

Editor's notes

Getting the big picture and writing the thousand words

Welcome to the first issue of volume 38 of the IASSIST Quarterly (IQ (38):1, 2014). After the extended special issue of volume 37 we are offering you a regular issue with information on some of the areas presented and discussed at the latest IASSIST conference.

At the 2014 IASSIST conference in Toronto many papers and interesting ideas were presented. The number of participants in such gatherings will always be limited for a plenitude of practical reasons. I think I know what you are thinking now - yes, often lack of funding is high on the list of obstacles to participation. But is participation necessary in our current era of blogging, tweeting, snapchatting, etcetera? Well, the bandwidth when actually attending a conference is still tremendous compared with what we experience through our gadgets. IASSIST and thus also the IQ have 'technology' in their names and we don't perceive ourselves as being low-tech. An IQ issue is produced through massive amounts of email correspondence, intense use of publishing software, and finally dissemination on the Internet. However, old media like this journal continue to have great advantages. Reading cannot be overrated and the use of text and the search for text on the Internet should be sufficient proof of that. If you were absent from the great bandwidth of the IASSIST conference, this IQ issue can at least partly bring you some of the information you missed.

The chairs of the sessions at this year's conference were given the opportunity to write short summaries of their sessions. San Cannon – working at Federal Reserve Board and currently the regional secretary of the USA – mailed the session chairs and asked for their contributions. As this was done 'post festum', as expected we received only two session summaries, and I hope that these are sufficient for our true purpose - namely to receive your judgments about the usefulness of such summaries. If this is considered to be useful we will pursue this with an earlier notice to conference chairs at forthcoming conferences. From the 2014 conference, we present a summary of the session on 'Tools and Services for Supporting Research Data Management' produced by the chair Carly Strasser. A panel of four individuals from or affiliated with the UC Curation Center (UC3) at the California Digital Library presented tools for data management in libraries and for researchers sharing their datasets, including uploading and providing metadata.

The second summary is from the session on 'Big Picture Metadata', in which there were three presentations from different settings and parts of the world. The British Library is involved in a collaborative project with participants around the world for better connection between researchers, authors and contributors of research data. From the University of Michigan staff at ISR presented a

system for extracting DDI standard metadata from Blaise databases; this software is freely available for all Blaise users. From GESIS in Germany there was a presentation of the DDI Handbook Project; as the use of the DDI standards is steadily increasing, the idea is to produce a collection of best practices in a form between a book and a FAQ. They have also received suggestions on 'what not to do'. Although negative examples are normally not considered to be among the best pedagogic methods, there are TV shows that have become very popular even though signs warn the public: 'Don't try this at home!'

In the Pecha Kucha session there was a huge number of great presentations in the dogmatic format of 20 slides for 20 seconds each. One of the presentations I especially enjoyed was 'Data Visualization and Information Literacy' by Ryan Womack from Rutgers University Libraries; it had many pictures and some words but little text. Ryan has been so kind as to produce a paper based on his talk. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Here you can experience an author who gave the time to write the thousand words, although not for each of his 20 slides. Remember that presentations at the conference are available from the IASSIST website. If you are waiting in vain for a presentation to turn up as a paper in the IQ you should take a look at the website.

Jungwon Yang from the Library at the University of Michigan has experienced a growing interest among social science researchers in using geographic information systems (GIS), and for more easily interpretable interdisciplinary dissemination of results. In the United States local government data as well as fine grained census data have become available, and are being supported by organizations. In the paper 'Discovering and Accessing Sub-national Statistics and Geospatial Data of East Asian Countries: Trends and Obstacles' she brings insights to these types of data in China, Korea, and Japan. As promised in the title, she describes barriers found in the use of the data. It is advisable to team up with librarians and specialists to overcome the issues.

At the session on 'Research Environments - Research Data Management' San Cannon from the Federal Reserve Board gave the presentation 'Moving beyond research: building an enterprise data service from a research foundation'. San describes how the FRB is now midway through a plan of centralized data management and governance, and is moving from the business-based silos designed to manage data sets that were only sparsely shared to an enterprise-focus with enhanced data governance, management and integration. The multitude of functions and departments of the FRB has led to the focus of the project being on obtaining a precise inventory and metadata, where data are systemically and strategically catalogued within system-wide standards. The conclusion on data management is that there is no one-size-fits-all

technological solution. When we find smart solutions, it is good to consider if they are too smart, and to recall the saying attributed to H.L. Mencken: 'For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong.'

Articles for the IASSIST Quarterly are always very welcome. They can be papers from IASSIST conferences or other conferences and workshops, from local presentations or papers especially written for the IQ. When you are preparing a presentation, give a thought to turning your one-time presentation into a lasting contribution to continuing development. As an author you are permitted "deep links" where you link directly to your paper published in the IQ. Chairing a conference session with the purpose of aggregating and integrating papers for a special issue IQ is also much appreciated as the information reaches many more people than the session participants, and will be readily available on the IASSIST website at <http://www.iassistdata.org>.

Authors are very welcome to take a look at the instructions and layout:

<http://iassistdata.org/iq/instructions-authors>

Authors can also contact me via e-mail: kbr@sam.sdu.dk.

Should you be interested in compiling a special issue for the IQ as guest editor(s) I will also be delighted to hear from you.

Karsten Boye Rasmussen
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Editor