

◆ Our 50th Anniversary: Looking Toward the Next 50 Years of Publishing

Last year, I eagerly looked forward to planning the program for CSE's 50th anniversary celebration. With the theme "The Next 50 Years: CSE in the Digital Age", the sessions would be oriented around the exciting topics of changing technology and cultural and social influences on scientific publishing, and to top it off, the meeting would be in Austin, Texas—"Live-Music Capital of the World".

Deciding on the meeting theme was a no-brainer: Celebrate the first 50 years of CSE, but also focus on the future: the "flattening" of the globe (using Thomas Friedman's metaphor) because of emerging technologies, competition of world economies, and the confluence of cultures in creating scientific publications. We wanted to continue providing topics of "practical" interest in addition to creating sessions

describing cutting-edge developments that will radically change publishing. The results allowed attendees to go home having gained practical knowledge but also having heard of such concepts as Web 2.0 and Second Life and with new ideas of what could be accomplished for their publications specifically and by scientific publishers in general.

What seemed a lot of "work" was rewarded by my many intriguing contacts with committee and Board members and prospective speakers. Quickly, I learned that top-billed "big names" were already booked as graduation speakers or expected fees beyond CSE's budget. I also recognized soon that this was a blessing in disguise; the "best" speakers for our group were not necessarily the best-known public figures but those who are deeply respected for their thinking about preservation and dissipation of knowledge (especially

scientific) that will lead to the greater welfare of the world and about how publishing fits into their predictions. We were fortunate to have plenary lectures by Michael Keller, of HighWire Press (representing libraries of the future); Colin Humphreys, of Cambridge University (a futurist in materials science); and Alex Pang, of the Institute for the Future (a futurist in emerging technologies and their societal consequences).

Arranging the concurrent sessions is always a challenge, inasmuch as CSE lacks a budget for speakers and we depend on their recognition that our value as science editors merits their participation. However, we were able to solicit speakers from academic ranks, including a futurist who analyzes trends and datasets to develop future scenarios, and speakers whose companies develop social networking sites or market globally.

I was especially excited about developing a session on the changing workplace, which is evolving because of developing technology, representation of multiple generations, and outsourcing and freelancing.

In formulating the 2007 program and exchanging countless e-mail messages and holding numerous phone calls, I've not only added to my knowledge of publishing but also cemented established friendships and made new friends. I look at the year's activities as a profound learning experience that has whetted my appetite for keeping up with the developments of the digital age. I look forward to helping the 2008 program cochairs, Bruce Dancik and Iain Taylor, and hope to see you all in Vancouver.

Patty Baskin
Chair

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