

Introduction

The NFAIS 2011 Meeting was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at the Hyatt Bellevue. The meeting was well attended by members of the community made up of those who create, aggregate and disseminate information. The papers in this issue provide an excellent sample of the depth and breadth of the presentations and interactions during the two and a half day meeting.

Ben Schneiderman gave the Miles Conrad lecture at the 2011 Annual Conference of NFAIS. His presentation was engaging and targeted. He was a co-developer (with Jennifer Preece) of the Reader-to-Leader framework, introduced in 2009. That framework described the features that social media use to motivate readers to “dip their toe in” and subsequently to get more and more involved as active participants. His article in this issue (“Social discovery in an information abundant world: Designing to create capacity and seek solutions”) expands on the Reader-to-Leader framework. The Social Discovery framework elaborates on the concept that “designers can channel their work into facilitating individuals and communities to create capacity and seek solutions”. Schneiderman sees profound implications in the growth and analysis of social discovery processes in academic, industrial and government research: “Can molecular biologists add to their tenure cases by curating genomic datasets, and astronomers be promoted because they engaged a million citizen scientists to taxonomize galaxies?”.

One of the articles in this issue (“Semantic MEDLINE: An advanced information management application for biomedicine” by T.C. Rindflesch et al.) is by a team of researchers affiliated with the National Library of Medicine’s Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications. The Lister Hill Center is named after former US Senator Lister Hill, who in 1965 declared: “We must develop a communications system so that the miraculous triumphs of modern science can be taken from the laboratory and transmitted to all in need”. The Semantic MEDLINE portal, as described in the article, seems to be taking a major role in achieving that goal. The article shows how the software behind the portal goes far beyond simple document retrieval, taking advantage of the predicate relationships among concepts in the NLM’s Unified Medical Language System (UMLS).

Along with advances in medical content availability, advances in mobile technologies are having an impact on healthcare workflow. Victor Camlek’s article (“Healthcare mobile information flow”) highlights the potential for mobile devices to handle the enormous amounts of healthcare workflow content becoming available. Camlek looks at the progress already made and asks what these developments will mean for STM publishers and their customers. In addition to technical challenges (in interoperability, data standardization and user adoption), he sees promising opportunities for STM publishers, as well as non-traditional content providers. Camlek predicts that “The new world may include participants from the medical equipment, software and insurance payer industries to add to their incumbent revenues by virtue of breakthrough mobile services aimed at improving patient care and physician or institutional performance”.

Christine Perey also predicts a new world, for another advancing technology, Augmented Reality (AR). “Our vision of the future is that any printed material, from a poster, a sign or a package to a printed page in a newspaper, magazine or book, can provide value when combined with a camera, algorithms that detect the content of a page, and platforms that retrieve associated data”. In “Print and publishing and the future of Augmented Reality”, she argues “that providers of Augmented Reality tools will benefit from a close association with content management systems for print and publishing, and that successful

printers and content publishers will integrate the use of Augmented Reality, in a healthy end-to-end ecosystem". Perey identifies the elements that will be necessary for AR to go beyond its current status as a novelty to its use by printers and content publishers in "a healthy end-to-end ecosystem".

As usual the NFAIS 2011 shows us what is coming and gives thought provoking options from the leaders in these new technology applications to textual data in different ways. Pushing the edges of our thinking on an annual basis helps keep the industry exciting and young.

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Guest Editor