LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

In the first ISQ issue of each new year, we take a look back at the prior year to reflect on the successes we have had in standards development in the information community and consider both where we have been and where we are headed. While we do the same in this Spring 2014 of ISQ, we also want to recognize an upcoming milestone. This summer NISO will celebrate the 75th anniversary of our founding. The leaders in the library community who came together back in 1939 were visionaries who saw the need for our community to collaboratively solve issues through standards development. Often people are challenged to understand exactly what standards are and the role they play in the space of information distribution. Likewise they don’t realize the critical importance of promoting awareness about those standards to advance their successful adoption.

This is why Information Standards Quarterly exists: to help educate readers about the standards and technology in our community, share experiences of implementation, and report on important initiatives in information distribution from other organizations. Along with our educational programs, ISQ serves NISO’s mission to create and foster the use of standards and technology in the communities we serve and for the public at large.

I don’t know that many sitting in the room back in 1939 could have imagined the technologies that we now use to distribute information. Perhaps the most prescient among them could foresee from the pre-computer shadows of traditional cataloging and information practice to something like today’s widespread adoption of telecommunications and the internet. The breadth and depth of information and technology available to our community has grown and expanded beyond what most of us could have imagined when we started our careers. We have access to more information and computing power in our pockets through our smartphones than was available to even the best librarian at the most prestigious library from their organization’s entire computer center. The creation and distribution of today’s information occurs at a volume and a pace that was unthinkable even 25 years after our foundation. NISO has played an important role in facilitating this digital transformation in how content is created, discovered, and delivered.

As our organization has grown in size, scope, and impact, so too have our publications. Today’s ISQ magazine was preceded by a newsletter of the same name launched in 1989. Interestingly, the launch of the ISQ newsletter coincided with NISO’s 50th Anniversary and I’m pleased to see how the publication has evolved over the years. Voice of Z39, the newsletter that preceded ISQ, started publication in 1979 and prior to that News from Z39 was issued beginning in 1969. It was a fairly simple publication, with lists of meetings, publications, and short descriptions of a few sentences, manually typed and distributed from the University of North Carolina. You can peruse the full archive of these publications from the ISQ area on the NISO website. We’d like to thank Haverford College, and in particular Norm Medeiros at the library there, for their help in digitizing the backfile of these publications.
2014 will be an important year for NISO in another respect. In May, not long after this issue of ISQ is released, NISO and ANSI will host the plenary meeting week of ISO Technical Committee 46, the international standards development community focused on information and documentation. The meeting will take place in Washington, DC at the Library of Congress and the US National Archives; there’s a two-page spread on the meeting in this issue just before the TC46 Year in Review article. Interestingly, the first time that the US hosted a TC46 plenary meeting was in 1989, the same year that ISQ was launched, and the last time was 10 years ago in 2004. During the 2014 meeting week, NISO will be hosting a gala reception and dinner at the National Archives, with addresses from Archivist of the United States, David S. Ferriero, and Vinton Cerf, Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist at Google. We’re expecting a great turnout and a terrific meeting. We hope you can join us.

NISO has grown and adapted over the years, and as information distribution continues to evolve, we will also continue to expand and change our work and activities. I hope as you read through this issue of ISQ, you will reflect on how much has been accomplished, not only in the past year, but throughout the 75 years that NISO has supported the library, publishing, and information distribution communities. Also consider the many thousands of people who have worked to develop our standards and make the organization a success. We cannot thank you enough!

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