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# ASIST AM 2020. SIG HFIS panel proposal April 27, 2020

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## Abstract

A progress report and discussion on the preservation of, and access to, historical resources relating to the history of ASIST and of Information Science and Technology generally and guidance for members interested on opportunities and methods.

## KEYWORDS

ASIST Curator, ASIST history and heritage, ethics, historiography, preservation and access

Q&A and contributions from audience.

## 1 | REMARKS

This panel will (a) present important practical developments in preserving and accessing ASIST heritage resources and related historical materials; (b) comment on ethical issues, useful tools, and specialized techniques in developing the history of information science; and (c) provide an open discussion with the audience.

Part 1: Kathryn La Barre's Curator's report at the Copenhagen AM in 2017 and at Vancouver 2018 was very well received. Unable to provide updates at the 2019 Annual Meeting, she will discuss ongoing work to inventory and preserve the intellectual heritage of ASIST.

The ASIST Curator acts as a resource for the ASIST Board and Management staff, Committees, Chapters, SIGs, and members to encourage the discovery, preservation, and accessibility of resources relating to our history and heritage. This includes curating historically significant documentation in concert with Knowledge Management strategies currently being implemented, as well as recommending preservation strategies.

Substantial collections of materials related to the history and heritage of ASIST currently exist in at least two

archives: the Smithsonian and the University of Michigan. The ASIST office also contains a large collection of physical materials including books, reports, records, photographs, and recordings (in a variety of obsolete formats, including audio cassette recordings of annual meeting presentations). Our digital heritage is vast and includes resources that were only accessible through legacy websites (e.g. the first digital proceeding of ASIS), as well as 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary projects such as a digitized gallery of ASIST photographs, and material from an Oral History project. ASIST recently received access to a digital collection of material amassed by Dr. Bob Williams. Much needs to be done to preserve and create stable access to all of these materials.

This talk will address steps that could be taken to increase access to our heritage in ways that help inform the present and future of the association. We'll be discussing the ways in which the association could make a deeper and more meaningful commitment to the value of our historical records, how the Curator position could be better integrated into ongoing discussions and deliberations so to provide advice to the association. Updates will include the status of policies to preserve and steward association resources, and the identification of open issues such as preservation and digitization of historically significant materials. The presentation will be framed

through the lens of the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals and will address the ways in which ASIST has worked to transform our world through the lens of people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.

Part 2: Advice from the field: Colin Burke and Michael Buckland:

Professors Burke and Buckland will draw on their extensive experience to make some general comments about information history, offer advice on how to proceed, and share tips on methods and resources that they have found useful.

Part 3: Tim Gorichanaz, Chair of SIG HFIS, will moderate an open discussion with questions and comments from the audience.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Moderator Tim Gorichanaz is Chair of ASIST SIG HFIS and Assistant Teaching Professor at the Drexel University College of Computing and Informatics.

Kathryn La Barre is an Associate Professor at the School of Information Sciences and Gender and Women's Studies faculty affiliate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her work interrogates the power dynamics of historical and contemporary naming practices in cultural heritage collections. A member of ASIST since 1998, she has served on the ASIST Board of Directors, as a Member of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary task force, and as chair of the ASIST 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary working group. She is currently the ASIST Curator, helping to facilitate the oral history project 'Leaders of Information Science Worldwide,' and is serving as Chair of the ASIST History Committee.

Colin B. Burke is Emeritus Professor of History, University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He has researched and published numerous books on information history, computer history, intelligence history, and quantitative methods in history as well as higher education, US political history, and non-profit organizations. Appointments include Scholar in Residence at the National Security Agency. His titles include *Information and Secrecy: Vannevar Bush, Ultra, and the other Memex* (1994), and *Information and intrigue: from index cards to Dewey decimals to Alger Hiss* (2014), also *America's information wars: The untold story of information systems in America's conflicts and politics from World War II to the internet age* (2018), which was awarded the ASIST 2018 Best Book Award. He was unable to receive the award in person at the 2019 AM in Melbourne, so this would be a way for ASIST members to "meet" him and to get him to sign copies of his book before or after the session.

Michael Buckland, is Emeritus Professor and former Dean, School of Information, University of California,

Berkeley. He has published extensively on the intellectual history of Information Science (e.g. "Information as thing" (*JASIS* 1991) and "What is a 'document'?" (*JASIS* 1997) and biographical studies of largely forgotten (and mostly European) pioneers: Lodewyk Bendikson, Suzanne Briet, Paul Otlet, Robert Pagès, and especially his detailed biography of the developer of the first electronic search engine circa 1930: *Emanuel Goldberg and his Knowledge Machine* (2006). A new historical study *Ideology and Library Services: California, Diplomacy and Occupied Japan, 1945-1952* is in press. His current topic is 101 years of women in the Berkeley School of Information.

Michael Buckland is Vice-Chair / Chair designate of the ASIST History Committee. He has been an ASIST member since 1972 and was ASIST President in 1998.

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Kathryn La Barre**, ASIST Curator, will describe the origin of her role, as ASIST Curator, responsibilities and achievements of this position, and will assess the state of Information Science in relation to the conference theme of information for a sustainable world. Two views from the field: Two experienced writers on information history will describe their experience undertaking information history and offer advice on priorities for the preservation of resources, how to undertake historical work, and best practices in using historical resources.

**Colin B. Burke**, emeritus professor of history, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, has published numerous books on the history of information, computing, intelligence, and higher education. He received the 2018 ASIST Best Book Award and has exceptional experience using FOIA requests and archival resources.

**Michael K. Buckland**, emeritus professor, Berkeley, has worked on studies of European and US pioneers of documentation and information science, and, currently, 101 years of women in Berkeley's School of Information.

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