

Janet Tomlinson wins the European Special Librarian of the Year (ESLY) award for 2004

Dow Jones & Reuters



The new ESLY, Janet Tomlinson has been with the Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE), since 1977. In 1998 she became Information Group Manager responsible for the planning, development, implementation and ongoing maintenance of virtual communities for the segments of the IEE membership and its wider customer base. Four years ago the IEE started developing a series of virtual communities called Professional Networks (PNs). The objective was to engage a wider population in active membership of the Institution. The emphasis is on delivering content and acting as a vehicle for communication. There are now

33 separate subject-based PNs each with a variety of content including daily newsfeeds, weekly news features and opinion pieces from editors, many articles and technical papers, competitions, checklists and other items. The communication elements include discussions boards, chatrooms and polls. There are now over 100,000 PN registrants worldwide.

As one of the key architects of the PNs and with responsibility for their content, Janet has pushed the boundaries forward and over the last year has enriched the content with www.iee.tv, an online multimedia version of IEE events. Key presentations are filmed, encoded and webcast, enabling those who cannot travel to engage in IEE events.

Janet partnered with an outside company called Datmedia to develop a unique player which is a platform-free browser-based interface for viewing streamed content. It maximises slide size for visibility on a small screen, optimises bandwidth availability and includes a content management system. This player is a truly innovative product which is gaining recognition with other large companies for distance learning and internal communication applications.

Janet is a long term member of the SLA Europe Board. She will now represent SLA Europe and Factiva at a number of upcoming functions in her year of office as ESLY, including SLA Europe's breakfast meeting at the Online Conference and Exhibition in December 2004.