
Introduction

When the 75th Anniversary Task Force first convened and discussed the kinds of things we wanted to do to celebrate this event the idea of a pre-conference, centered on the history of ASIST and the field of information science and technology, was greeted enthusiastically. Much of this enthusiasm likely came from the success of the 1998¹ and 2002² history pre-conferences, both of which had good attendance and resulted in two excellent proceedings volumes. In addition, many of the Task Force members had been closely involved in the planning and the production of the two conferences as well as the proceedings and thus felt comfortable with doing this 2012 history pre-conference.

The call for papers for the pre-conference was first issued in January, 2012 and required submission of an abstract of not more than 1,000 words by March 1. We received 27 abstracts and after review by our panel of referees 24 were tentatively accepted. Those authors were then given a date of June 1 (later amended to June 15) for submission of the complete papers. Our panel of reviewers reviewed both the abstracts and the complete papers and ultimately accepted the 18 papers that appear in this volume. All authors were given an opportunity to respond to the comments of the reviewers and submit a revised paper if required. A date of August 15 was given for receipt of the final paper. Every paper was reviewed by at least four reviewers. Special thanks to these hard working reviewers: Diane Barlow, Sarah Buchanan, Toni Carbo, Trudi Bellardo Hahn, Kathryn La Barre, Sameer Patil, Julian Warner, Bob Williams, and Iris Xie.

From the beginning of the process of planning the history pre-conference it was important that we approach the history of information science and technology as comprehensively as possible using a worldwide perspective. We also encouraged efforts to focus on the history of ASIST, a neglected topic in the history of the field. The 18 papers and the keynote address by Boyd Rayward show that we have been successful in these objectives. There are three papers that focus on ASIST, five that address European-centered aspects of the field, and the remaining eleven explore the evolution of the field from a variety of aspects, including attention to theory development.

The call for papers gave potential respondents a wide range of choices of topics to address because we wanted to be as broad-based as the field of information science actually is and as truly international as it is. Once the accepted papers were decided, we arranged them in thematic order (with some slippage of themes occasionally) as follows:

Theme 1: Development of ASIST (3 papers)

Theme 2: Evolution of the Field of Information Science and Technology (5 papers)

Theme 3: Historical Contexts of Technology Innovations and Impacts (5 papers)

Theme 4: Development of Foundational Ideas and Theories in Information Science (5 papers)

Since one of the major purposes of the pre-conference is to celebrate the 75th anniversary of ASIST we thought it more than appropriate to begin the day's events with this theme. We were a bit

¹ Bowden, M. E., Hahn, T. B., & Williams, R. V. (1999). *Proceedings of the 1998 Conference on the History and Heritage of Science Information Systems*. Medford, NJ: Information Today Inc. for the American Society for Information Science and the Chemical Heritage Foundation.

² Rayward, W. B., & Bowden, M. E. (Eds.) (2004). *The History and Heritage of Scientific and Technological Information Systems: Proceedings of the 2002 Conference*. Medford, NJ: Information Today for the American Society for Information Science and Technology and the Chemical Heritage Foundation.

disappointed to receive only three papers dealing with the history of our association, but the three we did accept are excellent. Hahn and Barlow give readers an inside look at the critical influences that the National Science Foundation's Office of Scientific Information and Helen Brownson played in the development not only of ASIST (then ADI) but also the newly developing field of information science. Smith's essay provides details about the development of the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* (*ARIST*), an annual publication of ASIST that both established and enhanced the reputation of this new field. Martens adds a little humor and a look at the significance of ASIS&T Special Interest Groups (SIGs), which have been the "little associations" within ASIS&T that have attracted and held many new members to the society.

Theme 2 explores the evolution of the field of information science and illustrates the broad reach of the field both in disciplinary aspects as well as internationally. Cox shows us how the mostly separate but closely allied field of archival science has fared as a part of information science and speculates about the future of this relationship. Saracevic addresses the problem of relevance, an issue of enduring importance to the field. Agarwal takes up the history of an equally important topic, information seeking, and provides a nice history of the development and influence of Dervin's sense-making approach to the topic. Papers by Pehar and Aparac-Jelusic, and Ibeke-SanJuan provide seldom seen views of the development of information science in Croatia and France respectively. These two papers broaden our perspective of information science and help tie us not only internationally but also back to our origins in documentation.

The next group of papers, historical contexts of technological innovations and their impacts, Theme 3, also reach back to the origins of documentation/information science. Buckland provides a fascinating look at Lodewyck Bendikson's early work on microphotography, who was both a pioneer in the field and also "present at the creation" of the American Documentation Institute (ADI) when microfilm played such an important role in the creation of the society. Hillman also takes us back to our origins, not only for the development of education for information science but also to the beginnings of online catalogs and online searching. His story is mostly a personal one of the evolution of information science at Lehigh University, but it also shows how campus politics and external funding can influence the development of the field at one school and in the discipline. Few words in our field are more ubiquitous in our field today than digital. Miller traces the early development of binary and shows its relevance to our present time. Russell does something similar by helping us see the importance of standards by giving us an inside look at how the Bell System, a large monopoly at the time, worked out the technology that would be so influential in the future. Zhu also addresses an early issue that we know very little about, access to information, by providing part of the history of Lexis-Nexis, an early online legal information system.

In Theme 4, development of foundational ideas and theories in information science, the authors provide a wide-ranging overview of these issues which again illustrate the variety of the field and address people and topics that are both common and largely unknown. Hauk and Stock tell us about Norbert Henrichs and his influence on the development of information science in Europe, a pioneer largely unknown in the United States. Burke tells a story that is familiar to most of us but he weaves it together in a way that is not familiar, showing the conflicts between those who thought classification was the basis of information science and those new "term oriented" retrieval experts that dominated the early years of ADI/ASIS. Classification is also the topic of van den Huevel's paper and we get a different view of how European and American classificationists viewed the field. McCain addresses a familiar topic, bibliometrics/citation analysis, and reminds us the influence of a significant scholar in the history of science and information science, Derek J. de

Solla Price. Courbières concludes this theme by discussing the French approach to documentation theory and nicely ties us back to the origins of the discipline in Europe.

The 75th Anniversary Task Force unanimously agreed to ask Boyd Rayward, one of the foremost historians of the field, to present the keynote address at the Saturday luncheon. Despite having to come all the way from Europe, where he is doing continuing research on Paul Otlet, and via Australia, his home country, he graciously agreed. His title, “The Emergence of Information Science and the creation of a History of Information: trajectories, continuities, discontinuities and transdisciplinary relationships,” while very long, nevertheless shows that he is also matching the broad-based nature of the pre-conference. It also shows how the nature of the history of information science and technology is slowly changing, incorporating new areas and ideas that will—and are—having significant impacts on the field itself and the history of the field.

Two of the significant problems with the history of information science and technology are the lack of a sizeable group of researchers with an interest in history and, consequently, a small body of written history. The 1998 and 2002 conferences and the proceedings not only greatly increased the body of published history for the field but also showed that there were more historically minded researchers around the world than we knew about. We hope this 2012 history pre-conference will have similar impacts—and stimulate further historical attention to the field of information science and technology.

Finally, I should mention the faithful support of the 75th Anniversary Task Force who not only came up with good ideas for ways to celebrate this milestone in the history of ASIST but also diligently pitched in when help was needed. Deserving special recognition for their duties as editors of this volume (and lots of other work as Task Force members) are Toni Carbo and Trudi Bellardo Hahn. Without them and their dedicated editing and production work under a very tight deadline this volume would not exist. The ASIST Board of Directors has also been supportive and encouraging, providing modest monetary resources and good ideas for the celebration. The history pre-conference is only one of the several ways that we are trying to both celebrate and document the history of the field of information science and technology. We have also been working on doing oral histories of the leaders of the field, identifying and providing improved access to our historical resources and archival records, and identifying significant gaps in the historical record that need attention. We invite any reader of this volume to come help us—now and in at least the next 25 years!

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