

Obituary

Professor Christine Bellamy, 1946–2017, and Professor Ignace Snellen, 1933–2018

A Personal Remembrance

I feel sadness in the air as I write this remembrance of two people who helped forge a new agenda for administrative studies and research as the digital era began to take shape more than 25 years ago. I am sad because I knew them well and I will miss their presence in this field of work. I am sad too because they have died far too young. And my sadness is deepened because I know they would still be working right up to the end, full of the intellectual energy that made them such strong contributors to the still emergent field of digital government.

I first met Christine Bellamy in the very early 1990s. I was working on the Programme on Information and Communications Technology [PICT], a programme funded impressively by the UK's Economic & Social Research Council. Christine had invited me to talk to a small group of colleagues working on putting new digital tools to good teaching use. I thought I would talk about how the content of teaching rather than its methods and technologies [CD Rom and PowerPoint!] should change under the weight of the new information networking that was beginning to develop. Christine 'got it' and, not only that, she immediately saw the need to do some development work with UK colleagues. Money was found from the PICT budget and a seminar series was developed, meeting several times a year for 4 years. Some of the most distinguished UK academics including some currently working in this field contributed to those first step seminars. This was Christine's character. She always showed leadership in the work we developed together and bringing on the next generation was especially important for her. And she was rigorous. An administrative historian 'to trade' she always had a beady eye for detail including getting work to publishers on time, for which I was especially grateful. Christine went on to work with other colleagues, notably Perri 6 and Charles Raab, opening up an agenda of risks to privacy as the digital era opened up further. In short Christine was a great contributor to the field of digital government and she still is through citation of her work. She would give a wry smile were she to note that her book with me 'Governing in the Information Age' is still being read and cited 20 years after its publication.

I first met Ignace [Ig] Snellen in the late 1980s. What a joyful encounter it was too. Ig Snellen, together especially with Paul Frissen, was leading a Dutch group at the annual European Group of Public Administration conference. They had formed a group focused upon the *mot du jour* 'informatisation'. I could not have asked for a better welcome when I arrived tentatively to present a paper. I think that was in 1988. There was a great spirit in the group and a sense of being at a leading edge of academic work in the field. Ig was an inspiration. He led both on content and organisationally. He made sure that those coming through from post graduate work were given time and space to develop and present their ideas. Wim van der Donk and Arre Zuurmond are two such that stand out in my memory, though there were plenty of others too.

Ig Snellen made sure he was very well informed academically throughout his working life. He spent time with digital government pioneers John King and Kenneth Kraemer at University of California, Irvine, and later on he had a seat as Visiting Fellow in the inaugural year of the Oxford Internet Institute, 2003. It was this desire to be at the leading edge that brought urgency in him to publish and inform. He

was constantly developing ideas for publication in sub fields of digital government as well as the field as a whole and selecting and working with others who he knew would deliver good content. His 'Public Administration in an Information Age' edited with Wim van de Donk, published 20 years ago, remains a good entry point to the study of digital government. And I shall never forget the experience of working on our edited book [with Arre Zuurmond] on business process re-engineering. Ig's encouragement to get the job done was perfect for me including, as it did, a study period in The Netherlands and some top end restaurant visits. I must not forget either the way in which Ig Snellen brought the Dutch publisher IOS Press into the field, a publisher that has stayed closely involved to the digital government field since Ignace introduced the firm to it. Ignace brought into being a new journal published by IOS which, in 2002, morphed into the journal you are currently reading, 'Information Polity', a change helped enormously by the respect that Ig had built up in his relationship with Einar Fredriksson, owner and CEO of IOS Press and his staff, including Kim Willems who has given so much energy to the journal throughout its life. I am sure that Einar and Kim will feel great sadness too at his passing.

Christine Bellamy and Ignace Snellen were delightful companions as well as excellent scholars. Each had a great sense of humour and a natural kindness. They wanted to help where help was needed. Both had deep interests beyond their scholarship and especially perhaps in the arts. Christine loved music in many of its forms particularly choral and orchestral. Ignace I remember as a keen visitor to galleries with, perhaps, a special interest in the [post] modern. He once showed me the 'Cube' in which he lived for a time: a postmodern apartment in a postmodern block with more than a touch of the *tromp l'oeil* about it.

Here is my farewell to you both. I miss you.

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