

Connecting...

The Newsletter of Computing Services SIS
American Association of Law Libraries



Connecting...

June 2001

Ten Things For Law Librarians To Do When Managing Technology

by Sheri Lewis, Mercer University Law
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It's rather difficult these days to do our jobs well, and perhaps even keep our jobs, without taking on the role of technology guru at certain times. This may be because we don't have a guru, are temporarily without a guru, can't find the guru, have an over-worked guru, or can't communicate well with the guru. And in these circumstances, we find ourselves managing technology in the lurch and taking on the role of the technology guru ourselves. Therefore, for those of us who find themselves playing the role of technology guru, I'd like to offer a plan. By working with this plan to prepare your library for those times when you don't have the ideal support for technology, it will be much easier to function without a guru.

#1 Compile a Hardware Inventory

The first task is to compile a hardware inventory. Many libraries have one, perhaps for accounting purposes. It should include detailed information for each individual system such as technical specifications and information on current use. The inventory also should cover historical information for each computer, such as the date of purchase and information on upgrades and previous uses. As part of the inventory, assign a unique

number to each piece of equipment or system. For example, ten computers in storage could be numbered Store1-Store10. Similarly, each of twenty machines in a third floor computer lab might be 3Lab1-3Lab20.

#2 Compile a Software Inventory

Next, I recommend doing a similar inventory for all software. Many institutions keep such inventories to track usage as governed by licensing. Begin by segregating your inventory, so that you cover all of the types of software (word processing, web browsers, spreadsheet software) that are used. Include administrative details, such as date acquired, date released, and licensing information. Also compile use information, such as number and names of users, types of uses, locations, and versions. And finally, include information as to manuals which you own and web sites that could be used as a resource for particular software.

#3 Do Skills Inventories

Once the hardware and software inventories are completed, the next step is to gather information on substitute technology gurus.

See *When Managing Technology* on Page 2

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SPECIAL SECTION !!!

TAKE ME TO THE ANNUAL MEETING!

A GUIDE TO THE 2001 ANNUAL MEETING IN MINNEAPOLIS

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When Managing Technology

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Include everyone in the library who could be required to help and others outside of the library who are willing to help (e.g. lawyers in your firm who have been using computers for many years, administrators in your court house who work as technology gurus in their own departments, professors or students who are willing to teach others). Inquire as to each person's use of particular products, the versions they are familiar with, and how able they might be to answer questions, train others, or create documentation. And if appropriate, cover hardware and network troubleshooting abilities.

#4 Create an Experts List

Using the skills inventories, you can now begin to map out who your technology gurus will be for

ing on hardware. The technology map may be useful to divide maintenance and troubleshooting responsibility by location. Use the hardware inventories to ensure completeness of the map. For an example technology map, see Susan Thompson, "Riding Into Uncharted Territory: The New Systems Librarian," *Computers in Libraries* (March 1999): 14-20.

#6 Create an Organizational Chart for Technology

An organizational chart for technology is different than traditional organizational charts which outline reporting schemes or workflow in an organization. This organizational chart focuses on assignments for specific tasks, or for specific technology support. Use this type of chart to create a visual plan for covering all technology support needs. I suggest organizing the chart by various categories, including types of software, network maintenance, hardware troubleshooting, research products or related-technology, such as Internet uses. Then create

"[When we] don't have a guru, are temporarily without a guru, can't find the guru, have an overworked guru, or can't communicate well with the guru ... we find ourselves ... taking on the role of the technology guru ourselves."

various tasks. The hardware and software inventories will identify areas where experts are needed. By using your skills inventories as the resource for experts, you can identify, create or borrow an expert for every need. For example, even if you don't have someone who admits to being an expert in running an NT server, you still know that you're going to need someone to do this if you have NT servers. Determine who can be trained internally or who can be relied upon outside of your institution. Also, institute a buddy system or back-up for each expert when he or she is not available. And finally, make the experts list accessible by all departments who may receive inquiries as to who can assist with technology.

#5 Create a Physical Map of Technology

The purpose of a physical map of technology is to have a visual portrayal of all of the equipment. This would be similar to a library map, but focus-

branches that link to those experts who will be called upon to support any needs in those categories. Together with the technology physical map and the experts list, you are building the resources you can rely upon when without a technology guru.

#7 Create a Technology Plan for the Lurch and Beyond ...

Every library or institution should have a technology plan whether managing those resources with or without a guru. Technology plans cover general concerns such as how and where technology will be used as well as specific issues such as when you upgrade or replace equipment. You can begin by relying on the first six steps above to generate the information you will need. Since what you'll be able to accomplish will greatly depend upon the staffing you have, you'll want to consider what's possible with and without a technology guru. And if you are in the

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When Managing Technology

(continued from Page 2)

situation where you are hoping to increase your technology staff, having comparative plans which show what could be done with additional help might be extremely useful.

#8 Create a Documentation System

A very important step to consider if you're managing without a technology guru is documenting the situation. This would be for your own purposes, for monitoring and keeping track of workflow and demands upon your staff, as well as to justify the need for sufficient technology staff to others. You may wish to incorporate the documenting of technology-related work into whatever reporting system you currently have. To the extent practical, try to include as much factual information as possible which explains how technology was managed. This would include specific tasks, the routine and exceptional work performed. Your documentation will be useful as an historical account of how things had been handled, what worked and what did not, typical and recurrent problems, and will prove valuable to future technology gurus.

"What you update and how frequently should be a part of your overall plan for technology."

#9 Create a Technology Library

This would be a centralized place where all of the useful resources which you've created or identified would be found, or which would lead you to them. The library should include all of the materials created in the above eight steps. It should also contain all technology resources assembled and used such as books, articles, list of web sites, lists of contacts for vendors and outside gurus, and all in-house resources created, such as guides, tips sheets, and check lists. You may wish to integrate this library into your online system, keep it in a separate searchable database, or perhaps create your own intranet

for technology management. However you decide to organize your technology library, be sure that it is manageable, accessible to those who need it, and that it includes the resources that you need to keep up with the technology that you use.

#10 Develop a Schedule for Keeping Current

The information that you gather and rely upon will soon become dated and, therefore, of questionable value. Be sure to update as often as is necessary for each particular type of data. Remember that the initial work that comes with doing inventories or creating resources is only part of what you're assigning. Keeping resources current can be a significant drain on time. What you update and how frequently should be a part of your overall plan for technology. The timing of new inventories, for instance, may be quite important for future projects and determining financial resources devoted to technology.

[Note: This article is based on an educational program presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, July 20, 1999. The slide show presentation from that program is available at www.usc.edu/dept/law/cs-sis/1999pgms.html.]

CS-SIS Officers—2001-2002

Vice Chair/Chair Elect:

Liz Glankler, St. Louis University Law Library

Secretary/Treasurer:

Dominick Grillo, Hofstra University School of Law

Member at Large:

Susan Boland, Northern Illinois University College of Law Library

**For more on this story,
see Announcements on Page 4**

CS-SIS ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW OFFICERS 2001-2002

The Computing Services Special Interest Section is pleased to announce the results of its election and welcome these members to the Executive Board:

Vice Chair/Chair Elect: Liz Glankler,

St. Louis University Law Library

Secretary/Treasurer: Dominick Grillo,

Hofstra University School of Law

Member at Large: Susan Boland, Northern Illinois University College of Law

Continuing on the 2001-2002 CS-SIS Executive Board:

Chair: James Duggan, Southern Illinois University Law Library

Member at Large: Jean Willis, San Diego County Law Library

Past Chair: Sheri Lewis, Furman Smith Law Library, Mercer University

Congratulations to these CS-SIS members and best wishes in their new offices!

Special thanks to the CS-SIS Nominations Committee, **James Duggan** (Chair), Southern Illinois University Law Library, **Ken Hirsh**, Duke University School of Law and **Sandra Braber-Grove**, Vanderbilt University Law School, for their excellent work in putting together such a fine slate of candidates. The Committee thanks all those who served as candidates.

GRANT RECIPIENTS

CS-SIS Grants have been awarded to:

D.J. Morrison, Oregon Supreme Court Law Library

Eleanor Frank, Touro Law School Library

Chris Tighe, U.S. District Court Library—Southern District of Illinois

For the second year, the CS-SIS offered grants to attend the annual AALL conference. Several articles were published and numerous emails sent to alert all AALL members of this opportunity. Over 10 members submitted grant appli-

cations, and not surprisingly the Grants Committee had a tough time making decisions. All grant applicants were more than deserving and we wish we could have provided something for everyone. After some agonizing, decisions were made by Grant Committee members **Susan Boland** (Northern Illinois University Law Library), **David Hanson** (Drake University Law Library), **Lisa Mecklenberg** (Montana State Law Library) and **Jean Willis** [Chair] (San Diego County Public Law Library).

Three grants have been awarded and each will cover the cost of the program registration fee for the upcoming AALL Annual Meeting and Conference in Minneapolis. The grant recipients have been asked to contribute to the CS-SIS, either by writing an article for this newsletter or by active participation in the SIS at the Board and/or Committee level.

Many thanks to CS-SIS for providing the funding for these grants. The hard work of the Grants Committee is much appreciated. All AALL members are encouraged to apply for a grant next year when the Annual Conference will be held in Orlando. The grant application is available at <http://www.usc.edu/dept/law/cs-sis/csgrtmod2.htm> and is due by April 1 each year.

- by Jean L. Willis, San Diego County Public Law Library, Chair, CS-SIS 2000-2001 Grants Committee

JAMES DUGGAN, current CS-SIS Vice Chair/Chair Elect has been elected to the AALL Executive Board!!!

Join us in sending bunches and bunches of CONGRATS! to James. As Jean Willis says, "We know from our own experiences of working with you on CS-SIS issues that you'll do a great job on the AALL Executive Board. Well done!"

Articles, Articles, We Want Articles!

Liz Glankler and Sandy Braber-Grove [CS-SIS Newsletter Co-editors] are always looking for articles. Want to get something off your chest? Dying to ask a bunch of questions and see who will answer? Send us your troubling tech. questions and we'll find answers. Share with us your tech. nightmare—you're probably not alone! Have you solved a tech. mystery and are willing to share? Write for the CS-SIS newsletter. Any and all articles, questions, etc. can be submitted via email to either of the co-editors. The articles we seek don't have to be the traditional 'scholarly' pieces—although we do want them to be well-written.

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SPECIAL SECTION—TAKE ME TO THE ANNUAL MEETING!

Hot Diggity: Fun in The Twin Cities

by Jean L. Willis, San Diego County Public Law Library

Fortunately or unfortunately (depending on personal perspective), many consider the denizens of the Computing Services SIS as long-haired, pencil-necked geeks. Now it's true that some take pride in that description. Perhaps we like to see ourselves as somewhat different from traditional librarians — dare we use the “L” word? Perhaps we enjoy having a laugh at our own expense. And finally, some of us are truly more techie than traditional librarian; it is the ough-ties/naughties/zeros/whatever, after all.

That said, our SIS has much to offer to many besides those more technically proficient. To top it off; many charter members of the D-SIS — that's the Dancing SIS to the uninitiated — are active members of our SIS, too. Who would think it? It's rumored that there are some who have started D-SISs internationally and who have found dancing opportunities in the most unlikely of settings.

Those of us who have dual CS- & D-SIS memberships believe that the Twin Cities may offer loads of “D” opportunities. Let us not forget that the great Purple master hails from Minneapolis and is even known to frequent his local nightclub, Paisley Park, on random Friday nights. One never knows what one may encounter in a new city on a Saturday night (or Sunday, Monday, or ...).

For those of you who may be new to AALL or the CS-SIS or who may just be shy or whatever, the CS-SIS offers a great networking opportunity with an excellent promise of dancing to follow. Together with the TS-, RIPS- and OBS-SISs we sponsor (with some underwriting from Innovative Interfaces) a reception on Saturday evening, July 14th at 6:00 pm. The re-

ception will be held at the Atrium of the University of St. Thomas, 10th and LaSalle, 2-3 blocks from the Hilton and the Convention Center.

Join us for the CS-SIS/TS-SIS/RIPS-SIS/OBS-SIS joint reception on July 14th at the Annual Meeting.

Kick off the conference, meet old friends, make new friends, and get the latest hot gossip on where to go dancing in the Twin Cities. It's fun, it's free and **YOU** are invited! Get out your dancing shoes!!



Annual Survey of CS-SIS Membership

I would like to thank Kris Niedringhaus and Mark Folmsbee for their hard work on the CS-SIS survey and encourage all of you to complete the survey <www.utlaw.edu/lavalleylibrary/cssissurvey2001.htm>, either again or for the first time. The information you provide will be valuable in decisions that the CS-SIS Executive Board makes in the coming months. I hope that the loss of the original data (which Kris should in no way feel bad about; it has happened to all of us) will prove to be a good thing as even more of you complete the survey this time around.

Sheri Lewis, CS-SIS Chair, 2000-2001

THE LAST OF THE ANNUAL MEETING NOTES

2000 Business Meeting Minutes

Twenty-nine CS-SIS members attended the Business Meeting on July 16, 2000 as part of the Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. At 5:00 pm **Lyonette Louis-Jacques** called the meeting to order and gave an overview of the past year's accomplishments. Of note; the CS-SIS bylaws were amended to create two new Member-at-Large offices; four CS-SIS grants were awarded for attendance to the annual meeting; CS-SIS job descriptions database was created and publicized; CS-SIS membership was surveyed in furtherance of the Strategic Plan; CS-SIS time capsule was put in place at the annual meeting; CS-SIS put on educational programs and roundtables at the annual meeting; the CS-SIS breakfast meeting featured **Genie Tyburski**; and the CS-SIS continues to have very popular freebies and giveaways at CONELL and the display table.

Don Arndt announced the results of the election held in Spring 2000. **James Duggan** was elected Vice Chair/Chair Elect and **Jean Willis** was elected as our first Member-at-Large.

Current Chairs of Committees reported on the activities of their Committees. Other members discussed on-going projects such as the job description database. New business included discussion about whether we should liaison with publishers of e-books; offering \$50 cash prize for the "Name the Newsletter" contest; web-based legal research exercises; the AALL Strategic Plan and the Plan Implementation Committee.

Much discussion took place over the newsletter — should it be published in print or electronic format or both? How many issues a year? **James Duggan** moved that the Publications Committee submit, by Sept. 1, to the Executive Board a proposal recommending the number of issues for a print newsletter; the Board then has until Sept. 15th to decide on the proposal. The proposal would also include a publication timetable. The motion carried and the newsletter was on its way to being rejuvenated.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.
Submitted by **Don Arndt**, Secretary/Treasurer (LaValley Law Library, University of Toledo)

For a list of attendees, the Treasurer's Report and the complete version of the Minutes, please go to the CS-SIS Web site at <http://www.usc.edu/dept/law/cs-sis.html>

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

In an attempt to answer questions posed by the 'inquiring minds who want to know', here is an excerpt from a memorandum sent from **James Duggan** as Chair of the CS-SIS Publications Committee to the CS-SIS Executive Board after it was decided to once again publish a Newsletter for the SIS.

The CS-SIS Publications Committee (**Susan Boland, Sandy Braber-Grove, James Duggan [Chair], Dominick Grillo, Liz Glankler, Lyo Louis_Jacques, Janet McKinney, Vicki Szymczak**) conducted an e-mail discussion about the CS-SIS Newsletter during the month of August 2000, and makes the following recommendations to the CS-SIS Executive Board concerning the Section Newsletter:

1) That **Liz Glankler** (St. Louis University) and **Sandy Braber-Grove** (Vanderbilt University) serve as co-editors for the newly revised newsletter (both have kindly consented to serve), and that the new newsletter have both online and printed versions. Liz and Sandy will produce and edit both versions, with assistance from other interested CS-SIS members.

2) That CS-SIS start with two printed issues during July 2000- June 2001, with one to appear in early to late fall (after the name contest is decided), and include reports from the annual Meeting, educational programs proposed/accepted, and other issues; and the second issue to appear in the early/late Spring and include previews of upcoming educational meetings; committee work/activities, and other news.

I'd like to thank all the members of the Publications Committee for their hard work and thoughtful discussion in dealing with this matter.

CS-SIS COLUMNS

On the Front Lines

by Ken Hirsch <ken@law.duke.edu>

Dealing with the Innovation De Jour

I've never taken a French class; indeed, in elementary school I learned very basic Spanish and in high school and college I took vier jahren von Deutsch. But I've always been fond of those French phrases that you come across in everyday life, particularly at a restaurant. Most memorable is the "soup de jour," which means the soup of the day, and all that implies – that tomorrow's soup will be something different.

Those of us on the computing front lines learn about and sometimes try out technologies that change rapidly in markets where today's dominant player becomes tomorrow's outsider. That player can be a company, a technology or an individual product. Look around, now or in any recent year, and you can identify the "technologie de jour." In 1992 many were predicting the advent of what was then called the PDA - the Personal Digital Assistant. No one could really elaborate on what exactly a PDA would do, but of course it would make your life easier and fit in your hand. Apple made a game try with the Newton back then. At the 1993 CALI conference several of us went to The Improv in Chicago, and the wait staff used handheld devices to take drink orders. Those were the closest things to PDA's I had ever seen or would see for nearly six years. Then 3Com got it right with the Palm Pilot; they got it so right that the word "Palm" has become synonymous with handheld computers. I wonder if Palm, Inc. is worried their trademark will pass into everyday language, like aspirin before it.

Of late wireless data transmission is the newest and fastest growing technology. In the past year sales and installations of devices carrying the WiFi certification have exploded. WiFi is the trademarked certification name for devices meeting the IEEE 802.11b standard. Prices are dropping and home users are joining businesses in

purchasing WiFi network cards and access points. Demand to learn about wireless is enough to foster sessions at numerous trade meetings, including the 2000 and 2001 CALI meetings and the annual meetings of the American Association of Law Libraries in those same years. David Whelan, Director of the Legal Technology Resource Center of the American Bar Association, has been instrumental in bringing wireless to the attention of attorneys, law librarians and legal technologists. While we face some uncertainty about the future of the WiFi standard itself, there is no doubt that this form of wireless is now ingrained in the workplace, educational institutions, and in many homes.

"At the 1993 CALI conference...[at] The Improv in Chicago...the wait staff used handheld devices to take drink orders. Those were the closest things to PDA's I had ever seen or would see for nearly six years."

In sharp contrast to the ubiquity of WiFi is Bluetooth. This wireless protocol was originally conceived as a way to replace the jumble of wires connecting your computer and its peripheral devices. But before long it was touted as the centerpiece of the "personal area network." You could connect your cell phone, your notebook computer, your MP3 player, and a host of other devices. Has anyone asked why we'd want to do all that? Apparently not. There is not yet a Bluetooth device available, much less a driver for your operating system. Maybe it will fade into history, like the Newton before it.

When you are offered the technology menu, you may not know which item is the "soup de jour" and which is the staple food that will nourish your environment for the longer term. Like the food critics who may have given the restaurant four stars, your colleagues and the trade press may have taken a hard look at the same menu. Find out their opinions before you order. Bon appetit!

CS-SIS COLUMNS

ASK THE GURU!



We received several “Ask the Guru” questions, some of which we’ll reproduce here, others can be found on our Web site <<http://www.usc.edu/dept/law/cs-sis.html>>, and there are some that we’re still working on!

As a reminder, **Guru!** will answer almost any question ... from the most basic to the more complex. Questions can be sent to either of the co-editors: sandra.braber-grove@law.vanderbilt.edu or **Liz Glankler** (glankler@slu.edu).

Hey Guru! How do you find great graphics (animated .gifs and stuff that moves) to snazzy up your presentations?

Dear “Wanting to Make it Snazzier”: There are lots of places on the Web offering just what you need. Here are a few to get you started. To find more, go to your favorite search engine and simply type “animated gifs” in the search box.

- World of Animated Gifs (<http://www.world-of-animated-gifs.com/>)
- Webdeveloper.com - Animated Gifs for Free download (<http://www.webdeveloper.com/animations/>)
- Animation Station (<http://www.animation-station.com/>)
- Dewa Network - Free Graphics(box on left) (<http://www.dewa.com/>)
- Barry's Clipart.com (<http://www.barrysclipart.com/>)
- Animation Factory (<http://www.eclipsed.com/>)
- Angelfire Graphics (<http://angelfire.lycos.com/doc/animate.html>)
- Web-Talent.com (<http://www.web-talent.com/animated/animated.html>)

William D. Gay, Young Law Library, University of Arkansas School of Law asks:

Hey Guru! I have taken a couple of classes in our Dept. of Educational Technology and was exposed to WebCt and Blackboard, among others. Who out there is encouraging law faculty to move beyond ‘TWEN’ and ‘Lexis Course in a Box’ (actually Blackboard now) to these web management tools? Any suggestions, comments?

Dear William: Some of the law schools with more resources than others never even went the ‘TWEN’/‘Lexis Course in a Box’ route. I can only speak about my home institution, of course, and can tell you that we are not currently using either of the technologies you mention (WebCt and Blackboard). The University (Vanderbilt) uses Prometheus but the business school uses Blackboard. Your inquiry screams CALI Survey — Hey John Mayer or Steve Burke, what do you think? If there are those who wish to share your experiences, please send them to sandra.braber-grove@law.vanderbilt.edu or **Liz Glankler** (glankler@slu.edu). We’ll put the responses either in the next issue or on the Web site <<http://www.usc.edu/dept/law/cs-sis.html>>.

CS-SIS COLUMNS

ASK THE GURU!

(Continued from Page 14)



At this year's CALI Conference we are hoping to get enough people together to start an Experts Database. Such a database would give us all someone we can turn to for help. This column can serve whatever purpose is needed, but most of all be a clearing house of sorts, some might call it a knowledge base.

Here are some questions we have on our plate:

1. Ruth Harrison, Texas State Law Library asks:

Hey Guru! I want to have a shortcut to an internet database that automatically logs the user onto the service. We have a subscription to Shepards on lexis.com and to a service on bender.com. We have tried remembering the passwords through Internet Explorer but the problem is that if a user logs in with his/her own password, ours is erased. Any suggestions?

2. Marilyn Harhai, Barry University School of Law (Orlando, FL) asks:

Hey Guru! I have a Web page form created using FrontPage 2000 that I would like, on submit, to carry out two tasks: 1) send an email message and 2) submit the data to an Access database. It doesn't matter if the solution is from the Web-page side or if Access can automatically generate an email message when it receives the data submitted from the Web (or any other way). Thanks for any help!

3. Jan Oberla, U.S. Dept. of Justice Main Library asks:

Hey Guru! We have been holding off on putting many URLs into our online catalog for fear of the major updating headaches—changes, broken links, etc. Now we have to bite the bullet and jump in with both feet—mixing metaphors a bit. I have not heard of any really impressive software recommendations for helping with this process. We surely can't do it manually. Any success stories?

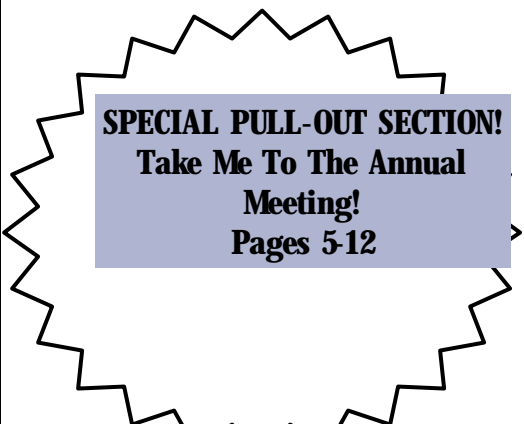
Guru! here: If anyone wishes to share experiences and/or solutions to any of the questions printed here, please email either sandra.braber-grove@law.vanderbilt.edu or Liz Glankler <glankler@slu.edu>. Look for responses either on the Web page <<http://www.usc.edu/dept/law/cs-sis.html>> or in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Thank you!

Connecting...

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TO:

SPECIAL PULL-OUT SECTION!
Take Me To The Annual
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