

[INFO TECH]

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Bio & Headshot: Pick up from June issue

Headline:
Technology and Value at SLA

Deck:
It's an exciting time for SLA, and the value of your membership just keeps going higher while the fee remains constant.

July Information Outlook

Picking up where I left off in my Info View column on page 5, SLA has a great traditional value proposition—chapters, divisions, caucuses, leadership training, *Information Outlook*, discussion lists, a website, and more. But members are demanding more. And they want it 24/7/365 (or 366, this year!). It has been my experience that members also just don't know everything that SLA offers—for free or for fee. So, we spent a lot of time in Seattle as Board members and staff reinforcing the benefits that your membership fee entitles you to.

I covered it in the opening session, several of the task force leaders and cabinet chairs covered it at the Leadership Summit, and Janice Lachance did a superb job covering it in the closing session in her CEO report. And the entire Board was prepared to make sure everyone knew about the cool new stuff available to every member with just his or her member ID and password. However, we also know not everyone was able to come to the 2008 conference in Seattle (we do hope to see you at the HUGE Centennial conference and Info-Expo in DC in 2009). So, here's a simple list of some of the initiatives we've launched, improved or enhanced for you this year. I think that a great deal of value has been added to everyone's membership.

Where else could your average member get this amount of professional development and membership value for just \$160.00?

- SLA has licensed a huge suite of innovative technologies where SLA leaders and volunteers can play and discover uses for the latest emerging technologies in their own context. SLA also provides tools to units to build and implement useful services and tools for their members. The range includes hosting and software for websites, communities of practice, surveys, voting, discussions, wikis, blogs, and more 2.0 type tools.
- In Seattle, we announced the launch of the SLA Innovation Laboratory. This project was built by a group of member volunteers and staff who demonstrated the Lab in the SLA booth in the INFO-EXPO. Hundreds of free and licensed software for everything from wikis and blogs to social networking and website design are there for the taking. Over the next year, regular sessions will be held to show members how to take advantage of

these tools, but any member can start on their own right away. This is a major initiative for SLA members to develop their skills for the future.

- A major feature of the SLA Innovation Laboratory is the Atomic Learning Videos. Yes, SLA now provides you 35,000 short videos on how to use hundreds of pieces of software. Give them a try. We're adding 450 new videos every 6-7 weeks.
- We also launched SLA's Learning 2.0 / 23 Things Project, which is part of the Innovation Lab. There is a members-only Wiki set-up for the project which models the way SLA works—collaborative learning. Learning 2.0/23 Things encourages all of our members to explore many of the features SLA offers for free or through Click U. The plan is that every member can learn up to 23 new 2.0 type tools in just 9 weeks (or at your own pace).
- During the conference members saw the beginnings of SLA's Second Life presence which is being created collaboratively by another team of volunteer members. The site has been started, as well as a blog. The SLA Second Life workgroup will be seeking more volunteers for this project. We can expect a few events over the next year in Second Life. You saw more information in the June issue of *Information Outlook*.
- For the conference, there was an SLA2008 Twitter group set up for attendees, who can join by using their phone, laptop, or PC. Find the group in the Lab or at <http://twitter.com/sla2008>. It was a great opportunity to learn this tool and I am sure a few folks will learn and play with you even after the conference.
- SLA announced a video featuring President-elect Gloria Zamora, which is available to all SLA groups, especially Chapters and Divisions, to use for their events. It is available via PAL, VHS or DVD, as well as on the web. This lets your Board actually be at two events at once!
- SLA has developed three options for unit leaders to make their own business cards and have placed the information in the Leadership Resources section of the SLA Web site. Your SLA identity now has some heft!
- SLA units have started a number of social networking sites. (Find a list in the SLA Innovation Lab.) There are currently more than 900 members in the SLA Facebook group. SLA members are in LinkedIn, where there are more than 500 individuals associated with SLA.
- SLA Past President Rebecca Vargha is currently working with a group of member volunteers and staff to build SLA's Wikipedia architecture and presence. Since Wikipedia is a major influencer of search engine rankings like Google's, this is an important part of SLA's virtual presence.
- SLA develops and provides Wikis and blogs for all groups (formal or informal) on a simple request basis. Details are on the website <http://wiki.sla.org/dashboard.action>.
- SLA now has three accounts on TypePad and hosts approximately 40 blogs from chapters, divisions, commissions, and other member-driven entities. By far, the most active unit blog on an SLA account is the IT Division's Blogging Section, which has logged nearly 40,000 page views since it launched in December 2005.

- The IT Blogging Section is often highlighted in the new SLA Connections blog which reminds me that most of our SLA newsletters now start as blogs, allowing you to subscribe through your RSS reader and get more timely alerts and news from SLA.
- During the Seattle conference, SLA added an electronic message center to the Cyber Connection area so that attendees could leave electronic messages for each other, rather than paper messages.
- Don't forget the free Factiva and Nexcerpt News alerts as well as the free Newsgator feeds on LIS topics that have been developed by the staff in the SLA Information Center.
- CONSULT Online is a directory exclusive to SLA member consultants. A search on this database is free and is available to members and nonmembers interested in locating a consultant who may assist, on a normal commercial basis, with such areas as library management, technical services, and subject specialty. Use CONSULT Online to promote your services at <http://www.sla.org/consultonline>.

Click U 24/7 Learning

As a member SLA and Click U, you can earn an advanced degree, enroll in a specific career enhancing program that leads to a certificate, take advantage of courses that help you achieve your professional and personal goals, sign up for seminars, and more. Click University has added free subscriptions to execuBooks for SLA members only. Professional writers and editors constantly review, select and summarize the best of current and upcoming business books into 15-minute summaries. Individual SLA members may "opt in" to have new execuBooks delivered via e-mail every week. Over 350 summaries of leading business books cover topics such as adaptability, corporate governance, decision making, innovation, marketing, project management, strategy, team effectiveness, and more.

Click University invites you to visit the SLA Online Libraries—Leadership & Management, HR and Knowledge Management. These ebrary databases cover a wide range of topics to enable professionals to make important business decisions. Key subject areas include: leadership, entrepreneurship, strategic planning, KM case studies, organizational behavior, personnel management, project management and risk management. The offering is now over 1,000 books after the new libraries announced in Seattle. Click U offers Click U Live! sessions on social networking to members. "Social Networking Tools: Hands-on Learning" was held 21 May and "Best Practices for Wikis" is scheduled for 11 September. Watch for other sessions on social networking brought to you by Click U.

Click University continues to offer the free Course of the Month. Don't forget to put these on your calendar.

Additionally, in an effort to enable students whose budgets may be limited to take advantage of SLA's valuable professional development offerings, SLA offers substantial student discounts. SLA student members qualify for a 25%

discount on the following Click U professional development programs: the Click U Live! online seminars, the Click U Live! recorded seminars and the Professional Improvement Libraries. And student members receive substantial discounts for Click U Live! Continuing Education courses at Annual Conference.

Moreover, we continue to increase the training and leadership opportunities for our units. LDI and our cabinet meetings continue to enhance the development of our association and profession.

Knowledge to Go Green

Begun from an ERMD and staff initiative, SLA has “The Knowledge to Go Green.” SLA has been moving to greater “greenness” all year, as all aspects of operations are viewed from this angle. SLA has taken up the challenge from Al Gore, our 2007 opening keynote speaker, and is working hard on being Green. The Seattle conference had a large number of initiatives you could see all over. Everyone could buy carbon credits and SLA will be responsible for planting many trees to restore fresher air. We greatly reduced our use of paper while providing free conference wireless as a win/win. It was a start, and we were trying to set an example for attendees to take home. Members, units or exhibitors should apply for an SLA Presidential Citation. Also, on this front:

- The SLA Pacific Northwest Chapter gave away 3,000 reusable water bottles to Seattle attendees! Water stations were located throughout the center and the INFO-EXPO.
- Badge holders were made from 20% recycled matter. At the end of the conference, there were containers to collect the used badges, so that they could be recycled. Thanks to CAS, the cool tote bags were made from 65% recycled material.
- SLA offered handouts online prior to conference. SLA partners and exhibitors had been encouraged to use environmentally friendly products and to print on recycled paper. And all conference signage was 88% consumer waste fiber board from Champion Nationwide.
- The Final Conference Program was printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper, with soy-based inks instead of chemical based, and on an FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) approved press. The FSC certification means that the print house no longer uses environmental damaging chemicals in its process and has reduced waste emissions.
- SLA has been working with its printing vendors to ensure that SLA brochures, mailers, postcards, etc. are printed on recycled paper. A recycled logo is placed prominently on all material printed with recycled paper. SLA introduced a conference e-mail list rental program to supplement direct mail address rental as part of the greening initiative.
- We worked with the both the Seattle Convention Center and the Sheraton hotel to ensure that we used the full range of their recycling programs and that we could donate food where appropriate. The convention center has provided more than 24,000 meals to charities over the past year. SLA has historically had a clause in its contracts requesting that food be donated where appropriate.

SLA headquarters is working on many more Green initiatives as contracts become available renegotiation. Rest assured that our association is doing as much as it can to help our planet.

Value of Membership

We continue to offer new benefits of membership. The multitude of free and low-cost benefits easily justifies our membership fees (which are lower than most professional associations). Your membership is increasing in value, as long as you remember your user ID and password! (You can change it to make it easier to remember, too.)

SLA has just announced free online access to two databases, GreenFILE and LISTA (Library and Information Science and Technology Abstracts), provided by EBSCOhost. These new databases can be accessed through the member benefits page.

Last but not least, there was another major development at Seattle. SLA and Dow Jones & Co. partnered to deliver an ad campaign about special librarians and information professionals in *The Wall Street Journal*. These ads ran throughout the conference including on the opening and closing day, and copies of the WSJ were ubiquitous. Dow Jones and SLA have a co-branded advertising agreement where both organizations will appear in print and on-line communications and advertisements advocating for the information profession continuing into 2008. This is an exciting (and appreciated) partnership. Thank you, Dow Jones!

Conclusion

It's an exciting time for SLA, and the value of your membership just keeps going higher while the fee remains constant. Add to this our association-wide initiatives that we reported on in Seattle—The Alignment initiative, The Ethics Initiative, our Centennial Commission and more—and you can see that we're trying. Keep volunteering and engaging with SLA and we'll have no problem tipping into the 21st Century and truly leading and contributing to the development of the information and knowledge based global economy. I am pretty excited by the progress we're making together. I hope you are, too.