up and the information becomes more freely available.

I thought one or two of the talks were a little bit weak, considering these people have been in the profession for a long time. It was almost as if they didn't want to hand too much of their expertise over in the free events.



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Joann Wleklinski

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The only reason I went to SLA was to hear Walt Mossberg speak. And the only reason I sat in the third row centre is because the first two rows were reserved. I was very pleased that SLA got Mossberg as a keynote speaker.

The keynotes are fun and especially if the speaker is someone interesting. I went to Seattle because Bill Gates spoke -- and because I'd never been to Seattle before. Sometimes I enjoy the keynotes for the validation that they bring. In Mossberg's case, it was validation that I'm thinking about the right things. The things he was talking about I also have on my radar.

I also attend SLA for the networking, especially networking with colleagues. I like to hear who's doing what, think about where can I get more business, or make changes to my own business. I've been in business a little over a year now and have six clients, of which three came from AIIP and two came from SLA. So, for me, attending SLA is rewarding.

I'm reasonably happy with what SLA administration is doing. One hears about

the 'greying' of the library profession, but I feel that enough people are aware that we are not strictly librarians; SLA is going down a decidedly right path.

NOT Waiting Until Next Year

Annual events can offer value, even if you don't have a chance to attend in person. SLA has made available via its website several podcasts of recorded sessions, covering such topics as leadership, competitive intelligence, copyright, pharma pipeline databases, and more. Learn more, view photos and read about the organisation's follow-up efforts at http://slablogger.typepad.com/sla_2006_conference_blog/.

And there are many more events out there in the information world -- some of which we know about and others we're just learning of. What conferences do you think we should cover? What events and professional development programmes do you find most valuable? Share your insight with the rest of the FreePint community. Report on an event for FreePint, and give yourself the opportunity to process what you've learned -- a critical step in cementing new knowledge and making it your own. Or simply suggest an event we should cover, for its value to those who find, use, manage and share work-related information. Submit your suggestions to monique.cuvelier@freepint.com, or via our Suggestion Box <http://www.freepint.com/suggestionbox.htm>.

The logo for Resource Shelf, with 'resource' in a dark red, lowercase, sans-serif font and 'shelf' in a lighter red, lowercase, sans-serif font below it.

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Events

Australia and Territories:

- "Strategic Corporate Communication" 13th - 15th September
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Netherlands:

- "Global Information Industry Summit" 14th - 15th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e707>>

United Kingdom:

- "Workshop Competitive Intelligence" 4th - 5th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e710>>
- "Market Research on the Web" 6th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e643>>
- "Researchers & Associates Summit" 21st September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e714>>
- "AUKML 2006 - The 21st Century Information Professional" 22nd - 24th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e688>>

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A look back at what FreePint covered at this time in previous years:

- FreePint No.186 14th July 2005. "Free Public Domain and Copyrighted e-Books Online" and "Knowledge Management Does Not Grow on Bonsai Trees"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/140705.htm>>
- FreePint No.163 15th July 2004. "In the Groove at the Grove - A review of the Perfect Learning Conference" and "Usability - ignore it at your peril!"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/150704.htm>>
- FreePint No.140 10th July 2003. "Copyright and the Internet: Myth and Reality" and "The Product Development Cycle"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/100703.htm>>
- FreePint No.116, 11th July 2002. "Content Management"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/110702.htm>>
- FreePint No.91, 5th July 2001. "D.I.Y. Site Design" and "Obtaining Grants"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/050701.htm>>
- FreePint No.66, 6th July 2000. "Panorama of Engineering Portals" and "Surfing the Sludge - Tips on Good Web Page Design"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/060700.htm>>
- FreePint No.42, 8th July 1999. "Electronic commerce" and "Plastics and Rubber Information on the Internet"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080799.htm>>
- FreePint No.18, 9th July 1998. "Small is Beautiful: Being a Small Business on the Internet" and "Statistical Information on the Web"
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