

STATE OF IAMSLIC ON ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

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Birthdays are all about looking forward and back so when I first thought about this presentation earlier this year I thought I should talk about some of our leading edge technologies and tools, but then realised that this whole conference is about just that. Then I thought I would talk about the projects that IAMSLIC has been involved with, but we will be covering that in our Business Meetings.

So then I thought what is IAMSLIC about and soon realised that it is about people. People make organisations, People are an organisation's best resource.

And so I decided that I would take a look at IAMSLIC from a different perspective and look at our personal profile. But how was I to visualise my talk?

Discussing the problem with UK colleagues we came up with the idea that since we are a community of acronyms I should use the word IAMSLIC to profile ourselves.

We operate at two levels, professional and social and today I shall be looking at our personal profile from the professional perspective. I have used some poetic licence and so ask the purists among you to forgive some of the associations I have made.

I is of course for International. Our conferences are attended by members from over 30 different countries and Information is what we are all about, we receive it, we organise it and we disseminate it and that is the Image we want to maintain. Some of us are very concerned about the image we have in society, yet in the UK a recent survey put our profession right at the top just under Doctors.

But our image is also about being Intellectual and on a level with our scientists who will then accept us to be their Intermediaries in information searching.

To do this we need the Infrastructure to provide access to all the resources and we often have to be Innovative in how we utilise the resources available to us, because much of it is based on our level of Income . We sometimes have to struggle to get sufficient finances and Inveigle donations from external funders.

In knowing what resources to use often means we have to be Intuitive with our users and despite Interrogation and Interaction we still have to Investigate all avenues to obtain and provide information. We have to be Inquisitive to satisfy their needs and to boldly go searching on the Internet on which so many of our services and catalogues are based. We

A is for our Association, formally constituted with bylaws to rule us. It is also for Aquatic which we included in our name to cover the freshwater interests of our membership, and you will hear a new proposal from that group this week.

We are expected to be Authoritative in our knowledge so that we do receive the due Acknowledgement for the support we provide to our scientist Authors and of course we are authors ourselves.

The majority of our work now cannot be done without Automation, the information explosion of the 60's is still racing on fuelled now by its electronic carriers. But automation costs a great deal of money to maintain state of the art hardware and many of us have to be Accountants to juggle financial resources using our skills to Articulate our case.

Our need to Accommodate so many demands on our time requires us to be Assured from our peers, that we are following the right strategy. So many of us have very wide remits that we now need All Embracing skills to maintain the services we provide.

M is for Marine our main scientific area, which is often confused with Maritime which is not a synonym but which is an aspect covered by some of our Members - IAMSLIC's most important asset. We have to be good Managers of all our resources and you all expect IAMSLIC to be managed professionally by the Executive Board.

At times in our work and even in organisations it is necessary to Manipulate situations, but we also have to manipulate data for value added services. In the past few years the term Metadata has become widely used, but we all know this is a new term for describing an old activity that we have been doing for years, called cataloguing. But it has been particularly applied to Mixed Media and the electronic format.

Our lives have been transformed by electronic publications but also the ability to communicate electronically by Email . How did we survive without it in our global community?

Now we no longer have to wait - ask the question on the Listserv and you will receive many replies. Knowledge transfer is one of our many skills. Sharing knowledge through the list and our Newsletter and Mentoring are a prime part of the IAMSLIC ethic.

S covers our Science discipline and the Sea is our Speciality. We Structure information for fast retrieval so that others can Study marine and freshwater sciences. We Select resources to provide comprehensive services like SDI to make our users aware of for example new Serials in our collection.

We Support our users and each other, and often have to Sort through an enormous amount of information to provide answers.

L is for all the Libraries we toil in as Librarians, but today both terms are considered out of date and labels such as Resource Centre and Information Manager are often used. Whatever our label we deal with Literature and I am sure you also find that you are expected to be particularly Literary. Many of us work in Laboratories, but all of us Link to related libraries, in our subject and in our region and through IAMSLIC link to library networks throughout the world.

Often those links lead us to Learning about new skills or products, and about the Licences required to use them correctly, so that we can take the Lead in their introduction within our organisation and progress its exploitation within IAMSLIC (think of the spread of the use of Ariel throughout IAMSLIC) and remember Librarians were the first to utilise CD-ROMs.

Tools that many of us use are Laptops which handle Lists so easily and maintain our access to electronic lists particularly the IAMSLIC Listserv. On one list I am on the current discussion is whether e-journals should be listed alphabetically by title or by the vendor and whether a Location should be included!. Yes lists are a constant delight and edification to Librarians.

I is for Information - the very core of our Organisation and our profession,

We come to C for Centres or Centers and central to IAMSLIC is our Annual Conference and the Committees and Boards that maintain the various activities. IAMSLIC needs your participation in these committees to carry out the operational strategy that you all vote on at our Business Meetings. It cannot be done on the scale required, just by a handful of people.

More than anything in our Profession we need to Communicate - at conferences with presentations but also with our managers and users. How else will they know how indispensable we are!.

The prime requirement of a librarian is not that you like books, but that you like communicating and working with people. The operational mode in IAMSLIC is one of Cooperation and Coordination - it is the only way we can achieve our organisational goals but also our service goals to provide efficient Customer support to our Clients. Clients from whom we are increasingly able to earn revenue as some services become subscription based.

Most of what we do is in support of our Collections and we need to be very Computerate to organise these for maximum exploitation. But even in this electronic age, it is still necessary to Catalogue and Classify our collection and of course keep ourselves and users within Copyright regulations. With copyright we are again expected to be experts knowing how copyright affects electronic publications like CD-ROMs.

Lastly more than anything else, we are always ready for Change. We work in a dynamic environment where our tools and resources are constantly changing.

Professionally our role is also changing and we must be trained and ready to take on this new Challenge in our own workplace and also within IAMSLIC.

I wish IAMSLIC many more successful years, but during this 25th Anniversary Conference we must take time to look at our organisation and all of us contribute to its future role.