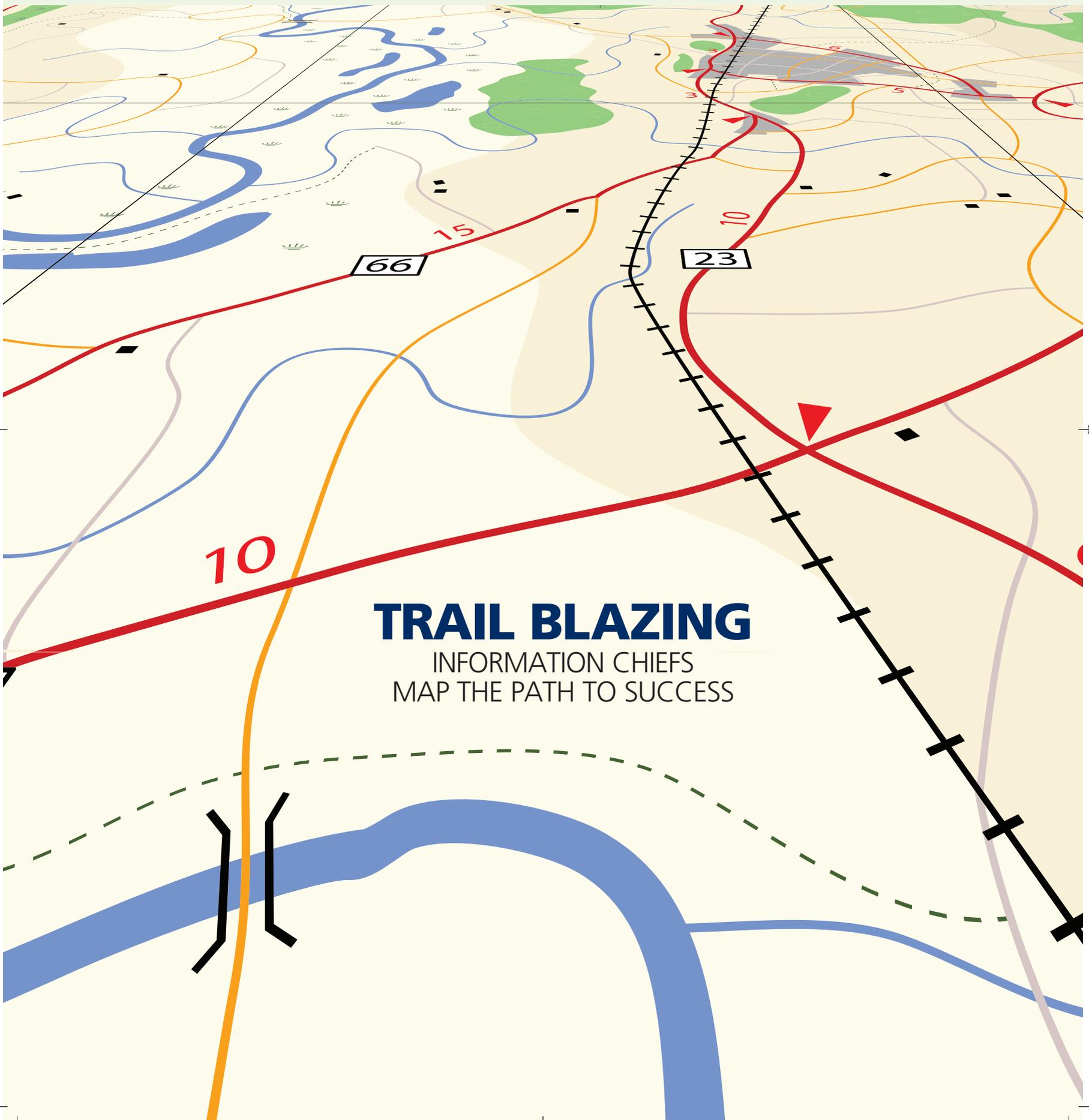


# iWWR HORIZONS

2008

## FORWARD THINKING



### TRAIL BLAZING

INFORMATION CHIEFS  
MAP THE PATH TO SUCCESS

# Look up for a better perspective



Information professionals are under constant pressure to get the day job done to the best of their abilities. In the midst of completing the daily tasks, it is sometimes hard to find the time to lift our eyes from the minutia and instead spend some time gazing towards the horizon to regain a better sense of perspective.

We all need to know what is going on around us and Horizons produced by the IWR team is designed to do just that.

Through the rigours of the monthly magazine schedule and the daily imperative of the IWR website, we appreciate that sometimes life is just too busy to take stock.

So trying to grasp some of the issues that will matter over the longer term has been a fascinating exercise.

While we did want to be serious, we have tried to resist the

temptation to be solemn, hence a design and content which is in contrast to the usual monthly style.

IWR would like to thank all the senior figures from the information industry who gave their time to contribute to this inaugural edition of Horizons, including those from the vendor community

who provided sponsored material in the form of white papers.

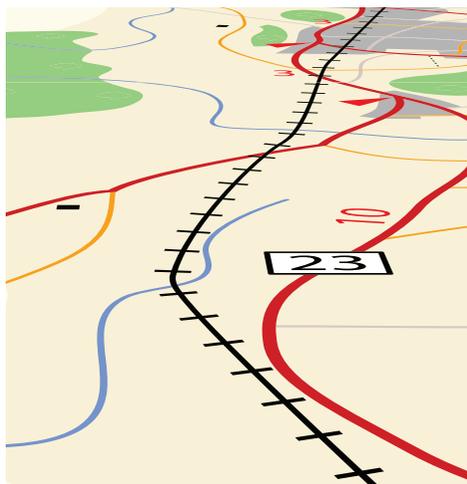
It has been a challenge creating the publication and we hope you find the end result both interesting and stimulating.

By the way, we took some time to think of the title that

summed up what we were trying to achieve. But it also made us curious about the physical horizon.

If you want to find out about literally how far you can see when on the beach gazing out to sea then try typing in "horizon Steve Sque, University of Exeter" into your favourite search engine.

→ [peter.williams@incisivemedia.com](mailto:peter.williams@incisivemedia.com)



We all need to know what is going on around us and Horizons produced by the IWR team is designed to do just that

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# LEARNING FROM THE MOBILE GENERATION

Podcasting, mobile technologies and social networking sites are transforming the way we access information, creating a powerful new learning tool for teachers and students, writes **Ewan McIntosh**

**W**hen my secondary school students and I set about podcasting in 2005 it was a genuinely tricky thing to do. We hand-wrote the code that would get the material into iTunes, used Apple Macintosh computers to do the recording and struggled with portable recording equipment that wasn't, yet, designed for the digital age.

That was only three years ago. Now, I podcast from my mobile phone, which also creates a transcription of my text and posts it to multiple sites without me having to understand how. This is just one example of why predicting the future of technology is fraught with difficulty. It moves faster than anyone could imagine.

Generally, as a rule, you have to look at least twice as far back in time to work out what's going to happen in the next decades, and even then we mustn't rely too much on what we see. In the 1960s we were being prepared for the 1970s with an interesting notion of what both technology and pedagogy, the ideologies and research that underpin success, might have in store. Much educational technology was placed alongside domestic applications of futuristic, but ultimately misplaced technologies, such as the radioactive food preserver (A rack of canned beans is lowered into a radioactive container where, they will receive enough radiation to preserve them indefinitely).

This kind of reverie meant that educational technology was to be reduced to the mindnumbing "Film Based Teaching Machine" (Student pushes one of four buttons to give answers and his score appears on paper slip at upper right), and "Push-Button Learning" (if the student presses the right buttons for the answers, he is "rewarded" with a new unit of study



which appears on the machine. If he flubs the answers, a paragraph of text appears on the screen setting him right and then he tries again.)

A browse around many of the 'innovations' proposed at educational trade fairs, though, are not a million miles away from this kind of rote-learning technology.

## PREDICTING THE FUTURE

Where education trend-predicting has had a rough ride is in the fact that pedagogy, the science of learning, has evolved in theory and, unless this theory is put into practice in classrooms, much of the predicted promise of new tools is squandered. Technology's transistors might have a Moore's Law which explains their doubling in power every six months, but the human's capacity to digest new ideas through which to exploit the technology has no such parabolic curve.

Over the next few years we will see some changing attitudes in two major areas and

**Today's students are taking advantage of social networking sites for sharing information and ideas**

this will affect how, where, what and with whom students learn in the next few years.

First, since 2005 when Europe's first schools podcast was narrowcast from my school, a new breed of site has been born: the social network. It was the same year that YouTube joined the party. Distribution and connectivity between individuals has never been so flexible, wide and, at the same time, able to reach into niches that until now had been ignored by the rule of market forces. When early pioneers were playing with this technology you needed to market just to get a few hundred listeners. Most bloggers still have an average audience of just 10. Now, though, increasing numbers are discovering the power of the network for sharing ideas and feeding off others, and the social network is where most of our friends, colleagues and potential employers are hanging out.

So, the first trend of which we are seeing the very beginnings, is a growing acceptance in the educational establishment that



connecting teachers to teachers, learners to learners and the outside world, is educationally beneficial. The challenge which delays this process are the exceptional and simplistic tales of social networking sites being “at the core” of the latest high school shooting, mass suicide, or spate of teen mums. It is these stories that are the most memorable for those working in education. As they amass at beginners’ blogging and pro podcasting workshops, teachers who

have been exposed to the dark side of the social web continue to be amazed by something they’ve never seen in action before: the positive potential in students connecting to each other through social media. Meanwhile, in what appears a disconnect with the educator population, 82% of those being educated are jumping onto their social network every week.

This implies a second trend which may be forced in the more distant future, if our current “innovation curve” of ten years is anything to go by. Namely, filtering policies against almost any kind of social media in education establishments are getting in the way of these lessons ever surfacing within the school walls. Schools are going to have to be the places where media literacy skills are learnt, first hand,

through the tools which young people use outside the school gates.

Parents mostly feel out of their depth in attempting to tackle the complexities of the social web at home. Students are working it out solo at the moment and, rightly or wrongly, are placing a significant majority of their trust in media sources with the web: most 8-11s do not trust what they see on television (44%), trusting material on the internet more (59%). Older children show similar patterns of trusting the internet (61%) more than television (47%).

Parents viewed the internet as a good research tool, but lamented the loss of ‘real’ research skills and worried that the information was not always appropriate or completely accurate: a role for education in the immediate future, without a doubt, is to improve the media literacy skills of our young people. This strategy is already emerging in practice, and the teaching of new literacies should be set to increase over the next three years.

As users become more proficient in their use of the internet, exploiting more sites in the same time through RSS (Really Simple Syndication), we should continue to see an increasingly interactive use of the internet eating into the time of passive watching of television – teens in the UK started spending more time interacting online than watching the television in 2007.

#### **SOCIALLY ACCEPTED**

The tabloid newspaper favourite, that today’s net generation are social geeks, does not appear to stand true and will be eroded over time. Both users and non-users of the internet read as many books as each other, the result being that users of the net tend to come across more information in general, and as much as non-users through other sources. Vitally, working and playing through social media has merely reinforced the importance of face-to-face (F2F) interaction. Users of the net value F2F meetings more than non-users, and ‘real world’ users are more likely to be outgoing individuals and part of a social group or club than non-users of the net.

The third trend which will happen along with, or more likely before filtering becomes more open-ended, will run along the lines of media literacy in schools, from younger ages. This will happen within the next year, based on the recommendations of the Byron Review in the UK and similar debates happening elsewhere around the world. Education has to take a lead in helping young people become media literate and internet safety is not a good enough excuse to ban, block and filter the tools that will help us do that. As Dr Tanya Byron says in her recent government report:

“We cannot make the internet completely safe. Because of this, we must also build children’s resilience to the material to which they may be exposed so that they have the confidence and skills to navigate these new media waters more safely.”

The fourth trend concerns the role of hardware in both reducing and increasing the digital divide. On an education level parents of children from more socially disadvantaged backgrounds are less able to protect against the risks of the internet and require additional support.

On a hardware level, the digital divide argument has been chipped away by those who point out that computing technology has never, potentially, been cheaper. Indeed, an increase in ultra mobile PCs and global developments in the One Laptop Per Child, or OX, project, should mean improved access to the net.

However, access to equipment that can exploit the connectivity that social media offers is resurfacing the digital divide. Although costs are coming down, hardware is made more powerful and better designed. The “iPod effect”, where the branded MP3 player is more desirable than other cheaper non-branded versions, has



**Educational technology was placed alongside ultimately misplaced technologies such as the radioactive food preserver**

seen the rising cost in technology young people desire, as opposed to the technology their parents or they can afford.

Arguably, the most sophisticated learning technology is the cell phone. The mobile phone points us towards the starkest reminder that adult gatekeepers will have increasingly little influence on what young people access on the net and where and when they do it: a quarter of parents are concerned that the existing ways of controlling the web would not have any effect on the many young people accessing the net on their mobile phones. Nearly half of cell phone users already send photos to each other, with the number accessing email or the net rising steadily and set to soar as cheap mobile internet devices with plentiful data contracts hit the market this summer.

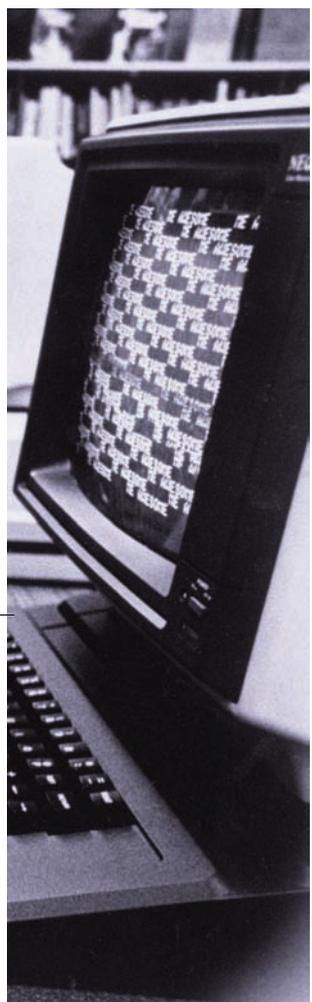
Over the coming year, more than half the planet’s population will own a mobile phone and increasing numbers will use the devices for broadband internet. Already in South Korea 43% of mobile users access mobile broadband, a trend that will not take long to reach Western Europe. The United States and Canada will potentially see themselves left behind in the mobile internet stakes and the changes in pedagogy that such “anywhere, anytime learning” brings along with it will take even longer to break in.

The fifth trend is that social networking, with its ease in finding new contacts with similar interests, combined with a rising number of education clearing houses such as Horsesmouth and SchoolOfEverything, will lead to a significant increase in the next three years in informal learning, outside school hours, with teachers not connected to a local institution on subject areas not covered by traditional curricula. The Open University’s social:learn project aims to bring informal learning to the Higher Education scene.

Currently, most net use does not even happen at school – more than four-fifths of young people’s internet use is in their homes, or friends’ homes – yet the main use of the net at home among tweens and teens is learning: 57% use the net for homework, saying it provides more information than books. More curiously, though, is that nearly one-fifth of students use the internet for learning that’s not ‘school’, the kind of flexible learning traditional education structures just cannot satisfy.

#### **References:**

In the Spring of 2008, several major research pieces were launched. Ofcom’s Social Networking Research helped form part of the information set included in the primary research carried out by Dr Tanya Byron for her review of the risks faced by children in their use of the net and video games. We’ve also seen the first in-depth summary of access to the internet and its uses across the UK population in the Oxford Internet Institute’s Internet Surveys. Finally, Ofcom’s Media Literacy Audit of the UK was published at the end of May 2008.



# Bulgaria goes digital

**DocuWare** reveals how it's helping a national institution join the European Library

What do you do when you want to modernise a library and create online access to all records in the Library via the Internet? There is really no choice, but to opt for a Document Management System that will make indexing and archiving easy.

The council of the Bulgarian National Library, St Kilirl & Metodii, decided to implement an electronic document archiving system because it found the system to be a reliable tool for processing all kind of documents for internal purposes, archiving within the library structures, providing electronic public access to ancient manuscripts, photographs, drawings, even music via the internet in order to join the European Library by the end of 2009.

The National Library plans to become a

**DocuWare**  
Ease of use and security made DocuWare the obvious choice



member of the European Library and implementations of such a system will allow more and more people, especially historians to gain access to the Slav-Bulgarian literary and cultural heritage.

Already now the system contains 19 digital file cabinets with 6,400 manuscripts and ancient books, as well as nearly 18,000 newspapers and periodicals. More than 27,000 have already been scanned, but will be added to the archives in the very near future. "Historical documents

take longer because they receive a special treatment before scanning, but once archived they are there forever. Now that we have added more DocuWare licences we can move much quicker," says Kamen Lazov of Nemetschek, Bulgaria who is running the project.

"The plan is to archive 40,000 items a year so that, in the future, all can be easily attained from any workstation in the library and through the National Library's website: <http://193.200.14.178/scripts/cgi/dwis.pl>



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# Looking out for the next big thing

## What is the most important development in the information industry so far in 2008?

Other than the Dow Jones' acquisition of Generate? If you leave aside our adoption of a "web harvesting" model to complement traditional content creation and aggregation, I'd have to say the completion of the Thomson-Reuters merger (and not just because of my many years as part of Reuters). Interesting to note, too, the immediate sale of Dialog to ProQuest.

## What issues are going to dominate in the final quarter of 2008, moving into 2009?

I'm an optimist by nature, but I fear there will be doom and gloom: credit crunch, recession, inflation and a business climate which is going to be very challenging.

## What is the biggest challenge for your organisation?

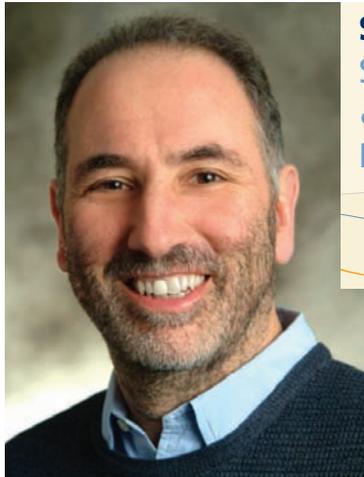
Setting priorities among our existing business lines and the many new investment opportunities we see, especially now we are part of News Corp – a parent company with plenty of capital, enormous energy and very high expectations.

## What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?

We could all do better I'm sure, but the profession seems to be in reasonably robust health. The inexorable expansion of information and information tools available to individuals means a greater need for savvy specialists to help them and their organisations get real benefit. It may not be the same profession we knew 20 years ago, but very few are.

## What's the must-have gadget that is always with you?

The BlackBerry, I fear. Stunningly sad and quite unoriginal, but I had resisted its allure until this year. As someone who travels about half the time, I must now acknowledge both its value and the excellence of a design perfectly suited to



## Simon Alterman

Senior vice president, strategy & business development  
Dow Jones Enterprise Media Group



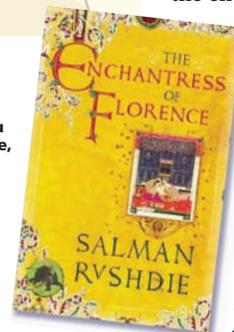
function. It will, however, be largely ignored during the holidays.

## Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break? Any room for

### holiday reading in the hand luggage?

Two traditional family breaks: a week in the Cumbrian Lake District with my extended UK family and the rest of August at our holiday home in the Mazurian lakes of Poland, my wife's native country. I'll be packing Salman Rushdie's *The Enchantress of Florence* and *Beijing Coma* by Ma Jian, as well as *What Sport Tells Us About Life* by the erudite cricketer Ed Smith. Just have to find time to read them.

A little holiday reading – if you get time, that is



## What would be the top tune on your desert island iPod?

*Summertime*, sung by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong, or perhaps The Animals: *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*

## Your favourite travel related web site?

TripAdvisor. It's hard to avoid giving too much weight to the negative comments, but the entries are usually detailed enough to work out whether this is a crowd whose wisdom I care about.

## What information industry figures would you most like to be shipwrecked with and why?

The guys in a flat in China, a garage in California or a business park in India who are creating the next Microsoft/Google/YouTube/Facebook.

## What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?

Try to avoid saying or thinking that you are back in the "real world". Work is important and the best jobs are stimulating and enjoyable. But the real world is with family and friends. That's what holidays are for.

Could these be the next Bill Gates?





**Josh Bottomley**  
Managing director  
LexisNexis UK

**What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?**

It's good – there are more opportunities to combine information and technology for new and existing customers in new and innovative ways than there have been for many years. LexisNexis' EU Tracker is a good example of an entrepreneurial initiative that was set up within our company and is doing well. Our webinars have really taken off and we have had a tremendous response from clients impressed by the content and quality of speakers. And our community forums, such as [www.companylawforum.co.uk](http://www.companylawforum.co.uk), allowing users to share information and discuss latest issues are a great success.

**What's the must-have gadget that is always with you?**

Any brand of combined mobile phone/email device.



**Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break? Any room for holiday reading in the hand luggage?**

Chill out with the kids – or is that an oxymoron?

**Mobile email device – never leave home without one**

**What would be the top tune on your desert island iPod?**

If it was one tune to listen to repeatedly, I'd go for Mozart's Clarinet Concerto.

**Your favourite travel related web site?**

Tripadvisor.com. It is a great way to explore different people's views, opinions and experiences of places you might want to go to.

**What information industry figures would you most like to be shipwrecked with and why?**

Rupert Murdoch, as I would trust him to have the best communications and transport resources to get us rescued.

**What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?**

Be clear on who your customers are (internal and external) and spend some time thinking about how you can help them in new and innovative ways.

# Low-down on the know-how

**What is the most important development in the information industry so far in 2008?**

The next generation of workflow tools that incorporate information and an intimate understanding of user requirements to give a clear benefit in terms of saving time, managing risk and finding better answers. Our KnowHow service, our InterAction 'TaxiPack' and our Visualfiles anti-money laundering offering are all good examples.

**What issues are going to dominate in the final quarter of 2008, moving into 2009?**

The budget pressures, particularly in financial services, that will cause information professionals to review their whole workflow as well as their information needs.

**What is the biggest challenge for your organisation?**

Investing in global technology and

resources, while delivering better content, service and 'solutions' to real customers. We are using our expertise to help our customers navigate their way through a changing environment. For example, our bespoke LexisNexis Analytics solution, a leader in media intelligence, allows

customers to identify trends and gain valuable insight into their clients, competitors and global market issues. We have also recently introduced a number of enhancements to our award winning LexisNexis Butterworths online library to make it simpler and more efficient for our customers.

**Relaxing with the children – Oxymoron?**



# Navigating the profession's rocky path

## What is the most important development in the information industry so far in 2008?

The up and down battle for Yahoo and the, so far, failure of Microsoft's pursuit of the company which has opted for an advertising alliance with Google. The implications for the future of search are significant, but it's never over till it's over.

## What issues are going to dominate in the final quarter of 2008, moving into 2009?

■ Continuing data fiascos in government – information professionals please step up to the plate. This is surely core business? Information management and leadership skills are sorely needed.

■ The mainstreaming of e-books, with more experimentation with business models and hopefully affordable e-book readers available in the UK.

■ Continuing battles on copyright and intellectual property. New versions of the nerds vs the suits, philosophies of lockdown vs openness.

■ The state of the economy and its implications for the industry and jobs.

## What is the biggest challenge for your organisation?

Managing the data deluge and the increasing need to integrate datasets that underlie published research with the more traditional formats and preserve these digital formats into the long term.

In a world of personal digital empowerment, social networking, amateurs as experts and mass collaboration, ensuring that our strategy continues to re-interpret our role and ensure our continuing relevance well into the future, squaring the new imperatives with expectations of our brand – quality, longevity and independence.

## What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?

A curate's egg, i.e. good in parts, but with plenty of challenges; for



**Dame Lynne Brindley**  
Chief executive  
The British Library

example, libraries and information professionals to step up to the plate to provide services which meet the needs of the Google generation and be the strongest political advocates for the importance of information literacy in our digital age.

## What's the must-have gadget that is always with you?

My BlackBerry I'm afraid.

## Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break? And any room for holiday reading in the hand luggage?

As usual, holiday tacked on to a conference. Travelling in the Rockies and then IFLA in Quebec. I'm re-reading Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* – pretty appropriate I think.

## What would be the top tune on your desert island iPod?

Schubert's String Quintet, the Adagio movement – serenely beautiful and might reconcile me to staying on the island.

## Your favourite travel related web site?

The Ramblers' Association ([www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)) which encourages me to walk in this beautiful country thereby keeping fit and doing my bit towards carbon neutrality

## What information industry figures would you most like to be shipwrecked with and why?

Anyone who can fish, cook, make fires and make a raft. I'm open to offers.

## What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?

Be pleased you have an interesting job. Give priority to ensuring you remain fit and healthy, develop a new skill, get

close to your customers and really understand how you can support them. Be positive and never whinge.

**On the road: Mixing work with pleasure**



# Living up to user expectations

**ProQuest:** One of the biggest challenges facing today's libraries is how to enhance the user experience

Libraries face enormous challenges in the information age. Partly due to the mass adoption of information technologies and the development of highly refined, open-web resources like Google, today's users are savvy about online applications and have firmly established expectations for electronic library resources. When library resources don't live up to these expectations, the entire library community suffers.

The proliferation of electronic content has shifted the balance of power in libraries to end-users – today's researchers appreciate and expect the simplicity of open-web, search-engine interfaces and the ease with which content can be accessed. In contrast, when confronted with a bewildering array of electronic library resources, with little knowledge of what the resources are, or how best to sort through them, library research can quickly become a frustrating, unproductive exercise that irretrievably degrades the user experience.

## IMPORTANCE OF USER EXPERIENCE

Recent research carried out by ProQuest showed that high value is placed on the user experience when working with research tools. Users have expectations of what their experience should be and therefore tend to choose the resources that meet or exceed these expectations.

While users recognise that electronic library resources offer higher quality and more credible content, these e-resources are not readily available to the research process in any compelling fashion. To get at the right resources for their research task, users must onerously navigate through the library website; which in most cases entails wading through pages of resource listings to determine where to even begin their research. Most users don't have this level of tolerance and why would they given their unencumbered experience using commercial web resources?

The lack of user-focused access and discovery solutions is widespread. Research materials cover the entire subject-matter spectrum; there may be thousands of electronic resources available and deciphering which are appropriate for any given research task is complicated. The unintended result is that the sheer volume of online library resources discourages use.

Barriers to information access leave users with the impression that the library doesn't contain appropriate, useful and accessible



ProQuest is striving to improve the user experience

research resources. This not only impacts the users, but also the providers of research databases, such as ProQuest. These barriers also diminish the value of the library in general.

## WHY USERS CHOOSE GOOGLE

ProQuest carried out extensive analysis to examine the role of the library in research. Our studies showed that if the quality of the research isn't of significant concern, users opt to use Google – even when it produces weaker research sources – when the alternative is a more time-consuming and complex task to search for superior research materials via the library. Although electronic library resources are recognised as being more effective and having more appropriate content, difficulty with navigation, an over-abundance of 'how to' guides and poorly designed web pages all contribute to users defaulting to open-web search engines for primary research.

Google isn't typically used as a primary resource by most researchers, but it is preferred for quick look-ups, such as the URLs of known sites, seeking definitions or

experiences like these often contribute to turning users to Google as a primary research source.

A well-conceived, well-executed design solution that simplifies accessibility of the growing array of resources, directs the user to the correct resources and provides unencumbered access appears to be beyond current reach. Each user comes to the library with a different research task, different needs and a unique combination of resource experience and awareness. This increases the challenge libraries face in providing meaningful resource guidance that enhances the user experience, simplifies research tasks and improves resource accessibility for all library users – especially when considering that users expect seamless, intuitive choices without need for reading screen language, online help or user guides.

## OVERCOMING THESE CHALLENGES

Educating users about the particular strengths and weaknesses of library resources, their intended uses and the discovery and selection of more appropriate alternatives should continue to be a priority for libraries. One highly effective strategy for promoting the proper use of electronic resources is library marketing. In the university community, library marketing is often conducted informally. For example, an instructional librarian may visit students in class to deliver much-needed information. Effective outreach programmes that are designed to increase user awareness of library resources and programmes that encourage teaching staff to incorporate library resources into their classroom presentations can all improve the library research experience and, indeed, the proficiency of researchers.

Guided tours of library resources, well-constructed resource access pages and e-resource services designed to simplify the process of discovering and selecting appropriate research databases; these are all ways in which libraries can potentially improve users' research experience.

Collectively, the library community and information industry need to collaborate on a concerted effort to simplify the access and discovery of electronic resources.

**John Law is vice president, Discovery Services**

## More Information:

To read the complete white paper *Observing Student Researchers in their Native Habitat*, email John Law at [john.law@proquest.com](mailto:john.law@proquest.com)

**Users recognise that electronic library resources offer higher quality and more credible content, but they are not readily available in any compelling fashion**

completing a citation for an article. However, subjects in the study clearly indicated that they did not consider Google results or information from Wikipedia to be authoritative. Rather, these services are useful when they need background context on a topic, a quick fact or to define an unfamiliar term.

While finding electronic library resources poses one set of problems, users experience difficulty accessing the resources they do find. Simple actions, like authentication, or accessing a resource through a proxy server, can make major differences to the success of the research experience. Many users are unaware of authentication requirements or available methods, yet resources may not allow full access without authentication. Another example is the library catalogue. It's intended to help users identify resources within the library, but often users don't understand the limits of the library catalogue search. They use the catalogue with the expectation that it will produce specific article-level content. Bad

# Finding a better way forward

## What is the most important development in the information industry so far in 2008?

The launching of the Show Us A Better Way competition, [www.showusabetterway.com](http://www.showusabetterway.com), which asks for the public's ideas on how to better use public information. It signifies a big shift in the way government does business by really harnessing the power of the web, and valuing information as the asset it is. Suggestions such as locating your nearest post box to discovering your area from the touch of a mobile phone button truly recognise the power of the web to make the most of public information.

## Natalie Ceeney Chief executive, The National Archives



Natalie is also the Government Head of Profession, Knowledge and Information Management



## What is the biggest challenge for your organisation?

Building the capability we need for a digital world. Information management in a digital world is not the same as in a paper world and virtually all of our existing paradigms are shifting. We face new challenges constantly, from data handling and data sharing through to digital obsolescence, keeping the web readable or the challenges of shifting advisory models online. And the challenges are changing all the time and new ones are constantly emerging. We need new skills to handle this, both technical and in terms of influencing and engagement skills as the information management issues increasingly go to the heart of business agendas.

Tim Berners-Lee:  
creator of the  
World Wide Web

## What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?

It's definitely 'could do better'. The information profession for government wasn't recruited for the current levels of challenge, in terms of size, level and skills. The scale of the challenge is greater than ever before, and doesn't just affect the profession, but affects everyone. We need more senior people to have greater influence on their organisations around the criticality of



managing information well and we need everyone, regardless of his or her core job to do it well and understand its importance.

## What's the must-have gadget that is always with you?

Most definitely my mobile phone. I couldn't live without it, though I have to say my husband has threatened divorce if I ever get a BlackBerry.

## Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break?

I prefer to take time off at Christmas and, this year, I'm taking a month off to go walking in Tasmania. The only problem with taking a month off is that I always forget my laptop password when I return to work.

## What would be the top tune on your desert bipod?

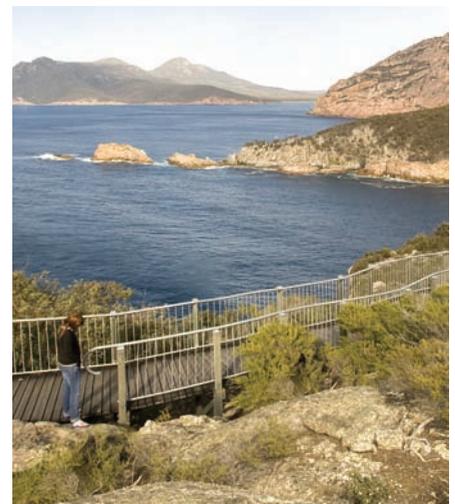
History repeating by The Propellerheads, featuring Shirley Bassey.

## Your favourite travel related website?

Expedia.

## What information industry figures would you most like to be shipwrecked with and why?

It has to be Tim Berners-Lee. I would just love to talk to him about what inspired him to create the web.



Enough to make you forget your password

## What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?

Remember to back up your holiday digital snaps. The average lifespan of a piece of digital information is only five to seven years so needs to be actively managed to make sure you can access them over the long term. Digital Preservation is an issue for everyone and The National Archives is leading a wide range of initiatives to ensure that government's digital information will remain sustainable and accessible over the long term.

# Economic downturn offers chance to shine

## What is the most important development in the information industry so far in 2008?

I suspect the ongoing turbulence within the economic and financial markets, both home and abroad, will have knock-on effects for the information industry throughout the coming year.

Ironically, however, the effects may actually work in the business researcher's favour, giving us an opportunity to demonstrate our knowledge and value to stakeholders and clients.

One might argue: difficult times requires in-depth research, analysis and interpretation; in-depth research, analysis and interpretation requires quality researchers; quality researchers require access to reliable, accessible and possibly alternative sources

Therefore, short-term investment in research(ers) could aid long-term gain.

In addition, the ever growing global emerging markets are likely to continue to dominate the economic and business landscapes, ensuring that the demand for reliable and timely sources remains high.

## What is the biggest challenge for your organisation?

Keeping up-to-date with all the new sources out there (it doesn't get any easier when you're independent).

I find direct feeds to my email box, from information industry discussion forums, newsletters and source guides. Heriot-Watt University Library's, can really help with current awareness management.

## What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?

From discussions during this year's City Information Group Open Day [www.cityinformation.org.uk/Events/events.htm](http://www.cityinformation.org.uk/Events/events.htm), there appears to be a real feeling of anticipation about the information profession, and interest in role transition within it. This could be a great time for new opportunities.

org.uk/Events/events.htm, there appears to be a real feeling of anticipation about the information profession, and interest in role transition within it. This could be a great time for new opportunities.



**Jill Fenton**  
Director & founder  
Fenton Research Ltd

## What's the must-have gadget that is always with you?

Apart from my mascara and compact mirror... hmm, probably my mobile phone (clearly I'm too girly to be a gadget-freak)!

## Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break? Any room for holiday reading in the hand luggage?

A bit of both please. After attending a good friend's wedding in a sumptuous venue, we're then camping our way around southern Ireland. Reading? I'm currently searching for Ray Mears does southern Ireland.

## What would be the top tune on your desert island iPod?

Currently, Amy MacDonald – Youth of Today (from This is the Life CD).

## Your favourite travel related web site?

My family recently came down to London to celebrate my Mother's OBE Investiture at Buckingham Palace. As official tour guide to my seven-year old nephew, I can now highly recommend Kids Love London <http://kids.visitlondon.com/> (on the Visit London site [www.visitlondon.com](http://www.visitlondon.com)) for activity and special offer ideas.

## What information industry figures would you most like to be shipwrecked with and why?

Steve Jobs, in the hope that he has a luxury yacht nearby and a ship-to-shore iPhone with him.

## What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?

To RSS the Fenton Research blog [www.fentonresearch.co.uk/blog](http://www.fentonresearch.co.uk/blog) for regular business research related posts (and details of top Irish pubs).



Tea at the palace: touring London's landmarks





**Gary Horrocks**  
Chair of UK  
e-Information Group



excellence and best practice across the industry, but it is so eclectic. Information workers include librarians, information scientists, IT specialists and knowledge managers from the public and private sectors all facing specific demands. Change is so rapid these days that playing catch up in some areas is the real problem for us all. I also think we need to address a revised skills set for the community as the roles of IT and information management are fusing in many respects. So, there is no current state to comment on really as we are in a constant state of flux.

**What's the must-have gadget that is always with you?**

I'm a bit of a Luddite in this respect. To be honest, a toothbrush and ball point pen. I have a precarious relationship with a temperamental iPAQ which I'm about to trade in for a BlackBerry.



**Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break? Any room for holiday reading in the hand luggage?**

Definitely chill. Sunshine and wine. I'm looking forward to reading Susie Boyt's new book *My Judy Garland Life*. It's a very clever fusion on biography and autobiography. I was honoured to get an advance glimpse at a penultimate draft and provided archival photographs of Garland for the book.

**What would be the top tune on your desert island iPod?**

Anything by Amy Winehouse... or Judy.

**Your favourite travel related website?**

Travelsupermarket.com

**What information industry figures would you most like to be shipwrecked with and why?**

Karen Blakeman, fellow UKeIG management committee member. She's fabulous company and we have great ideas for UKeIG during our informal brainstorming sessions together. We'd go off in search of a shipwrecked crate. Or Bill Gates. (I'd use the prolonged hiatus to persuade him to pay off my credit cards).

**What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?**

Take a deep breath and get back in there.

# Social networking is here to stay

**What is the most important development in the information industry so far in 2008?**

I don't want to sound flippant, but I'm trying to get my head round Twitter at the moment. I think a lot of fundamental developments are definitely in the Web 2.0 arena. How we utilise and translate them into practical business applications is another matter.

**What issues are going to dominate in the final quarter of 2008, moving into 2009?**

I think we're all still grappling with the whole Web 2.0 thing and the massive impact of social networking tools. Legal compliance, information security and policy is and will continue to be a major issue.

**What is the biggest challenge for your organisation?**

After feedback and requests from UKeIG's membership we are going to build on our training portfolio by having a conference in 2009: 'Innovation in e-information'. It's going to be a state-of-the-art event that will review technologies, techniques and tools for retrieving, managing and exploiting information with a focus on future developments, trends, case studies and initiatives.

**Good read: Relaxing with a Judy Garland biography when you're away from home**

**What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?**

It depends on which way the wind is blowing. There are so many examples of



# Co-operation is the name of the game

## What is the most important development in the information industry so far in 2008?

Perhaps the biggest development in 2008 is one that has not been realised – namely, Microsoft's effort to acquire Yahoo. Microsoft's pursuit of Yahoo illustrates the power the leading search engines have to attract web users. OCLC has long recognised the power of Google, Yahoo and others to attract users and we're working with these search leaders to ensure that libraries become an integral part of the web search experience.

## What issues are going to dominate in the final quarter of 2008, moving into 2009?

We'll see more applications for mobile technologies, developments in social networking and more consolidation in the industry. But the dominant issue in the final quarter of 2008 and beyond may be the condition of the US economy, the impact that might have on investors in technology and how it might affect library budgets, consumers and end users, not only in the US, but worldwide.

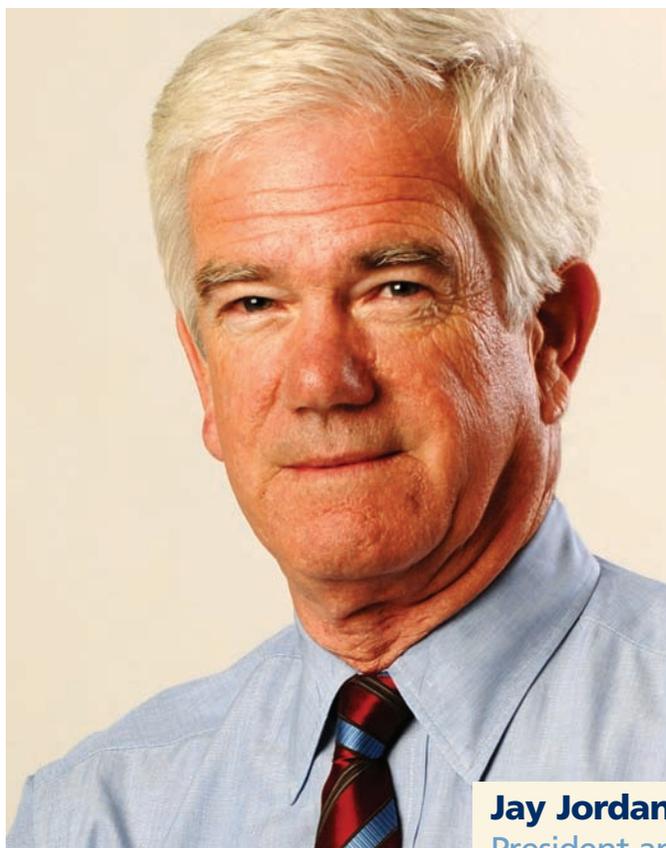
## What is the biggest challenge for your organisation?

OCLC's mission is to connect people to knowledge through library co-operation. In today's world, that means creating a web-scale presence for libraries that will increase the visibility and impact of libraries via the internet.

We continue to enhance and extend our cataloguing and resource-sharing services to broaden the organisation worldwide and add value for each OCLC member library. OCLC was founded on principles of co-operation, and those principles still guide us as we continue to pull together library collections so that they will have the weight necessary to create a larger impact on the web.

## What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?

Despite the challenges the economy might present, it's a great time to be in the information industry. Technology affords us so many



**Jay Jordan**  
President and CEO,  
OCLC

opportunities to do so much for our users. The biggest challenge might be to ensure that we execute our strategy rapidly, effectively and efficiently enough on behalf of our member libraries.

## What's the must-have gadget that is always with you?

I don't go anywhere without my BlackBerry. I'm always connected to email no matter where I am in the world. It's both a blessing and a curse.

## Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break? Any room for holiday reading in the hand luggage?

Earlier this summer, I spent some time in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, a place I called home for more than 20 years. It's always nice to go to a familiar place to relax. As an English major, I've read many of the classics. But I still enjoy some fiction, mysteries. And I catch up on information industry periodicals. I don't have to be totally disengaged to enjoy my holiday.

## What would be the top tune on your desert island iPod?

I listen to a lot of blues on my iPod. Some of my favourite artists are imports from the UK, like Eric Clapton, who, by the way, spends a significant amount of time in the Dublin, Ohio, area where his wife's family lives. But I might need something more optimistic than blues on a desert island. I might want to add Message in a Bottle, by The Police. Leave it to Sting to give hope to a castaway.

## Your favourite travel related website?

I travel a lot, mostly on business. In the past three years alone, I've presented to more than 80 library groups in 15 countries. So I use every conceivable travel-related site on the web – for checking flights, booking hotels and even checking weather patterns to identify possible delays. One of my favourite travel sites is SeatGuru, a service that allows me to search for the most comfortable seats on an airline flight. If you're on a plane for 15 hours to Beijing, you do what you can to be comfortable.

## What information industry figures would you most like to be shipwrecked with and why?

I have many friends in the library and information industry, and I think it's safe to say that all would be good company

and all would be resourceful. My hope would be that they'd be good cooks, and accomplished craftsmen with a keen sense of direction.

## What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?

Buckle up. Just because we take a holiday doesn't mean that the information world stands still while we're away. It might take a few days to catch up. So if you're lucky enough to come back refreshed, consider it an opportunity for change and a new perspective.

But you might want to remember to take photos during your holiday. Because after three days back, those photos might be the only reminders you have of that time to relax. And plan your next holiday before this year's break becomes a distant memory.



Getting away from it all, without losing touch

# Multi-faceted skills of today's info pros

**Intelligent Resources:** From strategists to pioneers why we are building a multi-disciplinary team

**W**hen information professionals describe their skills in a purely functional way, we prefer to think of ourselves as generalist sources of information rather than specialists. However, the key differentiator for successful professionals is their ability to communicate meaningfully with key stakeholders rather than simply deliver the information.

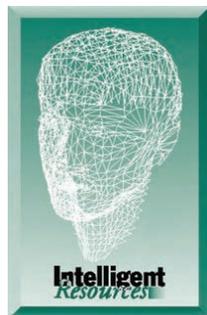
Today, expectations are high. Professional support staff are expected to be fluent in the use of an array of communications tools; email alerts, newsletters, RSS feeds, blogs, wikis and web publishing. In addition, with advances in information/knowledge automation and with the outsourcing/off-shoring of fundamental information services, expectations have moved up a gear. Information professionals are expected to become strategists, pioneers, consultants, change managers, fixers and makers of multi-disciplinary teams. You can see this particularly in investment banks and strategy houses where support services have been "post-off-shore" for a long time, but still need senior professionals to keep knowledge hubs running smoothly.

If you ask a senior practitioner how they spend their precious time, much is spent precipitating change and decisions from groups of senior executives. This element of stakeholder relationship management is obvious to practitioners in the workplace, but usually missed off a job description and often not factored in to performance assessments for individuals or teams.

## PROTECT YOUR REPUTATION

As firms experiment with the social and collaborative working elements of web 2.0, so the influence of individuals who collect, mentor and create material for easy access grows. There is tremendous scope for reputational enhancement (as well as damage) and for the development of loose communities of interest. Politics and change go hand-in-hand and the role of the knowledge worker will become more nebulous in concept, if not in practice.

That is not to say that hard information skills are no longer important, they are essential – because we are all more information literate, information professionals need to keep on top of technology and stay as self-sufficient and confident in harnessing technologies as possible. The days of handing over vanilla



**Intelligent Resources is harnessing the skills of versatile and ambitious individuals**

information, unflavoured by either analysis or opinion, are over. In addition, decision making within enterprises has become complex, as 360° reviews are required. Professional researchers are expected to arrive with a skill-set which includes basic training in analytical models; valuations, SWOT, PEST – skills often beyond the curriculum of their university training.

Deliberate consultation and gleaning of insight are essential now to encapsulate the views of internal and external customers. Because the results of focused primary research inform decisions as much as published information, our sophisticated information professional must also understand the fundamentals of market research, which, in turn, necessitates the acquisition of appropriate skills. These will include sampling and analysis (hard data), communications (framing the right question to the right people), and networking (working/reaching out to groups).

## REACHING OUT

Web 2.0 makes reaching out to different mixes of people much easier, so embracing this will be a key step forward for individuals in the work place either formally through portals, or informally in collaborative networks.

Intelligent Resources has seen a great diversity in roles with common information attributes. There is convergence in all the knowledge disciplines – every organisation has become a publisher, assisted by other publishers. The big advances have been made by organisations able to develop multi-disciplinary teams. For example, getting business development, corporate communications, research, knowledge and content managers working together to be able to apply segmentation techniques.

These can be used for tailoring services to internal clients, as well as scrutinising external clients for strategic marketing purposes. A cohesive, mixed team can successfully apply progressive KM techniques to all functions in the organisation. This is as true for government, law and business as it is for a not-for-profit firm.

The predominance of working in mix and match teams is inevitable with uptake of web 2.0 and collaborative working. If you will, it is a movement from the "I"-generation to the "we"-generation, as people are no longer working in isolation.

What this means for Intelligent Resources

and its customers is that the level of emotional intelligence required to work effectively will be high. Our information professional will need to have a vast general knowledge and be able to move easily between individuals and groups, from very finely detailed tasks to big picture topics. Use CPD budgets to acquire the basic principles of consulting techniques, if you haven't already had training, this will help with presenting a nimble service to your firm, paying attention to the way in which you address discrete groups of customers and their interests.

Information professionals need to harness survey and collaborative media to make sure consultations are done quickly and efficiently, to make groups inclusive without gumming up an organisation through endless meetings and delays.

We are also seeing the rise of the good all-rounder – individuals who can offer skills in information handling/technology, research, analysis, writing and client services, but able to focus on business need.

Instincts for competition and control inside complex organisations are easy to gratify using an intranet and Google, but are not necessarily best practice. As an information professional your consulting skills will be challenged in keeping the stretched knowledge organisation stay cohesive. You will become a political animal who has to serve mixed communities of people where each individual has a right of reply and criticism.

## SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

To survive you have to be multi-faceted and stay very focused on delivery – projects, timetables, budgets. Although you will have to become political, you must keep your hard information skills current, as you mature gracefully, and take active steps to keep up with the implications of technological advancement.

Intelligent Resources is a natural partner for versatile individuals and clients with ambition. We are experts in business intelligence and publishing, not newly jumped onto a bandwagon. The way we express that expertise is by advising on the best opportunities for the best talent.

**Julia Hordle is a director at Intelligent Resources**

## Acknowledgement:

DEMOS (Think Tank) in producing the report *Recruitment 2020: How recruitment is changing and why it matters* (Gallagher & O'Leary). For more information, visit [www.intelligentresources.com](http://www.intelligentresources.com)

# World at your fingertips



**Euan Semple**  
Director  
Euan Semple Ltd

## What is the most important development in the information industry so far in 2008?

The launch of the iPhone. It is the first time that web access has become ubiquitous and compelling. Being able to expect to have access to the world's information at your fingertips has been a long-held dream, but this is the first time it has become reality.

## What issues are going to dominate in the final quarter of 2008, moving into 2009?

The increasing trend for people to use systems outside the workplace to find each

other, stay in touch and get things done. Comparing work systems with the web will increasingly make everyone from the CEO down question what they are paying for.

What is the biggest challenge for your organisation?  
Being a self-employed one-man-band keeping up with demand. All the signs are that more companies will have to deal with the issues raised by great user control over the systems they expect to use and helping them looks like a good business to be in.

## What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?

I have always struggled with the inclination to see it as a distinct profession, but if you insist, information *per se* is of limited value

without context, yet many of the systems we have so far seen in business have simply shovelled more and more information at people. Developing and managing tools that help provide context through user conversations and patterns will become key skills and be a necessary part of information professionals' work.



## What's the must-have gadget that is always with you?

My iPhone

## Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break? Any room for holiday reading in the hand luggage?

Lying on a beach reading *The Origin Of Wealth* by Eric D. Beinhocker and *The World Without Us* by Alan Weisman.

## What would be the top tune on your desert island iPod?

A podcast by Leo Laporte called *Macbreak Weekly*

## Your favourite travel related web site?

Expedia, but then travel is work for me.

## What information industry figures would you most like to be shipwrecked with and why?

Perish the thought.

## What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?

Get a blog.

# Practice makes perfect

## What is the most important development in the information industry so far in 2008?

The data-loss debacle has politicised the perception of information's value across the board. More than ever, organisations are looking for strong examples of best practice. As info pros are both custodians and expert handlers of information there is a real opportunity to show leadership and guidance.

## What issues are going to dominate in the final quarter of 2008, moving into 2009?

Continued M&A activity and implementation of effective information best practice and security through all levels of organisation.

## What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?

Because the information profession covers a very broad area, it depends on the sector they operate within and sometimes it can



**Daniel Griffin**  
Deputy editor,  
IWR

be a struggle for the info pro to be heard. One thing to remember is that with the expertise the profession brings, there are many opportunities for those individuals willing to take new technology by the scruff of the neck and run with it.

## What's the must-have gadget that is always with you?

The AsusEee PC. It's cheap and ideal for hit and run online work (like blogging) as well as casual browsing. At home it gets more use than my laptop for a quick query which takes longer than I'd like to boot up.

## Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break? Any room for holiday reading in the hand luggage?

Busman's holiday (of sorts) this year, to

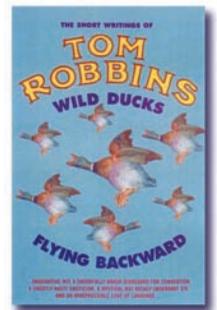
publish this special issue of IWR. I have sworn a solemn oath that we'll be going far, far away in early 2009. As far as reading goes, anything by Tom Robbins, the settings in his stories never fail to feel exotic. His stories are a celebration of the weird and unconventional.

## What would be the top tune on your desert island iPod?

Have just rediscovered *The Staunton Lick* (of Spaced fame) by Lemon Jelly. Also anything by *Flight of the Conchords* (although the live versions are the best).

## What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?

If you have been secretly nurturing ideas for a pet project, start planning how to take the first steps now. You'll want to be prepared when you fight for resources out of the annual budget.





# Things can only get better

## What is the most important development in the information industry so far in 2008?

The signs that Web 2.0 is something that is not just being talked about, but is actually beginning to mean something.

## What issues are going to dominate in the final quarter of 2008, moving into 2009?

Apart from Web 2.0, everyone at the moment is consumed by the gloomy economic outlook. It may not be quite as bad as some doom-mongers are saying, but information professionals have to be aware of the challenges posed by an economic downturn and a corresponding loss of confidence.

## What is the biggest challenge for your organisation?

Staying close to information professionals.

## What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?

The current state has to be good with most people we talk to working hard to respond to the changing environment faced by their organisation and clients.

## What's the must-have gadget that is always with you?

Am I the only one not to say iPhone or BlackBerry? The gadget that has



**Peter Williams**  
Editor, IWR

revolutionised the humble hack's life has to be the digital voice recorder. Save puzzling over those barely legible notes and so much better than an analogue tape recorder.

## Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break? And any room for holiday reading in the hand luggage?

It's drizzling and I'm going to the south west to find a coast path or two. A small car, a wife, two children and a dog

and no room for holiday reading. I'll borrow when I get there.

## What would be the top tune on your desert island iPod?

I am tempted to say Things can only get better by D Ream. Or is that too political? Too gloomy?

## Your favourite travel related web site?

Every so often I'll check out [www.seat61.com](http://www.seat61.com). The possibility of romance, glamour and right-on concern for the environment.

## What information industry figures would you most like to be shipwrecked with and why?

I'll have to stay neutral on this one.

## What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?

Keep reading IWR and checking the website.

I'm in Devon: Finding the happiness I seek

# Juggling the added demands

## What issues are going to dominate in the final quarter of 2008, moving into 2009?

Increasing demands on information professionals to fulfil multiple roles. With media hype surrounding impending financial doom, stakeholders are starting to panic and we're being asked to work with shrinking budgets and shrinking teams. I'm juggling more tasks daily.



**Anita**  
Info Pro, IWR

## What is the current state of the information profession – good/robust/could do better/poor?

Information professionals – good. Professional handling of information – bad.

## Summer holiday 2008? Adventure or chill-out break? Any room for holiday reading in the hand luggage?

Adventure. I'm off climbing in El Chorro, Malaga. A quick stroll around El Caminito del Rey then back to the camp to enjoy a classic read. I've got Don Quixote by Cervantes to take with me.

## What would be the top tune on your desert island iPod?

Jimi Hendrix – 1983...(A merman I should turn to be).

## Your favourite travel related website?

tfl.gov.uk for keeping up on delays, cancellations, oyster reader malfunctions and station closures. And Google Earth, which is excellent for pre holiday detective work.

## What information industry figures would you most like to be shipwrecked with and why?

Tom Anderson, founder of MySpace. With 240,000,000 friends, someone's bound to come looking for him. Or maybe Steve

Jobs, I'd like to see what's under the black roll-neck.

## What advice would you give an information professional as they return from their holidays?

Don't stress out over the mountain of emails waiting for you, just delete them all. Now, I'd never officially condone this practice, but it's always worked for me.

Happy camper: In search of adventure with Don Quixote



# Calculating the real worth of a database

A 12-point plan for quantitative and qualitative evaluation of databases from **HW Wilson**

**T**he assessment of a database's value to your library is not a simple matter. A thorough evaluation must account for many variables in order to arrive at a true measure of database value.

Many vendors promote a simplified quantitative approach: calculate the cost per full-text title and find out who gives you more full-text titles for your money. Simple enough, but a bit too simple. There is much more to factor into the equation. We wouldn't choose our print reference purchases on a "cost-per-page" basis, so why should the database purchase be reduced to such a simplistic calculation?

The quality of the library patron's user experience and the number of relevant results retrieved must weigh significantly in any evaluation of database value to a library.

## TWELVE POINTS TO CONSIDER:

**1 QUALITY OF CONTENT** Ask how journals are selected for inclusion in the database. Are journals selected by recommendation from a panel of subject experts and experienced librarians, or is there an "include-everything-but-the-kitchen-sink" approach to create inflated full-text numbers? Peer-review numbers can be deceiving. Look for a database vendor that sets an unimpeachable standard when deciding which publications qualify to be designated as peer-reviewed. The database publisher should guarantee that the peer-review label means that an independent scholar has reviewed and recommended the article for publication. Peer-review must not be applied to any journal that is not a popular or trade title.

**2 TITLES APPROPRIATE TO DATABASE SUBJECT** Are the titles selected for inclusion in the database really relevant to the subject area? The presence of extra titles in a full-text list does not provide a better user experience, rather it will tend to provide the highly unsatisfactory user experience of searching for journal articles and receiving a results set filled with inappropriate articles or even government produced pamphlets masquerading as full-text journals. Ask yourself if your library patron will be satisfied when a search of what is advertised as a complete education resource brings back articles from the likes of *National Tax Journal*, or *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*.



HW Wilson is bringing qualitative evaluation to databases

Is there an "include everything but the kitchen sink" approach to create inflated full-text numbers?

**3 CONTROLLED VOCABULARY** Is there a controlled vocabulary based on the literary warrant of the actual collection of items in the database, or has a database aggregator simply adapted a "one-size-fits-all" vocabulary specific to nothing and of little true value in bringing users all of the available items on a topic?

**4 RELEVANCE RANKING** Does the relevance-ranking algorithm understand that words found in fields like subject and abstract are more indicative of the "aboutness" of an article than random occurrences elsewhere in the article?

**5 SEARCH AND SYSTEM EFFICIENCY** Does the database require executing a second search to sort the articles by relevance? This provides impressive usage statistics that make the database appear to be your most popular database, but does your patron really want to execute two searches when one could bring the best results?

**6 EASE OF ACCESS TO BEST RESULTS** Does the database give library patrons quick and easy access to the information they want whether they are novice searchers or experienced professionals? Does the results set come back sorted only by date of publication in reverse chronological order, or are they sorted with the best articles available, automatically placed at the top of the results set in one search? Don't ask your patrons to sift through hundreds of irrelevant articles that just happen to mention the terms sought.

**7 MEANINGFUL ACCESS AND EMBARGOES** Is the cost per full-text title really what it claims to be? Try this comparison: remove all titles with a one-year or greater embargo period from each database journal list and then calculate the cost per full-text title. Is a database boasting over 4,000 full-text titles, but with 2,000 unavailable until a year or more after publication more valuable than a database with 2,000 full-text titles with few significant embargoes?

**8 ACCURATE FULL-TEXT NUMBERS** Note whether all the titles in your periodical database are really journals. Journal full-text title lists may be loaded with hundreds of "free-to-anyone" government pamphlets included simply to pump up the full-text title counts.

**9 STATISTICS TELL ONLY PART OF THE STORY** Consider how statistics are generated by your search system. Must the user re-execute a search to refine it? Do routine search result manipulations generate new searches? Beware of relying solely on usage statistics to evaluate the value of a database.

**10 TRUTH IN PACKAGING** Are all of the journals really there? Journals must be included in the title list only when there is actual content in the database. Watch out for a notation that reads: "\*indicates that this publication was recently added to the database and therefore few or no articles are currently available." You are paying for a title that isn't there.

**11 MOST EFFICIENT SEARCHING** See if there is a way to manipulate the patron's results set from the results screen to limit that set of results only to peer-reviewed journals, full-text HTML or PDF page image. In many databases, the user must go back and adjust the parameters of the original search and then execute yet another search to get desired results.

**12 KNOW YOUR SOURCE** Who is responsible for the metadata? Do highly trained subject specialists do the indexing work in-house, or is it outsourced? Ask the name and qualifications of the editor. Ask about the training of the indexing staff. Creating high-quality indexing based on high-quality subjects drawn from a superior quality subject vocabulary takes time to master. Indexers should be subject to rigorous training measured in months, not days. Training staff should also be drawn from the elite of the in-house indexing staff who are experienced with the subject vocabulary. Consistency in applying the correct subject headings requires experience and familiarity with the vocabulary and the standards of the company.

Quantitative analysis is one tool that may prove useful in making a determination of true database value, but a qualitative evaluation should be the paramount concern. The key question is, which databases will bring your patrons the articles that they seek, containing the information required to answer their information needs quickly, easily and efficiently?

**Ron Miller is director of product management at HW Wilson**

# ON THE INFORMATION TRAIL

Together with senior information figures, **Daniel Griffin** looks at the major issues for the year ahead

**W**ith our sister show Online Information conference programme taking shape, IWR was invited to several advisory committees to look at what issues would be most relevant to the information profession. This is no easy task, as there is, of course, so much to address.

Naturally, not all papers submitted made it through, but they were all discussed and debated with enthusiasm. Below, we have pulled together a selection of some of the themes that will be of interest to you.

## LIBRARY 2.0

If you are unsure what the term Library 2.0 means to your institution, or what tools are available that engage an online library user-base, then the American Library Association's Jenny Levine will have some answers. Levine will examine how certain 2.0 tools have been put to use effectively by those libraries on the cutting edge. How



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to use this technology, as well as determine its effectiveness to your library, will be a central theme.

## PROVIDING FOR YOUR 'CLIENTS'

Neil Infield from the British Library will be sharing the organisation's experience of adapting to changing customer demands at its Business and IP Centre. As users became more entrepreneurial in nature, the Centre needed to implement training for staff to advise on intellectual property and business information. One-to-one advice on how to set up a business is now commonplace there. It was this personalised service that changed how the library's business



centre and its users engaged with one another. Infield will explain how applying a commercial strategy built on trust has led to the library offering better information services and what that could mean for engaging with your readers.

Considering the volume of mobile devices suitable for utilising e-books potential, Hunt asks why the current incarnation has yet to realistically challenge its paper-based predecessor?

## CORPORATE SOCIAL NETWORKS

British Telecom is an organisation that has welcomed social tools to better serve its business. Through social networking tools, such as blogging, RSS feeds and even a company wiki, Richard Dennison, BT's senior manager of social media,

## OF INTRANETS AND IM

As any info pro knows, it is the quality of information that counts. So does the calibre of content in an organisation's intranet reflect this? Gerry McGovern, CEO of Customer Care Ireland will attempt to lay down some ground rules as to what that should mean.

## As any info pro knows, it's the quality of information that counts. So does the calibre of content in an organisation's intranet reflect this?

aims to examine what the effect using these tools can have on the organisation as well as cut through the hype. Through the BT experience, Dennison will outline the lessons the organisation learned, such as starting small and listening to feedback.

In his presentation Task-based Intranets: From information to tasks, McGovern says that the tendency to publish huge swathes of largely useless information on the intranet needs to end. Instead, rather than drown in data, we need to 'stop thinking about information and start thinking about tasks'. In other words, only make information available if it supports the completion of that task. First and foremost, the objective of an intranet must be to make staff more productive he says.

## WHAT FUTURE FOR E-BOOKS?

Widespread adoption of the e-book has so far proved elusive. Robin Hunt from CIBER, University College London, examines this tricky question, asking whether the e-book's time for ascendancy is nigh. His session will delve into a world which examines the many ways society hungrily consumes stories; through social-based online gaming to the Hollywood blockbuster.

In a similar vein, HSBC intranet manager, Natalie Bogos will deliver a case study outlining how her organisation's demanding force of 60,000 intranet users have their needs met.



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Susan Dyke, Information Scientist.