



# EUROPEAN CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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Winter 1998

## **SLA at Online Information '98 in London** By Doug Newcomb

Each December for the past three years, SLA has exhibited at Online Information in London. And each year, the positive response to the exhibit has increased. Staff in attendance from SLA's headquarters included Executive Director David Bender, Assistant Executive Director for Programs and Strategic Development, Fred Casey, and myself, Doug Newcomb, Senior Director for Public Affairs & Publications.

Working a booth at Online Information in London is essentially the same as other shows-excepting, of course, the incredibly polite attendees and efficient exhibit staff sponsoring the show-not to imply that American exhibit hall staff and attendees are less polite, it's just that the British are so extraordinarily polite. (As a side note, I found myself consciously disguising my twang to avoid immediate identification as a brash American. Has anyone else noticed how

Americans easily adopt a British accent, while Brits can live in the United States for years and still speak the Queen's English? You can meet someone from Great Britain who has lived in the U.S. for years, and yet, one would think they had stepped off the plane just hours before. Amazing, really.) Fortunately, as in past years, several members of the European Chapter dropped by on a regular basis to assist in elocution lessons (as well as assist with peak crowds!). Most notable were Neil Infield, Sylvia James, and Cris Kinghorn. Many thanks to them and all the others who assisted.

The majority of time at Information Online was spent providing information specifically about SLA and our various activities as well as the profession in general. Considerable interest in regional professional development opportunities was expressed, and a number of new members signed up at the booth as well as a few exhibitors for SLA's upcoming 1999 annual convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. SLA is becoming more widely known and recognized as a leading international association. This fact is reinforced



*David Bender and Fred Casey staff the SLA stand at Online '98*

by a deluge of questions regarding SLA's upcoming Mediterranean Conference 'Management of the Library in the Electronic Era' 26-27 February 1999 in Barcelona ([www.sla.org/professional/mediterranean.html](http://www.sla.org/professional/mediterranean.html)), the video conference on Licensing with a London site in March, and of course Global 2000, the worldwide conference on special librarianship scheduled for October 2000 ([www.slaglobal2000.org/](http://www.slaglobal2000.org/)).

We were, in fact, once again impressed with constant barrage of questions and genuine interest in SLA. This year's attendance was well documented by the amount of materials distributed. We distributed 500 copies of Information Outlook®, and about 300 copies of the European Chapter Newsletter-we ran out of both. It was a wonderful feeling to realize how many of the products and services were requested.

### European Chapter Breakfast

David and Fred participated in the European Chapter's breakfast networking session. Fred offered comments on Global 2000 and answered several questions. Following the session, David was invited to attend the Chapter's Executive Board Meeting and provided insights on membership records, professional development, Global 2000 plans and activities and possible handling of administrative affairs for non-North American members.

Whilst Fred and I held down the fort, so to speak, at Online Information, David took on several other tasks. David had two opportunities to present SLA as a leading international body. In addition to attending the European Chapter activities and assisting in the booth at Online Information, these opportunities with The British Library, and The Library Association enable SLA to become more readily recognized as the largest association for Special Librarians.

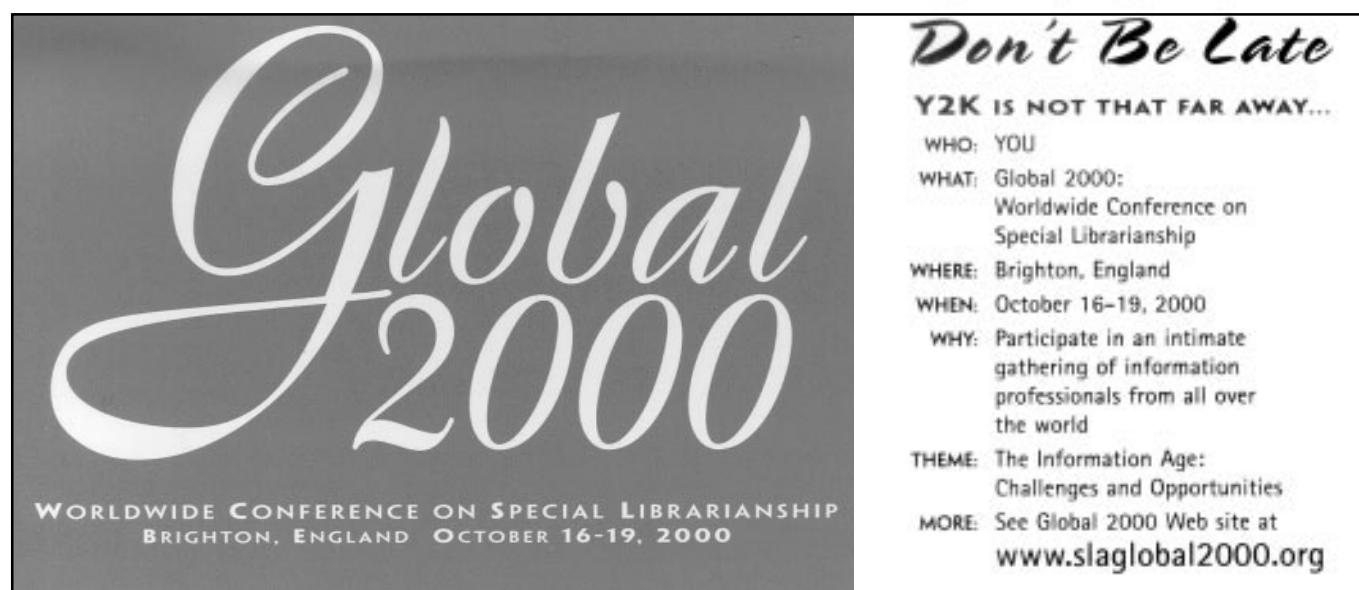
### The British Library

David attended, at the invitation of Brian Lang, Chief Executive, The British Library, to join 200 other delegates of 'world information leaders' to explore the topic of 'Through the Looking Glasses-Defining the Parameters of the Information Society.' The day-long meeting brought together decision makers from all sectors of the information market to take a strategic look at the information environment. Delegates came from the U.K., Iceland, U.S., Japan, and number of European Communities. Through the discussion, the various speakers looked at the development of the information society from the political, social, technological, and legal viewpoints and sought to identify the key areas of strategic importance for an international audience.

Themes that were addressed included: 1) social, political, and cultural influences on the Information Society; 2) the future of document delivery; 3) the development of the hybrid library; 4) intellectual property implications of electronic delivery; and 5) technological innovations and a view to the future.

David found the most stimulating session on futuristic information was offered by Oliver Sparrow, Director, Chatham House Forum, Royal Institution for International Affairs. Sparrow offered a number of scenarios substantiated by facts and figures that did not paint a bright future for most societies. One could draw a number of implications for information services and delivery from his comments. He looked at the political drift of the information society, corporate strategy and innovative management (with neither offering much hope from his prospective), information delivery into an information rich society and drivers of the information society.

The two sessions that followed provided critical time to



**Global 2000**  
WORLDWIDE CONFERENCE ON SPECIAL LIBRARIANSHIP  
BRIGHTON, ENGLAND OCTOBER 16-19, 2000

**Don't Be Late**  
Y2K IS NOT THAT FAR AWAY...  
WHO: YOU  
WHAT: Global 2000:  
Worldwide Conference on  
Special Librarianship  
WHERE: Brighton, England  
WHEN: October 16-19, 2000  
WHY: Participate in an intimate  
gathering of information  
professionals from all over  
the world  
THEME: The Information Age:  
Challenges and Opportunities  
MORE: See Global 2000 Web site at  
[www.slaglobal2000.org](http://www.slaglobal2000.org)

re-address a number of issues which SLA has already taken into consideration: 1) intellectual property rights in the digital age and 2) the hybrid library. Intellectual property rights issues centred around three main issues; what are the implications of electronic delivery of various media; the changing legal framework for information delivery and; partnerships-suppliers and users. The hybrid library panel concentrated on the integration of information delivery; whether it is digital or hard copy and the electronic acquisition and delivery of information to the user. The discussion addressed the need for information access in no specific format.

Prior to ending the day's discussion, an attempt was made to bring a consensus to a number of issues that were addressed throughout the day. David felt that understood topics such as life long learning and focusing on information users will require the ability to stretch and look for new building blocks that will partner us with currently unknown players.

David came away from the session with several conclusions, but believes that Communications and Information Technology perhaps describe our future better than most other words. As a profession, we must be willing to step into a new landscape or be left behind. Are we taking what we see and hear and building blocks or a vision? Do we really see the future through a clear vision or are we building that vision? We live in unsettled times in which most industrialized societies are adaptive to change and are realistic about information needs.

### **The Library Association**

Ross Shimmon, the Chief Executive of LA, invited six international representatives to The Library Association for a discussion of association management and to share ideas about IFLA 2002 (International Association of Library Associations), which will be held in Glasgow, Scotland. Items discussed were: conference and meeting planning; publications; international intellectual property rights; and cooperative endeavours. Each representative was provided with a copy of a recently released document titled 'Our Professional Future' which is a proposal for a new organization for the library and information profession. What the document proposes to do is create a new association from the existing Library Association and the Institute of Information Scientists. The report has been released for review and comment. The proposed title of the new organization is The Information and Library Association.

Following this stimulating discussion, the attendees were invited to represent their associations at The Library Association's Royal Charter Centenary Celebration. On 17 February 1898, Queen Victoria granted the Association a Royal Charter. In 1986, Queen Elizabeth II granted a Supplemental Charter that amended the purposes and powers in the original

Charter to reflect the Association's contemporary role. An address was given by HRH The Princess Royal followed by a reception in her presence. The event took place at the British Library's new location, which had been opened in June under the dedication of Queen Elizabeth. The entire celebration was most impressive and was truly an opportunity to foster closer ties with the Library Association.

SLA looks forward to more exhibits in Europe, and is moving forward quickly on finalizing programming and scheduling for its worldwide conference on special librarianship, Global 2000 in Brighton, England in October 2000.

### **Harnessing Intranet Potential SLA Getting out of the Box Series: Distance Learning Videoconference By Géraldine Clément-Stoneham**

On October 8, 1998, a dozen information specialists got together at The Dialog Corporation London headquarters following the SLA invitation to participate in the third distance learning videoconference, part of the, 'Getting out of the Box Series'. It was a special occasion as it was the largest gathering ever in London for one of these sessions, other participants being located in New York, Baltimore, Montreal, San Francisco and other sites across America. The subject of the evening was the intranet. The hour-and-a-half conference followed a fairly standard pattern and speakers' presentations alternated with question and answer segments, during which viewers could ring in to submit their comments.

A panel of experts had been assembled in the US and were there to share their experience in setting up and running intranets within their organisations. These guests were Mary Corcoran, Vice President of Outsell Inc.; Michael Crandall, who has been in charge of electronic information delivery systems at Boeing since 1990; Sheryl Rosenthal, who has recently joined US News & World Report after being Manager of Research Systems at The Washington Post and Fran K. Voci who works for The Dow Chemical Company. The moderator was Ellen Nulty, Director of Enterprise



Solutions, The Dialog Corporation. The broadcast of the videoconference was followed by a relaxed discussion among participants in London, accompanied by drinks and sandwiches kindly provided by The Dialog Corporation!

Various aspects concerning establishing and running an intranet were considered and here is a summary of some of the points that were made and advice given during the talk, which you will hopefully find useful in your own practice.

First of all, one needs to establish what is the purpose of an intranet. It needs to be a profitable operation, not just a 'nice thing to have'. It is a way to share and make knowledge available, a way to put the expert in touch with other experts within the organisation. Eventually, if the intranet is designed properly, it will improve the performance of the employees: "The purpose of an intranet is to organise, disseminate and communicate information that employees need to do their jobs more effectively (Mary Corcoran, What are intranets, 9/10/1998)".

When establishing an intranet a few points need to be considered. The most important is to assess the need for information; i.e. what people within the organisation would like to find on their intranet. The first steps would therefore be to establish who your users are, what they are looking for and how (in what format?) they want it. It is better to start on a small scale and build up in order to avoid an information overload. The intranet at Boeing started by making plans for new models available throughout the company and was then expanded. If it is decided to make certain databases available via an intranet, it is very important to remember to negotiate the correct type of contract with information providers. Once these aspects have been solved, a marketing plan should be established in order to create a demand and make sure the intranet is used to its best potential.

All is well to talk about establishing an intranet, but who should be in charge? All the speakers agreed that intranets are a great opportunity for information



professionals. Intranets were often started by making the library catalogue available online, whereas in other instances the IT department of a company made the first steps. In any case, information professionals have qualities that are essential to create an efficient intranet. Information should be made available in a format people are used

to, as well as being simple and easily accessible. It needs to be organised, structured, classified, which is what (among other things!) information professionals are skilled at. There is therefore an important librarian know-how which can be used in organising an intranet.

Speakers were also keen to emphasise that the content of an intranet has to be constantly reviewed and renewed. In the case of the Washington Post, a content manager was appointed, who was in charge of finding new items to be posted on the intranet pages. This person would work closely with the various teams to get feedback and suggestions on what employees wanted to have access to. It was underlined that the intranet can be a gateway to external resources, but it is also a way of sharing existing skills and knowledge. The intranet should integrate the whole organisation and it is therefore vital to have every department participating in its content. As more people bring their own input, information professionals can play an essential role in training end users.

Once the intranet is up and running, it is very important to keep monitoring its success. Various ways have been suggested, such as user's surveys or calculating the number of hits on the various pages.

Throughout the talks, various problems were mentioned. One of the main issues raised was the technological gap that still exists within organisations between information professionals, who spend a large part of their day working on computers, and other employees. A huge effort of training and education is required if we want the intranet to be successful. Another aspect mentioned was how to motivate people to participate, how to convince them that their knowledge is worth sharing, or that they will not lose

personal importance if it is made publicly available via the intranet. In certain American companies, financial incentives have been established to encourage employees to contribute, but that cannot be considered as a panacea.

The layout of an intranet can also be problematic. It is difficult to find the right balance between a well-structured, online catalogue look-alike intranet, which can be very boring, and a high tech page, with lots of graphics and frames, which can be a complete muddle. Finally, one needs to be aware that intranets are very greedy in human resources. Their content needs to be constantly updated to remain



very greedy in human resources. Their content needs to be constantly updated to remain attractive and efficient and this is a very time consuming process.

So what is the future of the intranet? The various speakers agreed that intranets would play an increasingly important role in connecting people to people, allowing them to share resources and expertise. This might not be limited to the organisation. Parts of an intranet content might be made available to the exterior world as an Extranet. This highlights the potential that intranets might develop with E-commerce and how they can turn out to be a new revenue source, an aspect that should not be neglected.

 **SLA annual library lecture:  
Knowledge Management - a  
tombstone for push technology**  
At the Royal Society of Chemistry Sponsored  
by SWETS Report by Stella Trench

Peter Hoey of the Royal Society of Chemistry hosted the annual lecture this year and introduced the evening with a short history of the Society and its magnificent premises which are located in the historical heart of London's Picadilly.

The home of RSC, Burlington House, was originally built in 1664 and was the regular meeting place of poets, academics and other luminaries of the time, including Handel who lived here for a short period. In 1854 the original Burlington House was demolished and it was rebuilt over the following years. In 1968, the RSC was moved to the current premises at the rear of the courtyard. As early as 1850 there was a library catalogue - a slim volume proudly displayed by Peter. Of course the current library contains a vast information collection and became a commercial, fee-paying library and information service in 1993.

The main purpose of the evening, apart from to admire the amazing chandeliers, was to hear John Gundry of Knowledge Ability Ltd speak about Knowledge Management. Gundry gave an interesting and slightly irreverent exposition of the subject and was only allowed one plug for his book and KM consultancy practice on the subject (to follow).

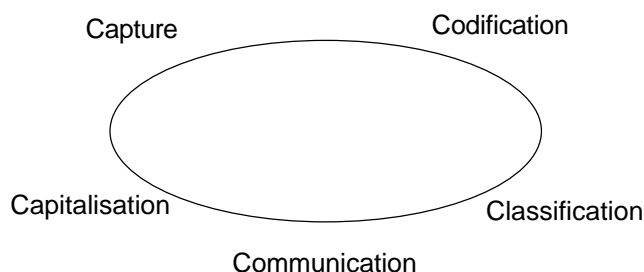
'Placing knowledge under the management remit' is his definition of the ubiquitous KM, with the management rather than the knowledge part of this being the new part of the equation. And why is it the hot topic it seems to have become? The answer seems to be the move away from the manufacture of commodity products towards a knowledge based economy, the faster pace of change in the business environment, greater job mobility and the availability of appropriate technology all of which allow interested persons to jump aboard the KM bandwagon.

'Where there's brass there's hype.' All technologies and terminologies go into the KM pot - groupware, electronic publishing, databases, document management. Many slogans are attached to the process such as earnest aims to 'Increase the corporate IQ!' No large company is respectable these days without a Knowledge Management function of some sort. In many cases this involves a simple re-badging of old skills.

The usual definitions of the difference between data, information and knowledge were given - knowledge is two-dimensional and provides the capability to act, decide or plan based upon a web or body or map of information. Gundry wisely did not presume to define wisdom itself. Real knowledge is a human capability and results from interaction with the source, it is generative not reproducible, is elaborate, context sensitive and is both explicit, i.e. 'knowing what' and tacit i.e. 'knowing how'. This threatens people who want to sell you Knowledge Management technology as most KM systems do not create knowhow.

The artefacts of KM include libraries, training departments, employee directories, competitor intelligence, customer databases, intranets, search engines, Chief Knowledge Officers, knowledge networks and so on. However, these things are the means for KM, they are not KM of themselves.

The KM Process Map goes something as follows:



It is only at the capitalisation stage that any money is made from the KM cycle, all other stages are expense stages. An excellent example of KM is a small team working on a common project with common goals- here there is complete co-operation and communication between the members of the team and real KM rather than KM in the abstract. Perhaps we should outlaw large working companies or working groups!

KM is respectable and a 'good thing' but the result can often be information overload with KM not being the cause but the context for the phenomenon. Messaging over-dosing leads to 'email blizzards' and the proliferation of junk emails. Overload makes the recipients feel bad as they lose control of the information flow. Incidentally, it now appears that our concept of personal space has changed to include the contents of our PC which we treat in a proprietary way and so messages received into it are an infringement of

that personal space and we feel uncomfortable. It is certainly true that we feel inclined to knife anybody who messes with out PCs without permission!

The 'Push - Pull' model for information and knowledge was discussed. Libraries are usually based on pull - making material available - the access model - whereas many individuals act in a Push mode - the distribution model. There are downsides to both types of behaviour with the pull model resulting in information underload and the push model in information overload. It is all too easy to send that monthly report to 50 recipients via email in case they want to read it rather than because they expressed a wish to do so. Is sender filtering better where the librarian sends selective information or is it better to be a receiver filter? The successful information management model treads the middle path and reaches the right level. Push methods include catalogues, search engines, web indexes, group messaging - Pull methods included post, distribution lists, email, listserves, newsfeeds and the last year's buzzword - push technologies, R.I.P.

Knowledge Management should:

- be based on knowledge that is valued
- be about creating, mobilising and capitalising
- make knowledge available where it is needed regardless of space, time and money
- make money

Some Knowledge Management is driven by special interest groups within organisations and technology and may just create a system and overload all concerned. Librarians, using their traditional pull information skills, should be involved and advocate the right information models.


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## Knowledge Management: A New Competitive Asset

This compendium explores the essential elements of knowledge management and how it can enhance corporate productivity and competitiveness. Topics include the concept of knowledge management, the tools and techniques you can use to improve your organization's management of knowledge assets, real world examples, and key issues that should be considered in implementing a knowledge management program.

ISBN 0-87111-480-1 ■ 230 pages  
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For more information,  
call 1.202.234.4700 ext. 643  
Or, visit our Virtual Bookstore at [www.sla.org](http://www.sla.org).



Special Librarian Association

As librarians, or whatever we are currently calling ourselves, we should stamp our feet, hold our breath until we are blue in the face until we are involved in the knowledge management process within our organisations.

There were a number of lively questions and the audience was left with the distinct feeling that blue faces should be the common uniform in the future. The evening's refreshments, gratefully consumed by the audience, were sponsored by SWETS.

Dr John Gundry, Knowledge Ability Ltd,  
[www.knowab.co.uk/ka](http://www.knowab.co.uk/ka)  
Agile Networking. Metes, Gundry and Bradish. 1998

### SLA Tea at EBIC '99 in Dublin

If you are going to be attending TFPL's European Business Information Conference in Dublin between 16 - 19 March don't forget to come along the the SLA tea.

It will be held in the conference hotel (the Berkeley Court Hotel) on Tuesday 16 between the Pre-conference workshop and the welcome reception from 4.30 to 5.30pm.

We are hoping that David Bender will be on hand so you will have an opportunity to tell the Executive Director of the SLA what you think of the organisation in person. In addition several members of the board of the European Chapter will be there and look forward to having a chance to meet fellow members. If the refreshments provided in Lisbon are anything to go by it will be worth coming for the cakes alone.

### Chapter News

Congratulations to the winner of our Online '98 prize draw. A 3Com Palm Pilot will be winging its way to Linda Griffiths Information Officer MS Research Trust.

Also well done to Martin Ashton Marketing Analyst at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers and Susan Moore Research and Information Manager at Mazars Neville Russell. They both won free membership to the SLA.

On a professional note Cris Kinghorn and Neil Infield were recently promoted. Neil's was primarily for his work building his companies' intranet site.

*Please contact the editor if you have any news about yourself or fellow European Chapter members.*

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## European Chapter web site goes

live!

By Neil Infield

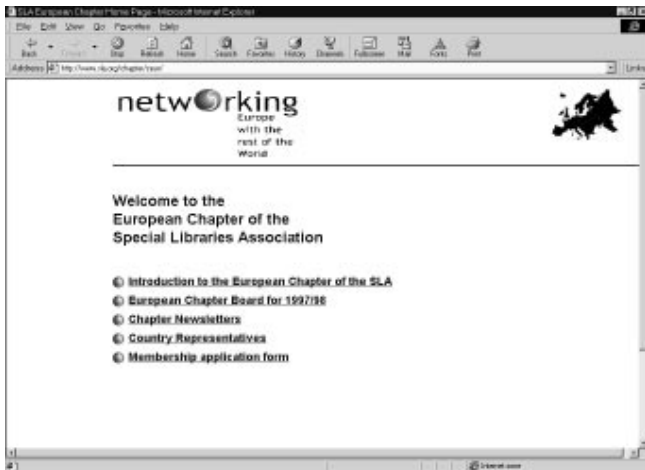
The European Chapter web site is now live!  
It is located on the SLA main site at:  
<http://www.sla.org/chapter/ceur/index.htm>.

Please have a look and see what you think. I am open to ideas about changing and adding pages. After all the site is for you so I need your help in improving it.

I have created the site using FrontPage 98 which makes web page and site creating fairly easy for someone without technical knowledge. So far I have only been able to test the pages using Explorer 4.01 and Netscape Communicator 4.04.

I look forward to receiving your feedback and suggestions for development of the site and the kind of contents you would like to see added. I would also like to try and build up a set of links to other web sites and pages you find useful in your work.

Please contact me at [n.infield@hermes.co.uk](mailto:n.infield@hermes.co.uk).



## Celebrating ISLD '99 - Library/ Information Center Activities

### Host an open house for your users:

Provide a tour of your information center - Demonstrate your tools and services, showing how you add value to your organization;  
Give Internet search tips to help with most commonly asked questions/problems - Serve food — a guaranteed crowd pleaser!

### Engage your users in an activity or think “virtual” they don’t have to come together to participate:

Coordinate a scavenger hunt - Create a trivia game - Challenge willing participants to a timed-search on the Internet - Give tours of your intranet;

### Provide information:

Create a user guide/brochure for your library outlining its resources and services - Write an article for your organization’s employee or customer publications - Unveil your own newsletter, including frequently asked questions, how to’s, new acquisitions - Create a display of interesting materials, services, etc. Place it in a high-traffic area.

### Publicize, Publicize, Publicize:

Utilize SLA’s promotional kit, easily down-loaded from your desktop - Splash ISLD’99 on your routing slips, faxes, e-mail signature, voice mail, newsletter, etc. - Produce a flier-stuffer to go into pay envelopes or billing envelopes.



## European Chapter profiles

**In order to get to know each other a bit better we will be printing biographies of European Chapter members. Please send yours to the editor at [n.infield@hermes.co.uk](mailto:n.infield@hermes.co.uk)**

For this issue we have Gill Voisey our Public Relations Chair. In her professional role she is responsible for interfacing between LEXIS-NEXIS Europe account management team and the company’s prospects and clients. This involves educating clients and prospects on the benefits of the LEXIS-NEXIS services and planning activities which promote the LEXIS-NEXIS service to the information professional market (hence her role in the European Chapter!).

Before LEXIS-NEXIS Gill was on the other side of the vender/client divide working at West Merchant Bank in London. She was manager of their information service which contributed tactical and strategic business intelligence to all divisions of the bank.

Prior to that she was at Smith New Court a leading city stockbroker dealing in global equity markets. Here she was manager of their European information services heading up a team providing an information service for brokers and analysts, researching European companies and markets.

Her very first job was at the British Tourist Authority in London marketing Britain as a visitor destination, as an assistant librarian. She followed this with over ten years at D’Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles a leading worldwide advertising agency providing advertising, media and marketing services, where she had a succession of posts of increasing seniority culminating in head of the marketing intelligence department.

On the non working side of life Gill assures me that she has absolutely no hobbies and no social life. Apparently she “lives to be an Information Professional”

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