

Introduction

This issue of *Information Services and Use* is an outgrowth of the NFAIS Annual Meeting held in Philadelphia, February 2010. The theme of the meeting this year is: *Redefining the Value of Information: Exploring the New Equation*. The meeting brings focus to the needs of the information community, especially the needs of those who aggregate and distribute primary publishing. Each year the group gathers together to hear presentations, think about the issues facing the industry, and then return home armed with new thoughts for implementation in the coming year. This year we are pleased to provide a selection of papers which give insight to the nature of the meeting and provide the readers of *ISU* with implementations and directions for better leveraging of information. We have five papers in this collection. Let me give you a few highlights of each.

Christine McCue's article ("From search to social: Innovation for today's researchers") focuses on the evolution of a chemical information services company. The main drivers for technological change in the company's offerings have been (1) customers' growing needs and (2) changing technology. These factors need to be considered in tandem. The year 2005 turned out to be too early for a mobile application for chemical researchers; as McCue writes, a company "cannot innovate beyond its users' demands". However, recent customer research showed that the time has come for a mobile application for researchers. Moreover, customers have indicated a strong desire for expansion of mobile application functionality, with advanced social networking features that they can exploit for research.

In "Emerging technologies to speed information access" Del Satterthwaite observes that search engine technology has been extraordinarily stagnant in comparison to the rapid developments in information technology in general. He quotes John Naisbitt's apt statement from 1982, "We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge", an observation that is even more true today. Satterthwaite asks, "can we really expect the core technology of index and search that were derived during that same time period, to be applied successfully to the problems of 2010?": The article outlines a new approach to search technology.

Not all that long ago, the various technology areas of the communications and information industries were well defined and separated, "fractured by fiefs and domains". This has been changing. Stephen Arnold writes, "I want to explore what happens when digital spaces bump together. The boundaries of these intersections are in my opinion ripe with opportunities". He sees the environment of today's information industry as a "fluid, chaotic datasphere", as exemplified by the boundary-crossing activities of Amazon, Apple and Google. Arnold challenges us to take advantage of this environment now, observing that "technology makes it possible to mash up, mix and match, repurpose and innovate at a higher rate of speed than at any other time in history".

Victor Camlek's article ("How to spot a real value proposition") explains how to identify a well-developed value proposition, and explores typical deficiencies. Camlek emphasizes keeping in mind that it's the value of your product or service to the potential user that counts, something that companies sometimes overlook while they enumerate features. He points out that the "capability to spell out the value of a product or service within the business context of the user is the elusive gold at the end of the trail where so many efforts simply fall short".

Abe Lederman's article ("Breaking down language barriers through multilingual federated search") describes WorldWideScience.org (WWS), a science research platform hosted and maintained by the

USDOE's Office of Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI). WWS users can simultaneously do a live search of 69 databases from 66 participating nations. Not only does this call for effective federated search, it also calls for sophisticated multilingual functionality at several stages of the search process. Citing an OSTI-sponsored study that applies epidemiology models to the spread of ideas, Lederman writes, "Science advances through increasing the contact rate among global multilingual researchers".

I know that you will enjoy reading all of them and will find them a guide for your own *Redefining the Value of Information: Exploring the New Equation*.

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