

Editorial: Special Issue on the Global 2000 Conference

The Global 2000 Conference held in Brighton, United Kingdom 16-19 October 2000 revealed some very important factors that will determine the continued growth of the information profession on a world-wide scale. Sponsored by the Special Libraries Association (SLA), this Second World-wide Conference on Special Librarianship yielded 700 delegates from 56 nations, all of whom were carefully optimistic about the promise of greater global sharing and networking with their colleagues.

Each day of the conference was highlighted by a keynote address. Dame Stephanie Shirley delivered an uplifting address to the delegation on the first full day of the conference. She called on the audience to “focus on entrepreneurship, innovation, and making their careers and organisations leaner and more fit.” Her remarks spurred several breakout sessions after the First General Session ended, and inspired many delegates to engage in some lively discussion on the relevance of Dame Stephanie's success to their own careers and the future of their profession.

Yves Michel Marti, Founder and President of EGIDERIA, a leading European competitive intelligence consultancy, was the Keynote Speaker for the Second General Session of the conference . During his address, Marti emphasised that information professionals should not focus on the processes they put in place for the dissemination of knowledge. Rather, information professionals "should focus on customer needs first, so that you can fully meet their needs." Marti's remarks were well-received, and were the focus of discussions during the Strategy Sharing Sessions held shortly after his address, with many delegates wondering just how aggressive the profession must be in CI efforts.

The highlight of the final day of Global 2000 was the Closing Luncheon, where Chantal Cuer delivered a stirring address. Through sharing stories of her reporting career, Cuer provided an intriguing commentary of the crucial need for accurate information sharing world-wide. She urged the delegates to take on the responsibility in their organisations for communicating truth and accuracy. “Without it,” Cuer warned, “our world’s governments, corporations, news agencies, and the people will suffer.”

The Global 2000 Exhibit Hall proved to be one of the highlights of the conference, with 50 international companies showing off the latest in online and digital information resources. Many events were held in the Exhibit Hall so that delegates

and exhibitors could spend more time interacting and learning about one another.

The 23 delegates at Global 2000 who received fellowships to attend the conference represented the future of the information profession. Others in attendance could see quite clearly that these people find the services and networking opportunities within SLA to be critical to their future success. They will enjoy the benefits of membership in SLA for the next year, and they will likely gain more from the experience than many who have been members for years. Their involvement in the conference surprisingly echoed the same ideals for the profession that were mentioned by the colleagues from developed nations:

- Innovation in the profession is a priority.
- Enhanced collaboration is badly needed.
- Global alliances among organisations must happen NOW.
- Growth in the profession is dependent on the developing nations.
- How will the digital divide be closed so that developing nations can participate?

Many within the SLA leadership suggested that the Global 2000 Conference was just the beginning and expressed strong hopes for a regular international event that will promote the local nature of this global profession.

The papers in this issue all come from this exciting event. They do not represent the complete proceedings but a selection of the best papers. Some authors of other papers unfortunately were too late in giving their copyright to be integrated in this issue of INSPEL - some of these will follow in the next issues. Stay tuned.

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