feature

Joanna Gillette

Effects of the Digital Age on Society Membership

> *"The best associations know what their members want before the members know they need it."*

I n his opening remarks at this year's Emerging Trends in Scholarly Publishing™ Seminar, Gerald Lillian, CEO of Allen Press, made the following statement:

Emerging trends and technology changes are not just affecting our publications. There is a huge impact on our societies and organizations as a whole and on our members—how to reach out, how to retain, whatever the goal may be, we need to think about the member-centric aspects of emerging trends.

Keynote speaker John H. Graham IV, CAE, president and CEO of ASAE & The Center, captured Mr. Lillian's point in his address, *Effects of the Digital Age on Society Membership.* Mr. Graham advocated that societies should maintain a member-centric mindset that makes full use of virtual communities to remain competitive in what bestselling author Thomas Friedman, in his 2005 book *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, has termed a *flat world*: "a global, Web-enabled playing field that allows for multiple forms of collaboration on research and work in real time, without regard to geography, distance

John H. Graham IV, CAE

AL PRESS CLUB

FrontMatter — In *front* of publication issues that *matter*

FrontMatter is a quarterly newsletter devoted to issues that affect society and association publishers, with a particular focus on the use of technology.

editor

Anna Jester, Marketing

editorial staff

Jeff Ireland, Copyediting
Gena Woodling, Graphic Design
Hector Codoceo, Web Programming

allen★press

Partnering with organizations to promote their interests and to achieve their goals.

810 E 10th Street │ Lawrence, Kansas 66044 │ 800/627-0326 │ www.allenpress.com

© 2008 Allen Press, Inc.   All rights reserved.

contact us

Anna Jester
Manager, Product Marketing
ajester@allenpress.com

Robert Fox
VP Sales & Marketing
sales@allenpress.com

subscribe

Both print and online subscriptions to *FrontMatter* are free. To add, remove, or change an address on the print mail list, or to sign up for e-mail alerts to the online version, go to http://frontmatter.allenpress.com

from the editor
Anna Jester, Marketing

Standards, Emerging Trends, and Best Practices

Standards can be extremely useful when evaluating your organization, publication, or even an upcoming high-dollar purchase. Our Technovations article in this issue discusses the SUSHI (Standardized Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative) Protocol, which aims, in part, to ensure that statistics collected are truly useful. Perhaps you've read an online review of a product and wondered if the reviewer has the same overall concerns you do? Have you ever clicked through all of the results, or even just 1–10, of the 41,400,000 that were returned to you from Google? We need standards—so we know which 40,399,995 results might not be useful for our purposes and can be quickly avoided.

Recaps of some of the presentations given at this year's Emerging Trends in Scholarly Publishing™ Seminar are also covered in this issue. Presentations on Eigenfactor and MESUR detailed why standards, such as the Impact Factor, may be easy to use but may not cover all the bases you hope to include, or the ones you don't realize exist, when evaluating publications.

John Graham IV gave seminar attendees a wealth of society membership topics to digest. Technology has changed the society landscape in a multitude of ways. Your society's level of preparedness for these changes may leave you feeling calm or stunned. Have you surveyed your membership to see what they truly want? For additional information about this year's speakers, copies of the presentations, and a video of the Keynote Speaker, visit http://seminar.allenpress.com.

Another emerging trend publications will notice is increasing postage rates. Rising costs for paper and postage may encourage societies to focus on their online versions at ever-increasing paces.

Effective e-mail campaigns and association management companies are two best practices we discuss in this issue. If your e-mail campaigns aren't as successful as you'd hoped, this issue has advice for making sure your message gets through loud and clear. If you're interested in hearing as much as possible about best practices, I recommend noting the dates for the upcoming Blueprint for Sustainable Publications seminar this fall. Topics to help you streamline your workflow, create efficiency, and sustain your publication for the future will definitely be of interest to editorial offices.

We are always interested in hearing your feedback about the newsletter and ideas you have for future articles. Please e-mail comments, suggestions, or ideas to frontmatter@allenpress.com. ★

or, in the near future, even language." Mr. Graham contends that competing in a flat world means embracing changing technologies and engaging in current trends. Blogs, wikis, and social networking sites are the tools of the future, and they are tools that our associations must learn to use effectively. Through the course of his address, Mr. Graham presented three evaluative tools used by ASAE & The Center: a Member Needs Assessment, *Mapping the Future*, and *The Decision to Join*.

The Member Needs Assessment

In 2007, ASAE & The Center conducted a Member Needs Assessment. The findings of the assessment indicated that there is a significant increase in members' participation in virtual programs. Fifty-two percent of those surveyed reported that they make decisions about virtual vs. face-to-face participation based solely on convenience. What drives the choice is not personal preference for one format over another, but a simple matter of which happens to be more convenient at the time. Only 47% of those surveyed expressed a clear preference in format, with 13% preferring electronic interface, 23% preferring a combination of virtual and face-to-face, and 11% preferring face-to-face contact. The assessment also found that for members, networking is equally as important as education. Face time is more important to association staff than to CEOs because they need exposure for career development. It should also be noted that association staff are often younger than other types of members, and age plays a factor in both their need for career development and their willingness to network in new ways. The younger staff also place a higher value on connecting through a virtual community. For association staff, the level of interest was 3.8 on a 5-pt scale, while the general member average was only 3.5.

2008 Allen Press Emerging Trends Seminar, Washington, DC, April 17

Mapping the Future

Another tool available from ASAE & The Center is *Mapping the Future of Your Association*, an environmental scan used by associations to prepare for a new and ever-changing business environment. *Mapping the Future* identifies eight super-trends of which successful associations must be aware. The super-trends, as described by Mr. Graham, are as follows:

Customer: *Demassification* The mass market is breaking into smaller pieces. Members are interested in focused efforts to meet their needs, not "one size fits all." Simply put, all members are not the same. Associations must discover how to retain, motivate, and engage a younger, more diverse workforce. Using several specialized approaches for different member groups will certainly be more expensive, but it is the only way to maintain relevance.

Competitor: *Unbundling* Increased competition is pressuring associations to offer products and services *á la carte* rather than as an organized

"Members are interested in focused efforts to meet their needs, not 'one size fits all.' "

▷

Joanna Gillette

> **"The growth of technology has made information a profitless commodity"**

package. Mr. Graham asserted that this point is critical. ASAE & The Center has seen reliance on dues revenue decrease (from about 70% to about 15% over the last 15–20 years), in favor of more reliance on the fee for transaction. It is important to keep the dues low enough that people want to join, and still provide the value and services that keep people engaged and willing to come back.

Economic: *Scrimping* Economically, society members—and their employers—are looking for a greater return on investment in association membership. One way to keep costs low is to rely on the members to create content. This is what scientific societies do. The association's job is not to come up with content to feed to its members, but to add value to the content they receive from their members.

Technology: *Wave 3.1* The growth of technology has made information a profitless commodity. Competitive advantage lies in enriching professional development, learning, and connectivity through knowledge. Much of what used to be sold is now available free. As Mr. Graham noted, "It is not that the price is too high, it's that the value is too low." People will spend more money when they perceive that there is value. The content can be obtained for free (whether you think you have restricted access or not); it's how a society adds value to the content that makes a difference.

Furthermore, free is better. Open access is more beneficial than restricted access. If you can get the information to more people then you'll be better able to get them excited about how it is packaged.

Social: *Virtualization* Our highly mobile society has disintegrated traditional communities and enhanced the appeal of Web-based virtual experiences as a form of fellowship and networking. To maintain their strength as community builders, associations must serve a growing appetite for virtual connections, while continuing to offer personal experiences. How associations deal with social networking is going to be crucial. People (especially young people) are increasingly expecting associations to integrate it into their environment.

Political: *Cyber-Mobbing* With the channels of political influence broadening to include digital media, associations must develop a creative and Web-savvy approach to advocacy. The ability to mobilize people quickly through online campaigning is having a significant impact on the political landscape.

Legal: *Scrutiny* With special-interest legislation and litigation on the rise, associations must operate transparently in the areas of governance, advocacy, and political activity. Financial scrutiny and transparency is a given. The public now operates with a significant amount of distrust that is motivated and spurred on by Watergate, Enron, and scandals in the church and that is exacerbated by around-the-clock news. It is no longer enough to be a familiar organization with laudable goals. Donors want to know what will be done with their money. Organizational effectiveness and accountability are paramount. The real question donors and members are going to be asking is, "How well have you done what you said you were going to do?"

Geophysical: *Counter-Americanism* To operate globally, associations must develop localized models of association culture, governance, and politics. The political climate today has an impact on how international members view US-based societies and associations. No matter

what our personal views may be, we simply cannot ignore this fact.

The Decision to Join

Twenty-three professional societies engaged in the study that culminated in *The Decision to Join: How Individuals Determine Value and Why They Choose to Belong*. The study represents the most comprehensive research on member psychology in over 20 years, analyzing close to 17,000 participants. Important points in the categories of value, interest and engagement, and leadership emerged, as well as some interesting information on key groups.

Value   Contrary to what we might have guessed, individuals do not apply a cost-benefit analysis when making the decision to join a society. They place far more importance on the "good of the order" benefits, that is to say, an individual joins because they believe they can add value to the profession. Furthermore, the value an individual places on membership is not significantly different if their dues are paid by their employer rather than themselves.

Interest and engagement   It is vitally important to engage members whenever possible. Mr. Graham stated that a mantra of ASAE & The Center is this: "The engaged member is the member that renews." Boards and committees are not the only form of engagement, and in the future will probably not even be the most prevalent. Virtual communities and networks can provide instant engagement on whatever level each individual is comfortable with. Once a member has been engaged in smaller ways, through ad hoc committees, special projects, and virtual communities, they will be more willing to invest time and energy in a more long-term, intensive commitment. Members are enthusiastic about projects and activities such as the writing, reviewing, and presenting of content. They view this as real engagement in their industry. This is a way for members to add value to their professions; as noted above, many individuals choose to join for this very reason.

Leadership   By and large, leaders are perceived as being out of touch with the general membership. In the eyes of the member, the board does not

know what is best for the membership. The board must strive to make data-driven decisions. The only way to obtain the necessary data is to communicate with the members. Successful associations must be member-centric. The best associations know what their members want before the members know they need it. This is not just an intuition; it is born out of constant research.

Key groups   It is important to be sensitive to the unique needs and desires of divergent groups within your membership. For example, non-US respondents are more interested in ad hoc volunteering and engagement than their US counterparts. A successful association will provide unique opportunities for engagement with overseas members. Academics are the strongest supporters of associations and professional societies. Academics are also in a unique position to influence entry-level people. Keeping the academics happy, then, becomes a vital step toward building a growing membership base. Young people believe that career information and employment opportunities are important offerings, but associations aren't meeting their needs. It is imperative to give young members the information and tools they need to advance their careers. Each group has different needs. The successful association will address the needs of each group in different ways, rather than trying to force a changing demographic into the same one-size-fits-all model.

Through his work with ASAE & The Center, John Graham has provided valuable insight into society membership in the digital age. We live in a fast-paced, customizable world. Associations must remain flexible and willing to engage members in ways that are convenient, meaningful, and specific to their unique needs. The Member Needs Assessment, *Mapping the Future*, and *The Decision to Join* are all valuable studies that can help societies function in the new, flat world.

To download a copy of John Graham's presentation and to view video footage from the seminar, please visit http://seminar.allenpress.com. To find more information on *Mapping the Future of Your Association* or *The Decision to Join: How Individuals Determine Value and Why They Choose to Belong*, visit http://www.asaecenter.org/. ★

John H. Graham IV, CAE, has been President and CEO of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) since 2003. ASAE & The Center are more than 22,000 association executives and industry partners representing nearly 11,000 organizations. Before ASAE, he served the American Diabetes Association for 24 years and the Boy Scouts of America for nine years. John earned a bachelor's degree from Franklin & Marshall College.

Swivel Me This

Have you ever wondered whether a CFO's optimism affects the overall net worth of a company? Or whether the amount of facial hair on a president is connected to his approval rating? Thanks to Swivel, a data-sharing site, you can now upload, view, and compare over 5 million different graphs that pertain to a diverse range of information.

Swivel was launched in December 2005 by Dmitry Dimov, Brian Mulloy, and their team of computer-savvy individuals who thrive on "geeking out about data." They describe their site as the YouTube for data, where you can view, rate, comment, and even blog about the graphs floating around their site. This allows people to fully understand the data that is being presented, not only in terms of the world but also in terms of their own surroundings. For example, if you live in Indiana, you may not be interested in knowing which months have the highest levels of precipitation in Italy; however, if you want to plan a European excursion, this information could help you decide whether to pack your umbrella and rain boots.

So how does Swivel work? Well, to start out, they have myriad computers that work day and night to create graphs out of data

that they receive from online users. Just as Amazon.com offers you suggestions on purchases based on your buying habits, Swivel will offer you connections to graphs that may be beneficial to your personal research. The fledgling site makes research easy and fun—and it's free.

Companies can use Swivel to compare data internally. For example, several different departments (accounting, ad sales, marketing, customer service, etc.) within a company can upload information. An administrator could then go access all of the different graphs of information and begin comparing and contrasting the different facets. You could find out whether the number of customer service calls received has any correlation to the number of marketing campaigns that were administered throughout a month, or if specific holidays affect the financials. The prospects are truly endless.

However, you may not feel comfortable placing your information on an open forum for the entire world to see. That's why the folks at Swivel are currently getting ready to offer a new edition, Swivel Private, that will target companies who may want to keep their data private

and secure. These companies would pay a fee for this program, but they would be able to compare their private data with everything that is public. This feature is currently under construction, but you can e-mail sara@swivel.com for more information.

Perhaps the greatest asset that Swivel brings to the table is their attitude: they are less concerned with creating a product that will dominate the market and more concerned with improving lives. They are interested in educating the general masses so that people will make better decisions in life. Swivel offers people the opportunity to form collaborative communities to disseminate data online, an evolutionary concept that is being referred to as Web 2.0. The Beatles once said that "we all want to change the world," and it looks like Swivel is poised to help everyone work together to reach that goal. ★

Eigenfactor – The Google Approach to Bibliometrics

Not all citations are created equal. This is one of the core ideas behind Eigenfactor.[1] Citations from more prestigious journals (such as *Science* and *Nature)* are worth more than citations from less important journals (such as the *Journal of Obscurity*). This meritocratic approach to bibliometrics is very similar to the philosophy behind Google's PageRank algorithm, which is at "the heart of [its] software"[2]. Receiving a hyperlink from a highly reputable website means more than a hyperlink from a neighborhood blog. Both Google and Eigenfactor utilize the wealth of information inherent in the structure of their respective networks. For Google, that information can be found in the topology of the web, and for Eigenfactor, the information can be found in the citation structure of the scholarly literature. The success of Google's search engine illustrates the power of this approach to ranking. Part of the success behind PageRank can actually be traced back to prior work in the field of bibliometrics.[3] With the advent of scholarly measures like Eigenfactor, this relationship has come full circle.

The idea that important journals are cited by other important journals may at first sound hopelessly circular, but the idea can be formalized in a beautiful mathematical formula. We find the following heuristic helpful in explaining what the Eigenfactor number represents. Imagine that a researcher decides to spend all of eternity in the library randomly following citations. In other words, the researcher first picks some random journal in the library and, in that journal, points to some random citation. The researcher then walks over to the journal of that citation and finds another random citation. The researcher does this ad infinitum. Eigenfactor measures how much time the researcher spends at each journal during that infinite walk in the library. For example, the Eigenfactor for *PNAS* in 2006 is 1.83. This means that the researcher spent 1.83 percent of her time at *PNAS*.

Eigenfactor therefore measures total value within the scientific literature. If publishers or authors want to know the value *per article* of a journal, they can use the complimentary

Jevin West (left) and Johan Bollen at the 2008 Emerging Trends Seminar

metric that we call Article Influence. This particular measure is comparable to the well-known Impact Factor. Article Influence is approximately the Eigenfactor of a journal divided by the number of articles that the journal produced over a given time period. Article Influence measures the prestige of a journal, rather than the total value.

The Eigenfactor approach to measuring journal influence has some notable nuances. For example, by virtue of the PageRank-style algorithm, citations from non-review journals are worth more than citations from review journals, which typically have longer reference lists. When the infinite researcher ends up at this type of journal in the library, she can only choose one of those many references. More citations means less likelihood that any given one of them will be followed in the next step. This also means that citations from frugal fields are worth more.

No metric will ever replace reading papers as the best form of evaluation. Nonetheless, with increasingly limited time and limited budgets, there will continue to be a legitimate need for quantitative measures of the scholarly literature. We would like to think that Eigenfactor is a step in the right direction. ★

—Jevin West, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

MESUR

It has been said that cynics know the price of everything but the value of nothing. Since it is easy to express the cost of scientific work but difficult to measure its true value, scholarly assessment has been caught in the same conundrum.

Most scientific publications contain references (i.e., citations) that indicate their most important influences. Therefore, it is reasonable to count the number of citations to a particular work and use this count to asses its impact. For example, Thomson Scientific's journal Impact Factor expresses the "impact" of a journal in terms of the average number of citations its articles received over a two-year period. Numerous refinements have been proposed (e.g., the Eigenfactor [http://www.eigenfactor.org]), but the Impact Factor remains the most commonly used indicator of scholarly impact.

There are, however, two important problems with this approach. Citation data originates from the world of print. It is subject to significant publication delays, applies mostly to traditionally published materials (journal articles), and mainly represents the opinions of published authors. It is no longer entirely suited for today's scholarly world. An increasing number of scientific contributions are now made in a form not amenable to the collation of citation statistics (e.g., data sets, algorithms, blog entries, and gray literature), and their importance is expressed not in terms of the number of citations they received over time but in terms of their position in the networked, fast-moving nature of present-day scientific activity.

How can we assess impact in this new environment? There are two relevant developments. First, usage data is now recorded on a very large scale by most online information services. It has significant advantages over citation data. It captures scientific activity immediately upon publication, applies to anything that can be made available online, and is recorded for everyone regardless of where, how, or even whether they choose to publish their work. Second, science now takes place in a networked, fast-moving fashion. Network science has over the past 40 years developed numerous methods to assess the importance of network elements in such a context. Rather than count citations, we can apply the results of this domain to develop more reliable, network-based indicators of impact.

The MESUR project (http://www.mesur.org/) is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon foundation to investigate the above-mentioned innovations and to issue generalizable, quantitative recommendations with regards to their proper use. MESUR operates according to the following methodology.

To avoid the effects of sample bias, we collected large-scale usage data from some of the world's most significant publishers, aggregators, and institutional consortia. This usage data was combined with all related citation and bibliographic data, resulting in a reference data set of nearly 1 billion usage events that apply to nearly 100,000 serials.

We then proceeded to characterize this reference data set to determine the degree to which it provides an adequate and unbiased sample of overall scientific activity. This resulted in the first comprehensive clickstream map of science that visualizes the flow of present-day "traffic" in the scientific community and highlights the important role of the social sciences and humanities. The latter are often underrepresented in citation data due to different publication and citation habits in these disciplines (see Figure). Usage data corrects this bias and reveals the numerous interdisciplinary connections that tie the social sciences and humanities to the natural sciences.

On the basis of MESUR's clickstream maps (represented as a usage network) and citation data, we calculated nearly 50 social-network metrics of scholarly impact. Whereas the Impact Factor favors popular and often-cited review journals, these metrics express various other aspects of impact, such as prestige (as opposed to popularity), interdisciplinary importance, the holding of central position within a particular domain, being read often by practitioners despite lower citation counts, etc.

The rankings produced by these metrics were then compared to investigate how different metrics produce different rankings and how well the metrics succeed in expressing different facets of scholarly impact. Each metric was projected into a geographical map so that metrics that produced similar rankings were positioned in proximity. This map thereby visualized the similarities and dissimilarities between facets of scholarly impact as expressed by each of MESUR's 50 metrics; it functions as a visualization of the various concepts that underly our understanding of scholarly impact.[5]

The MESUR project has not yet completed its survey of usage-based indicators of scholarly status, but its results are already set to produce a set of practical guidelines that practitioners in the field can use to guide their assessment decisions. It is our hope that rather than relying on single metrics that express a particular, selected aspect of scholarly impact, we can arrive at a situation in which scholarly status is evaluated as a multidimensional phenomenon that can be assessed in terms of varied, proven, and validated metrics. ★

—Johan Bollen, Principal Investigator, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation–funded MESUR project

▷

Footnotes can be found at
http://frontmatter.allenpress.com
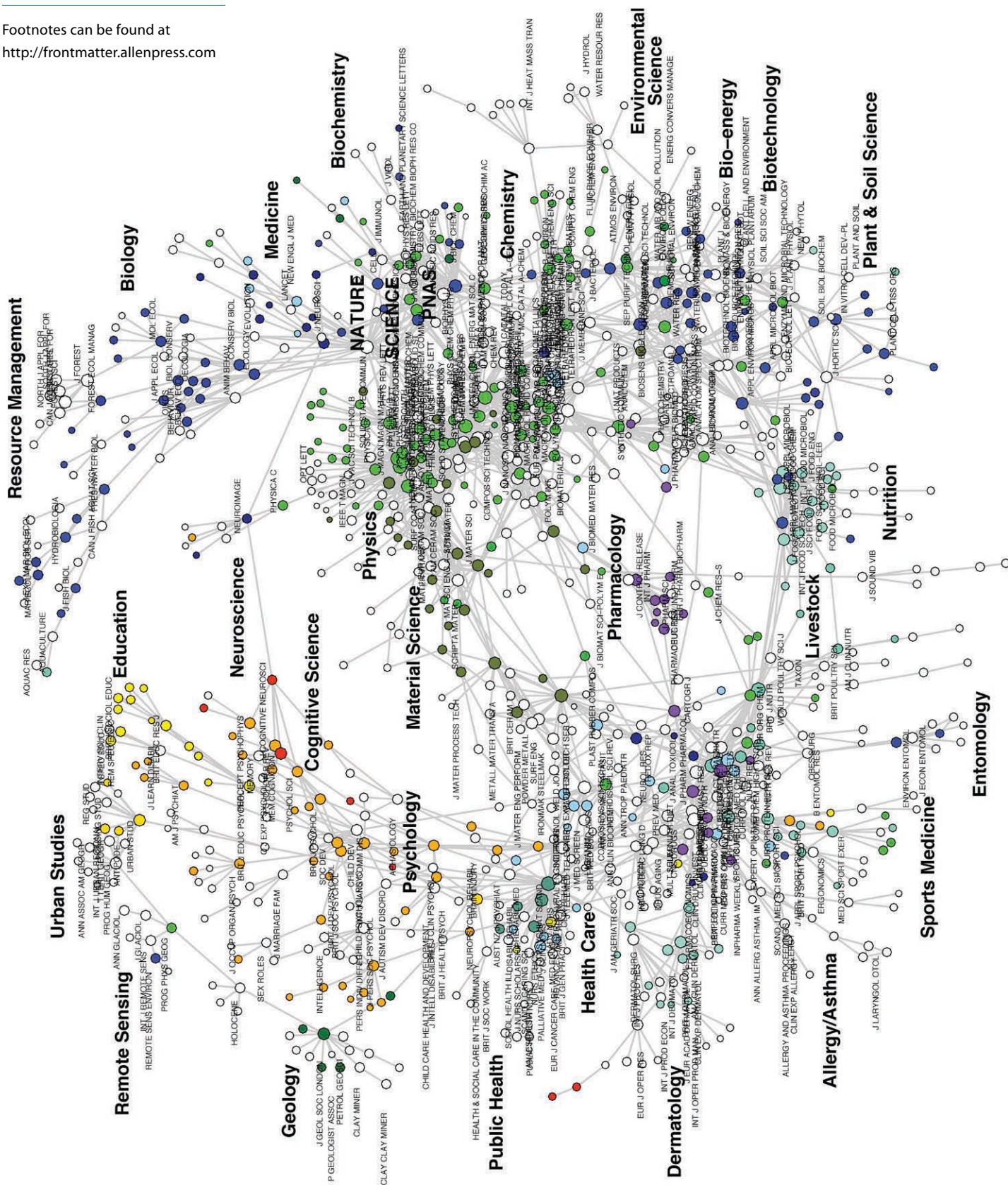
Shipping Savvy

The United States Postal Service (USPS) raised postage rates on May 12 in what has become a yearly occurrence. The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, new legislation that was signed in December 2006 by President George W. Bush, ties rate increases to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), meaning this year prices cannot rise past 2.9% collectively.

First Class 1-oz mail increased by one penny, and though most will agree that isn't a significant increase at a total of 43¢ for a stamp, many do agree that it is irritating to have to supplement or replace old stamps. If you feel bitter over the fact that you have to buy 1-cent stamps to use the stamps you already own or, worse yet, double up old stamps to mail a card, take heart with the Forever Stamp.

In an effort to abate consumer upset over the raise in price that will happen each year around this time, USPS launched the Forever Stamp last April. They have sold more than 6 billion of the Liberty Bell–adorned stamps, which are recognized as the correct amount of postage no matter how high the stamp price may climb, thus they are forever usable.

Though First Class mailings increased only marginally, other class mailings went up a little further based on size, weight, and other factors, all of which can be found on USPS.com. For example, at Allen Press we mail most journals using a periodical or standard flat rate. Periodicals increased in price by 2.71% and standard flats increased anywhere from 0.6% to 3.1%.

To avoid being hit with a larger-than-expected postal bill, be conscious of how you design mail pieces because sizing and weight continue to be a large factor in postal pricing. Make sure that your mailings fall into the updated regulations for non-profit or other specialty groups. The more a mail piece conforms to the standards outlined by USPS, the more cost breaks you will be afforded. Other cost-saving mailing techniques employed at Allen Press are co-palletizing and drop shipping. Overall, the best way to save money with the new postal regulations is to know your options.

Periodicals A class of mail consisting of magazines, newspapers, or other publications formed of printed sheets that are issued at least four times a year at regular, specified intervals (frequency) from a known office of publication. Periodicals usually must have a legitimate list of subscribers and requesters.

First-class mail (FCM) A class of mail that includes all matter wholly or partly in writing or typewriting, all actual and personal correspondence, all bills and statements of account, and all matter sealed or otherwise closed against inspection. Priority Mail is a subclass of First-Class Mail. Any mailable matter may be sent as First-Class Mail.

Flat The general term for flat-size mail, so called because the large mail is sorted without bending it so that the mail remains flat.

Drop shipment Typically the movement of a mailer's product on private (nonpostal) transportation from the point of production to a postal facility located closer to the destination of that product.

Co-palletize To combine and present two or more different or separately produced mail streams together on one pallet.

Zoned price A price structure for Priority Mail, Periodicals, Parcel Post, and Bound Printed Matter that is based on weight and distance traveled (or number of zones crossed). ★

Definitions courtesy of USPS.com: Quick Service Guide 800 *Glossary of Postal Terms and Abbreviations in the Domestic Mail Manual*

FrontMatter Index

Number of pieces of mail processed and delivered each year by USPS: 213,000,000,000
Number of addresses involved: 146,000,000 | Number of pounds: 25,900,000,000
Percentage of the entire world's card and letter mail handled by USPS: 46
Number of new addresses added each year to the delivery network: 1,800,000
Number of customers served daily: 9,000,000 | Number of post offices this involves: 37,000
Annual operating revenue: $73,000,000,000 | Number of career employees: 700,000
Salaries and benefits paid every two weeks: $2,000,000,000 | Number of vehicles (largest civilian fleet in the world): 216,000
Number of miles driven per year: 1,200,000,000 | Gallons of fuel expended per year: 121,000,000
Number of average hits per day on USPS.com: 860,000 | Number of gigabytes stored on its intranet site: 2,000,000
Number of years' worth of MP3 songs this site could hold, with no repeats: 4,000
Number of employees with an e-mail account: 182,000 | Number of e-mails delivered in 2006: 3,100,000,000
Number of USPS mail classes that would individually qualify as a Fortune 500 company: 3

Sources listed at **http://frontmatter.allenpress.com**

Effective E-mail Campaigns

Over the last five years, there has been considerable migration away from direct mail—the old marketing standby—and toward online formats, especially mass e-mail. When speaking to a group of librarians recently, we discovered that over half of the group never even looked at direct mail pieces anymore—they preferred to receive all marketing materials via e-mail. Considering the growing focus on marketing in electronic formats, how you can create the most effective e-mail message possible?

A Strong Subject Line

This is the single most important aspect of any e-mail you send. It is the first thing the prospective reader will see, and you must use it to your advantage. Keep your subject line concise—six words or less if you can. Use these words to convey the major content of the e-mail to the reader. Use more than six words if you absolutely must, but make sure they are effective words that enhance the message of the e-mail. Avoid using words such as "free," "save," and "discount," because spam filters essentially grade each e-mail from an unsolicited e-mail address using this sort of criteria. Cutting down on the little things that filters look for will increase the volume of successfully delivered messages.

The Personal Touch

Personalize e-mails as often as possible by including the name of the recipient. Simply stating "Hi there…" will not be received as well as "Hello, Mr. Smith." Studies have shown you can improve your read e-mails and click-through rates by as much as 650% by making this slight change. The more personal you make the message, the better. People enjoy feeling they have some sort of relationship with the sender. Small things like personalizing your e-mail can more effectively establish that.

HTML vs. Text Only

Keep HTML to a minimum in the body of your e-mail. Moving graphics and sound may look fantastic on your computer, but not everyone will receive the message the same way. Many filters automatically block e-mail that is embedded with pictures, graphics, or sounds. Ensure your message is not adversely affected by the loss of these items. Use support text around the images so a reader will still be able to understand the overall message of the e-mail if the images have been blocked. If reasonable for your organization, find a service that will allow you to send both HTML and text-only e-mails. This will allow your e-mail to go through to an address regardless of whether the recipient's filter blocks HTML messages. The e-mail would simply be delivered in a text-only format. Include full web addresses in the text-only e-mail so people can have access to all of your information and see what you have to offer.

Test It Out

Always test an e-mail before you send it to your complete list. Send it to a small group of people in your office to make sure everything comes through correctly. One of the last things you want to claim responsibility for is sending 20,000 identical e-mails that have the wrong color of graphic or, even worse, the wrong graphic altogether. Get some feedback from the coworkers who received the test e-mail. See if there is anything that can be improved upon and whether the content is accurate and concise.

These ideas should be a good starting point for your e-mail efforts. Implement these tips and you should see results quickly. Over the next few issues of *Front Matter*, we will continue to look at new and different ways to improve your ongoing e-mail campaigns. ★
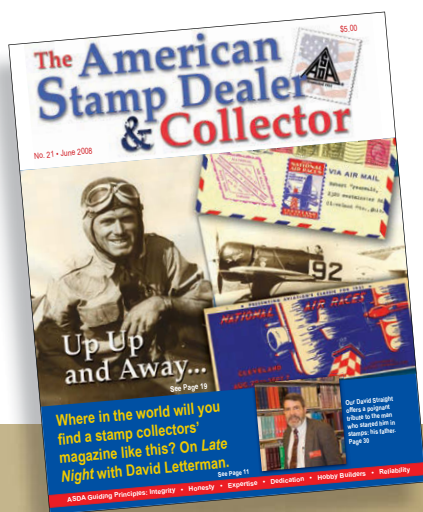
Unexpected Marketing

The American Stamp Dealer, a publication printed by Allen Press, recently got a few moments of publicity on *Late Show with David Letterman*. Patrick Dempsey appeared on the show May 2, 2008. Dempsey's photo, in which he was dressed as a mail man, had been digitally placed on the cover of *The American Stamp Dealer* as part of a gag: "Patrick Dempsey: Cover Boy. Now that he's a big star, Patrick keeps popping up on the strangest magazine covers." He was not actually featured on the original cover.

You can view a clip at:

http://www.cbs.com/latenight/lateshow/video_player/index/php/953313.phtml

The Benefits of Using an AMC

An Association Management Company (AMC) is a group of trained professionals who provide management and administrative services to professional societies. These services include membership, subscription, and meeting management as well as web hosting, financial planning, marketing, strategic planning, and executive services. AMCs are able to approach not-for-profit management in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Association leaders, including officers and councilors, are often volunteers that may not be able to find the time to concentrate on their duties to the association. AMCs provide administrative support, which provides association leaders with the time to concentrate on policy issues. An AMC can also provide continuity of business operations through the various changes in association leadership, affordable management expertise through shared resources, and a central business office for all member services. An association may use an AMC for every aspect of management, or may choose to partner for only the portion of services that has been difficult to manage by

the association alone. Currently, the AMC industry serves more than 4,600 associations encompassing nearly 5 million association members. With an industry growth rate of more than 150%, it is clear that many associations are moving to AMCs for their management.*

Listed below are services an AMC may offer:

Membership and subscription management Annual dues processing, address maintenance, online journal access through username/password and IP authentication, journal claims reviewing, individual demographic gathering and reporting, professional specialty tracking, and mailing list generation.

Meeting management Different levels of service, from a few services through full meeting management, are available. Services include site selection, contract negotiations, abstract submission, program book production, on-site management, and full financial services registration management, including payment processing.

Product management Payment processing and warehouse services, including fulfillment of journal back issues, newsletters, books, and other special publications.

Customer service Support staff trained in resolving association customers' needs through phone, mail, e-mail, fax, and online interaction for all management services provided.

Financial services Payment processing, merchant services account maintenance, preparation and maintenance of budget versus actuals, preparation of financial reports, preparation for external audit, and filing of annual reports.

Membership and subscription renewals Renewal campaign using mailed renewal forms and e-mail notifications. The campaign includes development of renewal materials, mailing schedule, printing, and mailing.

Online business office Internet presence that allows association visibility and provides increased customer service capabilities. Customers may maintain their own profile, make payments, view the membership directory, and participate in discussion forums, surveys, and elections.

In addition to providing printing and publishing services, Allen Press is a full-service AMC. Contact your sales representative if you are interested in learning how we can assist you. ★

* Statistical information from the AMC Institute website, http://www.amcinstitute.org/.

Amanda Heather, Sales Administration

Standardizing SUSHI

In the ever-changing—and often confusing—digital world in which we find ourselves, one organization has made long strides in providing the publishing community with a map. The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) is a non-profit association that implements and maintains technical standards that ensure exchanged information is suitable for research and learning. They recently unveiled their latest technical standards initiative with the SUSHI (Standardized Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative) Protocol standard.

With new, innovative programs being implemented in the library industry, NISO and the professionals they cater to found a common problem with the new system: managing all of the data it collected. COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources) was designed for the library and publishing industry to track usage statistics for electronic resources and to record the data or exchange it with others in the industry. However, it created problems because of the sheer volume of data it returned to the librarians, costing them more time to compile the data than to analyze it. The SUSHI protocol is the solution developed by NISO for organizing and implementing the data received by COUNTER.

The SUSHI protocol was developed by NISO to help retrieve and manage the outpouring of data from a source into one cohesive report. SUSHI receives a request from an application being run by a user and implements the retrieval protocol. The application identifies the specifics that the customer is requesting and relays the information to the SUSHI server data provider. SUSHI then provides the specified report in XML format to the requesting customer.

NISO is uniquely qualified for the task of technical standards keeping, with more than 70 leaders from fields such as publishing, library science, and IT on their roster. From idea to implementation, NISO had SUSHI ready for trial use in just 14 months. Their goal of unified standards for the collection and harvesting of data ensures that valuable time and information is not lost in trying to decipher data. This is where SUSHI steps onto the stage.

Creating SUSHI because of the inconvenience and difficulty of compiling reports from COUNTER embodies NISO's mission: identify the problem plaguing many, consult with professionals in that field, and develop the solution to the issue. ★

Acronym Soup

Acronyms abound in the printing and publishing industry. Here we define some acronyms you may have heard, used, or planned for.

COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources), launched in 2002, is an international initiative to improve the reliability of online usage statistics. It is supported by the vendor, intermediary, and librarian communities. COUNTER's objective is to ensure that vendor online usage reports are credible, compatible, and consistent. This is achieved by the publication of Codes of Practice that specify the content, format, delivery mechanisms, and data processing rules for a set of core usage reports that are easily implemented by vendors and easily understood by librarians.

NISO (National Information Standards Organization) is a non-profit association that implements and maintains technical standards that ensure exchanged information is suitable for research and learning. They recently unveiled their latest initiative toward technical standards with the SUSHI Protocol standard.

SUSHI refers to the Standardized Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative (SUSHI) Protocol standard (ANSI/NISO Z39.93). The standard defines an automated request and response model in a Web services framework that harvests electronic resource usage data. It is intended to replace the time-consuming, user-mediated collection of usage data reports. The protocol was designed to be both generalized and extensible, meaning it can be used to retrieve a variety of usage reports. An extension designed specifically to work with COUNTER reports is provided with the standard, as these are expected to be the most frequently retrieved usage reports. ★
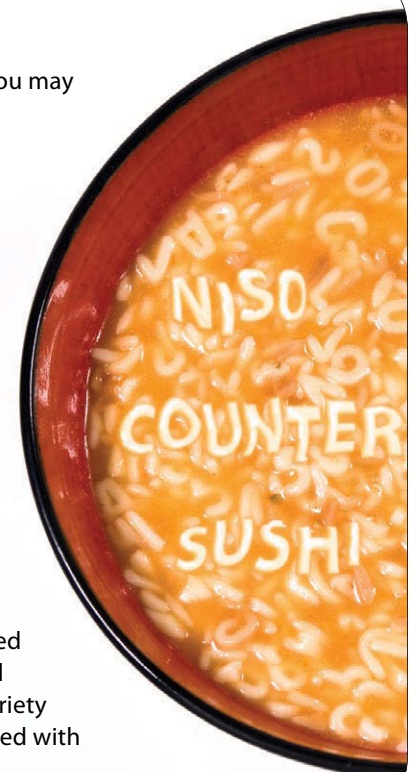
The Wildlife Society SNAPs Up a Bronze EXCEL Award

The Wildlife Society (TWS) won a Bronze EXCEL award for the feature article "The Graying of the Green Generation" in the launch issue of *The Wildlife Professional*. EXCEL awards are put out by the Society of National Association Publications (SNAP) and were presented this year at the 28th EXCEL Awards Gala on June 10, 2008, at the Capital Hilton in Washington, DC. The EXCEL program judges over 1,200 association publications, including magazines, newsletters, scholarly journals, and websites. SNAP presents the EXCEL awards on an annual basis.
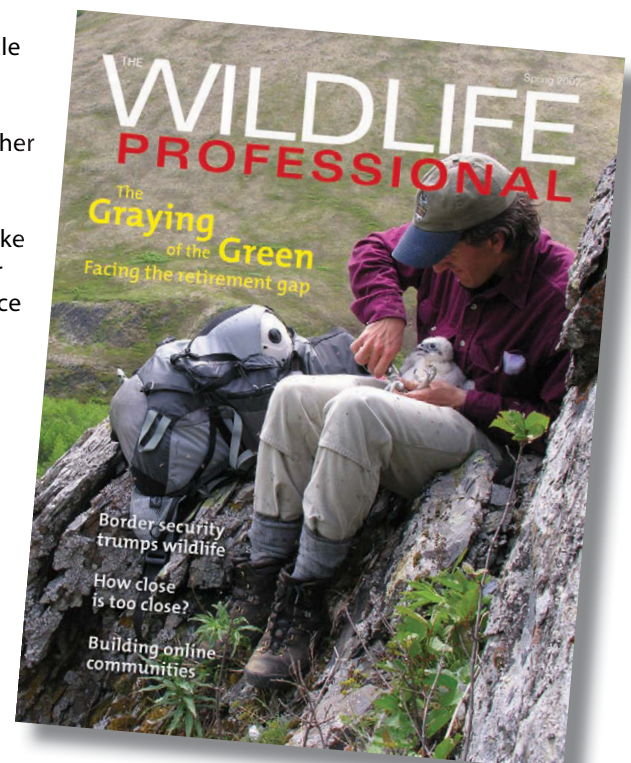
In 2007, TWS launched *The Wildlife Professional* to provide society members with timely news and information about the most important issues related to wildlife management and policy. The content of the magazine is produced by TWS's Publishing and Information Resources Department, headed by Philippa Benson, who is also Editor in Chief of *The Wildlife Professional*. The quarterly magazine, written in a highly readable and engaging style, covers significant wildlife events from across North America and around the world and reports on topics such as science and management, professional development, law and policy, health and disease, ethics, and education. The magazine is distributed both in print and online, with the online version containing many additional features and resources in electronic form. Allen Press publishes and distributes *The Wildlife Professional*, in addition to hosting the online version, and SQN designs the magazine.

The launch issue of *The Wildlife Professional* contains stories written by TWS staff and leadership as well as contributions from prominent wildlife professionals. The articles cover topics that range from how avian influenza might affect wildlife populations, to the growing problem of wildlife habituating to humans, to the impact a border fence between the United States and Mexico would have on threatened species.

TWS publications staff (from left to right, Science Writers Divya Abhat, Katherine Unger, and Director of Information Resources and Editor-in-Chief of *The Wildlife Professional* Philippa Benson) accepted the Bronze EXCEL Award for a magazine feature article at SNAP on June 10, 2008, in Washington, DC.

The award-winning feature article addresses a major concern in the wildlife management and conservation field: Like many other sectors, the baby boomers will leave a wide gap in the wildlife workforce once they begin to take retirement in droves. The author of the feature article, TWS Science Writer Katherine Unger, took up this topic and examined how the task of caring for natural resources might be affected by a diminished workforce. The piece discussed not only the effects of the impending retirements, but also what is being done to prepare younger generations to step into leadership positions. Educational institutions are taking new approaches to teaching wildlife students, and professional institutions are investing in their current employees by providing leadership training. The article was honored by SNAP in the category for feature writing in magazines with a circulation of less than 10,000. ★

Jenna Crane, Marketing Operations and
Event Associate, TMA Resources

Painting the
TMA Resources Annual Users Group Meeting Green

It's not hard to imagine how an annual meeting can negatively impact the environment. Travel emissions from airplanes, paper handouts, energy used at hotels—the list goes on. As TMA Resources prepared for its annual users group meeting (TAUG), we looked for ways to go green, both conventionally and innovatively. Through our research we found that even the slightest modifications can help lighten the impact of your carbon footprint at your annual meeting.

Our first step was to make a statement on our meeting website that TMA Resources is committed to minimizing the environmental impact of our meeting. Here are the highlights of what we did to "green" our meeting:

We Chose a Central Location in a City Committed to Green Initiatives
A majority of TAUG attendees are less than 500 miles away from Louisville. We held the meeting in the Louisville Marriott Downtown, which is less than 15 miles from the airport. Louisville is ranked number 9 out of the 50 largest US cities for their waste diversion efforts in the latest SustainLane.com sustainability rankings.

We Bought Locally
We spoke to our caterers about using locally grown and seasonal food. Buying locally grown products not only helped us to support Louisville merchants, it also reduced the negative impact of transporting the goods from distant locations. One of our caterers even provided local wine and beverages.

We Put It Online
We provided both presentations and handouts electronically. We saved 10,400 pieces of paper just by putting the attendance roster on the Web. For those who like to have hard copies, we encouraged them to print double-sided on recycled paper.

We Bulked Up
We asked the hotel to use bulk dispensers for sugar, salt, pepper, cream, and other condiments to help reduce wrapper waste. We requested that the chef piggyback our meals with coinciding conference meals to reduce the excess purchase of food items. By using bubblers and glasses for water, we saved 1,200 bottles.

We Donated
We donated two terra-cotta planters to downtown Louisville in the name of our TAUG attendees. Louisville's CVB helped us select this useful gift for the city. In addition to donating the planters, we gave all attendees a packet of seeds to take home and plant. We minimized our waste by donating conference signs to a local elementary school and the floral centerpieces to Parkway Medical Center.

We Turned Transportation into Fun
We hosted a "Go Green Walk" for our opening reception at the Muhammad Ali Center as an alternative to bus transportation. The Ali Center is approximately a half mile from the hotel. Fewer bus trips reduced carbon emissions. Imagine more than 300 people walking in large groups through the streets of Louisville, equipped with complimentary pedometers calculating every step—a positive reminder that there are footprints you can leave that imprint your support of keeping our environment clean.

Sandra Humphrey from Toastmasters International, a TMA Resources customer, put it best by saying, "There are so many opportunities to use less, waste less… it's just a matter of looking at situations differently. Each of us can make such a difference; collective efforts like the steps taken at TAUG even more so."

Annual meetings are important events that could be harsh on the environment, but with simple modifications and an imagination, it is amazing how you can paint the world green. ★

FrontMatter

IN THIS ISSUE

AN ALLEN PRESS SEMINAR

allen★press

BLUEPRINT FOR SUSTAINABLE PUBLICATIONS

BEST PRACTICES & INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

OCTOBER 1–3 2008 ELDRIDGE HOTEL, LAWRENCE KS

[800] 627-0326 **$99 PER ATTENDEE** http://edseminar.allenpress.com

This seminar is designed for editorial office staff involved in the day-to-day process of getting a publication to readers as well as for individuals making decisions about publishing, market share, technology, and strategic directions. This informational three-day event will provide insight, information, and hands-on learning in prepress and composition workflow, online publishing, and tools of the trade. You'll take away valuable tips for streamlining your workflow, creating efficiency, and creating a blueprint for sustaining your publication for the future. Don't miss this opportunity to network and share ideas with editorial staff from a wide range of disciplines.

New in 2008, we've expanded the scope of the seminar to cover broader publishing and association management topics. We'll be adding a full day of sessions to run concurrently with the AllenTrack™/PeerTrack User Group on Wednesday.

The 2008 Seminar will share best practices and offer innovative solutions to address the many challenges faced by editorial and society staff today. Join us at the historic Eldridge Hotel in Lawrence, Kansas, October 1–3. This year's topics will include preprints, autoproofing, PDF annotation, PDF creation, color process, digital printing, virtual proofing, and more.