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FROM THE EDITOR

President Scott Attenborough introduces this final issue of 2017 by mentioning the diversity we enjoy in AIIP. He reviews AIIP’s diverse activities and successes throughout this past year and hints at what the future holds.

Diversity appears in this issue as we explore diverse styles of work. AIIP is made up of infopreneurs who incorporate a variety of styles of work into their businesses. We have several articles looking at some options for successful information-centric businesses.

Dan Odenwald examines teleworking and how to make it work. Marilyn Harmacek shares her experience working as a consultant who works for multiple clients within a single organization. Jan Knight opens up about her (not so) secret life as a part-time infopreneur. And Barbara van Veen looks into her crystal ball to help us envision a sustainable future for our industry.

What does the future hold? One thing we know for certain is that the next AIIP annual conference will be held on April 19–22, 2018. Is it on your 2018 schedule yet? Lynn Strand drops some hints about the program and introduces us to the host city, Minneapolis, MN.

Don’t miss the Coach’s Corner, where Mary Ellen Bates reviews that one essential activity for every infopreneur, no matter your style of business: communicating your value. Start now for a better future.

We open the December 2017 issue of AIIP Connections by remembering Barbara Quint, or bq to anyone who knew her or was influenced by her words. Marydee Ojala shares her experiences with bq and reminds us of the influence she had on the information industry.

Phyllis Smith
Editor, AIIP Connections
Halton Hills, Ontario, Canada
At times, it feels like I’m continually in a “doing” mode and rarely in a “planning” mode. I think a lot of us get that way. I have to persuade myself to stop and take a deep breath.

Now is also a good time to stop, breathe deeply, and take inventory of what AIIP has accomplished this past year. While we’re at it, let’s take a peek at where we’re heading. 2017 has had its twists and turns, but as I look back over the year there was great work done by and for our members. I’m so impressed with the things our volunteers made happen this year. Here are some highlights:

• Our members own very diverse information-centric businesses. In the past, we had some issues articulating that diversity. The “Who We Are” initiative gave us a framework to talk about the value of our association to our members and prospective members. Check out the practice areas in which our members do business.

• We are working to get the message out. AIIP members took the “Who We Are” message on the road and exhibited at five conferences this year, plus we had a presence at a couple more.

• We migrated our webinar video platform to Vimeo and now our members can enjoy gorgeous, high-quality playback on desktop, mobile, tablet, and TV.

• Our conference in New Orleans was motivating and inspiring. I got practical insights that I could take back and implement right away. Most of all, it was, as always, a great time to reconnect with friends, colleagues, and partners.

• We piloted a virtual event at the 2017 AIIP conference, and a team of volunteers is continuing to look into ways we can capitalize on our learning and carry it forward.

• Our membership services team reorganized our partner program to better represent how we interact and define our relationships. We also reconnected with and landed Dow Jones Factiva as a Silver Partner.

• Two of our members were highlighted at the ProQuest Dialog booth at SLA. It was great to see how representatives of ProQuest Dialog values their relationship with our association.

• Volunteers updated our website to a new responsive and mobile-friendly theme. The web team did a fabulous job evaluating and implementing the transition.

• We’re now publishing two posts per month to our blog and are working on an overall editorial calendar. If you haven’t done it yet, sign up to get those blog posts in your email so you don’t miss any valuable content right off the press. I invite you to write a blog post to share your knowledge, talent, and wisdom with the world.

• In 2017, the AIIP webinar team produced 14 webinars.

“So where do we go from here?” you might ask. Just for starters:

• A team of stalwart volunteers is working to document a forward-looking strategy for AIIP. I can’t wait to share those results with you.

• Conference planning for 2018 in Minneapolis is in full swing and I’m excited to see you all again between April 19-22. Lynn Strand introduces the conference and our host city in her article in this issue.

How have we accomplished so much over the course of the year? Volunteers make this association work. The most satisfying benefit of the association to me is becoming part of a team that works to the benefit of all members. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

I wish you peace, purpose, and prosperity in the new year.

Scott Attenborough
When Barbara Quint—or bq (never BQ)—passed away on October 4, 2017, the information world lost its most vocal critic and its most ardent supporter. I’ve known bq for almost all my professional life, even before AIIP existed. We traded industry gossip for years. We collaborated on projects as independent information professionals. She wrote articles for me when I edited ONLINE magazine and I wrote articles for her Searcher magazine. We shared the Footsore Searcher moniker when covering conference exhibit floors. Most recently, she and I worked together on Online Searcher magazine. She was very fond of pointing out to me that she had a book entirely devoted to her (The Quintessential Searcher: The Wit and Wisdom of Barbara Quint, edited by Marylaine Block, Medford NJ: Information Today, 2001) and I didn’t. Honestly, she deserved it.

She had a long history in libraries. After receiving her MLS in 1966, bq took a reference librarian position at The RAND Corporation. When information started to become available in electronic form in the early 1970s, bq was among the first to recognize how online would revolutionize reference librarianship. She quickly became a vocal proponent of the technology, not only within RAND but also in the wider community. Annoyed that vendors were not offering training sessions in Southern California, she invited area searchers to share their expertise. The resulting organization, the Southern California Online Users Group (SCOUG) formed in 1976.

Ten years later, Alan Meckler invited bq to edit a new magazine, Database Searcher. She left RAND to take on that task. She formed Quint & Associates soon after. Meckler shut down Database Searcher with the January 1993 issue (volume 9, number 1). Information Today, Inc. started Searcher: The Magazine for Database Professionals later that year, with bq as editor. It ran for 20 years before being merged with ONLINE to form Online Searcher. The common thread throughout all three magazines was bq’s insistence on the importance of information professionals and the need for quality information.

One of my early memories is the AIIP meeting in Denver in 1988. I’d flown in from Kansas; bq drove from Santa Monica. AIIP was very young at the time—that Denver meeting was our second conference—and it was held in a conference room of a downtown hotel. Both bq and I had recently left salaried employment to start our own businesses. We listened to Roger Summit’s inspirational talk, where he urged us to call ourselves consultants rather than freelance librarians, and sat through the tortuous process of approving bylaws for the fledgling association. At one point, bq turned to me and told me she’d decided we were going to have dinner at a restaurant she’d discovered. It had a Western theme, a great view of Denver, and served drinks in Mason jars. Typical bq! She was a force of nature who simply swept you along with her.

Her quest to keep our vendors honest manifested itself with her idea that AIIP create an Industry Relations Committee. It was at the 4th annual conference, in San Francisco, in 1990, that the Committee was formed, with bq at its helm. She enjoyed her role...
as “industry nag,” as she put it, both on behalf of AIIP and of searchers everywhere. As a visionary, she often saw things the rest of us didn’t. Paula Eiblum, an early AIIP member who owned a document delivery company, recalls bq talking about how large publishers dominate the industry but in the future authors would publish directly on the internet. That was in 1993 at the AIIP conference in San Diego, well before the ubiquity of the internet.

She often spoke at information industry conferences, notably those produced by Online, Inc. and by Information Today, Inc. Her “Breakfast with Barbara” early morning sessions at National Online Meetings in New York were memorable for her biting humor and her devotion in speaking truth to power. No one could turn a phrase like bq. Want to hear her? Check out the video of her 2002 Library of Congress lecture, “No Guts, No Glory: Information Professional March into 22nd Century”.

Tom Hogan, CEO of Information Today, Inc., calls her “the conscience of the industry.” Although she hadn’t been active in AIIP recently, her leadership was instrumental in how well our association was regarded in the information industry. Her generosity of spirit, her willingness to put herself out for her fellow information professionals, her ability to see far into the future, and her ingenious turn of phrase gained her the respect and, at times, adulation of her peers—while striking fear into the hearts of those with whom she took issue.

For me, bq was a friend, a collaborator on business projects, and a fellow “grammar nazi.” She was a pillar of AIIP, an influential voice for the online searcher, and absolutely without equal.

She once said she wanted a phrase that Alan Meckler said to her on her tombstone: Breezy but Profound.

So, from me, with great sadness and a bit of tearing up (which she would have hated), to you, bq, here you go: Breezy but Profound.

Marydee Ojala,
Editor-in-Chief, Online Searcher

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Spotlight on Supporting Members

June Boyle, Marcy Phelps, Ulla de Stricker

by Jan Knight, AIIP Director, Member Services

In this spotlight, we offer our special thanks to three AIIP members who have gone the extra mile to become Supporting Members.

Even if you’re not familiar with this category of membership, you’re likely familiar with the names. All three of these colleagues have been incredibly engaged in our membership for many years, serving on the AIIP Board, chairing committees, presenting at our conferences, and being great ambassadors for our association.

They chose to be Supporting Members and we invite you to explore the category for yourself. Review the Supporting Member benefits on our Join page and look over the specific benefits of being a Supporting Member.

Reach out to thank these wonderful supporters of our AIIP membership.

June Boyle, CeRCo Research & Consulting

June helps business leaders, and the consultants who advise them, get access to pertinent information to aid in critical decision making.

Marcy Phelps, Phelps Research

Marcy recently successfully pivoted in her business and now offers “corporate investigations for informed decisions.”

Ulla de Stricker, deStricker Associates

Ulla’s decades of experience in the information industry enable her to offer strategic planning in information and knowledge management.
The ILI is an interesting international event for librarians and information professionals, with speakers and delegates from all over the world. With more than 300 participants from 26 countries and some 60 lectures and case studies on current developments, it was again a stimulating conference with food for thought and one of the rare opportunities in Europe to meet other AlIPers.

**Innovative libraries and library services**

Kate Torney, CEO of the State Library of Victoria, Australia, was the keynote speaker, with “Making a Noise About a Quiet Revolution.” She presented her library, a beautiful, just renovated Victorian building dating back to 1854, and her concepts. For example, she discussed the library’s focus on outstanding design, private funding, marketing and PR, special services for individual user groups like children or entrepreneurs, and more. For inspiring examples of how inviting, beautiful, and lively a museum library can be, see State Library Victoria, a series of YouTube videos.

Many of the case studies showed how modern libraries not only survive, but also work successfully. Representatives from British, Swedish, and American libraries described the makeover of their buildings, how ideas and experiences of users had been included in the concepts, the hurdles during execution, and finally the approval of their customers. Before-and-after photos illustrated the improvements. The Danish Allerød and the British De Montfort University library are always open, 24/7. After the challenges of the transition phase and staffing, nighttime self-service hours, early morning cleaning, and “noticing the small stuff” helped make the always-open library an asset.

**Advertising, advertising, advertising**

One of the key takeaways of this conference for me was that librarians and information professionals need to be proactive and market their services—and that they do. A paradigm shift. Two tracks dealt with marketing and PR: “Content Creativity” and “Marketing the Library.” One of the PR tools used by libraries, companies, and professionals is content curation—gathering information relevant to a particular topic, editing it, and publishing it. Deborah Kyburz, ETH Library, Switzerland, presented ETH’s multimedia storytelling and content-marketing platform Explora, launched two years ago to attract new user groups, and she addressed the whys, hows, and lessons learned. Andy Tattersall, University of Sheffield, Great Britain, presented his app hacks, discussed how he curates educational apps, and gave hands-on tips on how to create similar short videos yourself. Phil Bradley, Internet Consultant and ILI co-chair, Great Britain, as well as Arthur Weiss, Market Intelligence Consultant, Great Britain, shared curation tools, including Scoop.it, Nuzzel, Paper.li, Pearltrees, and Storify.com.

It was exciting to hear that a university library in Ireland and the Library Association of Ireland’s “Librarians Aloud” initiative broadcast a radio music show and podcasts reporting on the latest news from the libraries.

**Search and more...**

As part of the search track, Marydee Ojala, editor-in-chief of *Online Searcher* and ILI co-chair, reminded us of professional search techniques. A panel discussion chaired by Terence Huwe, United States, addressed the post-fact information landscape and how internet librarians can deal with it. Ingeborg Hjorten, a researcher at the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, reported on her work at Faktisk, the joint fact-check initiative of several media during this year’s election campaign in Norway.

The last focus area I will cover concerns “New Scholarly Communications,” with lectures on the changing role of librarians, how modern research cycles can be supported, new university presses, reference management software, and more.

Birgit Bauer is the owner of Bauer Business Research. She is a veteran Information Professional in Austria and a long-standing member of AlIP.
The joys of telework are too numerous to count. The treasures they provide constitute a happiness dividend that in my view is nearly irreplaceable. Working from home conveys a freedom that in part, I bet, is why so many of us got into the independent info pro business in the first place. And rightfully so. I’m never more productive than when I’m on my laptop, at my kitchen table, with the hum of the dishwasher behind me. Bliss.

Yet, for all its attendant delights, dangers lurk in telework. Any work-from-home manual will list the familiar warnings: avoid needless distraction, mark your space, lock the office door when you’re Skyping with the BBC. We all know telework’s cardinal rules—don’t forget to eat, sleep, shower—but chances are, like me, you’re ignoring some of the fundamental ones. Not out of ignorance or malice, but mostly because we can.

Without the systems and rules of office life, it’s easy to let some guidelines—truly designed to protect our sanity—slide. It’s kind of like, when no one’s looking, you indulge in that fast-food lunch or skip the gym (just today) because it’s cold and rainy outside.

We all know what’s good for us when teleworking. But it’s the little rules we break over time that can accumulate and threaten our mojo. As with any indulgence, a cheat from time to time is fine and probably healthy for us, too. But if they’re committed every day, we’re looking at real trouble.

What follows is a list of the ten rules of telework we may be breaking. Like any spring cleaning project, it’s a good idea to pause occasionally to inspect and scrub your telework habits. The results breathe new life into your process and make sure that your most important business asset—you—is purring happily like a new dishwasher.

**Just one more thing.** Quitting time hits and you say, oh, just one more thing, then I’ll pack up. One thing becomes two, two becomes three, and before you realize it, it’s past nine in the evening. “Just one
more thing” is a lie. It’s never just one thing. It’s a time-suck and can steal your nights and weekends. Overachievers, stand down. The work will be there in the morning. Go have dinner with your husband. Take the dog for a walk. Get to yoga class on time. One more thing can wait until tomorrow.

Embrace your block.
We all know that terrible, sinking feeling in your gut when staring at a blank word processing page, cursor blinking impatiently, not an idea within reach. We organize the knick-knack drawer, reorder some papers, bang out a few more administrative emails. Stop feeling guilty. Your block is real. Embrace it. The ideas aren’t coming because they’re not ready to manifest. Go back to your brainstorm notepad, take a walk, sleep on it. Let your internal idea oven bake some more. Stop judging yourself as a hopeless, telecommuting procrastinator or a lazy, home-office ditherer. Great ideas don’t always come between 9 to 5 while you’re at your laptop. Be patient with yourself. Sometimes you just need to wait.

Stand up.
They say sitting is the new smoking. Perhaps not, but you’re probably sitting way too much. Countless studies argue the benefits of standing more: weight loss, better cardiovascular health, more calories burned. Do yourself a favor and create a standing workstation—a kitchen bar, the top of an office bookshelf, even a stack of sturdy boxes. Standing up gets the blood flowing, keeps you moving and encourages more frequent breaks throughout the day. Millions of years of evolution didn’t lead your body to the desk chair, however ergonomically-crafted. Biology mandates you are a bipedal creature. Please, give your vertebrae a break and stand up.

Sometimes, it pays to show up in person.
An important rule of telework is knowing when not to telework. Sometimes, it pays to show up in person. Of course, events will determine, but if a client is having an all-hands-on-deck team meeting and you’re invited, it’s a good idea to participate. If a favorite or all-important client is hosting a charity event or a fundraiser, a show of support goes a long way. If one of your internal champions is winning an award, then showing up at the ceremony to offer congratulations is a nice touch. Naturally, there’s no need to overdo this, but a well-timed face-to-face can juice an already thriving relationship.

Break up with your smartphone.
Somebody once asked me if my apartment were on fire, what one thing would I take with me? I didn’t hesitate a millisecond: my iPhone of course! I bet most readers of this article don’t go anywhere without their smartphones. We’re chained to them and their tiny screens. Why? We can’t miss that client email or phone call. We’re waiting on word from a pitch. A client may need us! How often have you tried to type a treatise-length email on your phone, tormented by ridiculous auto-corrects and typos galore? Trust me, your email reads as if written by a drunken serial killer. If you sleep with your smartphone next to your bed, it’s time to break the chains. You need to get up right now and bury it in the farthest corner of your house. Right now.

Figure out how to take notes in your idea place.
We all have a special place where ideas just come to us. For some, it’s on the treadmill at the gym. For others, it’s driving in the car. For me, it’s in the shower. Whatever magic your idea machine enables, learn how to capture it. For me, it’s a small waterproof whiteboard that hangs next to my shaving gear. If you’re in the car, maybe it’s a voice-activated dictation tool. If you’re exercising, maybe you pause for a second and drop a note in your gym bag. Don’t let those delicious ideas created in your daydreaming place float away into the mist. Get ‘em down somehow.

Know when to pick up the phone.
We all have clients who just get us. They know (and appreciate) our sense of humor, our communication style, our enviable wit. They laugh at our every email joke and love our sassy texts. Now pretend those clients don’t exist (they don’t). It’s exceedingly difficult to pull off humor in a business email. Tone and context almost never translate in business writing. Best not to try. Save your comedic material for real-world interactions when you have other tools at your disposal: facial expressions, gesture, sound, etc. Especially if you’re working with new clients, pick up the phone and initiate a conversation. Let them hear your voice, measure your style, assess your cadence. You may have gone home office to avoid water-cooler chit-chat, but knowing when to pick up the phone is a critical skill for any teleworker.

Find a high-low friend.
Every job has its highs and lows. Somedays, we’re on top of the world and can conquer anything. Others, we feel as if we’re one contract away from homelessness and starvation. Home-based solos may turn to family and personal friends for comfort as we manage the roller coaster of indie life. But it helps to find a professional friend or high-low buddy. That is, when you’re having a rotten day and want to throw in the towel, you call your bud and let them talk you off the ledge and vice versa. Or, if you just nailed a project and want to share the joy, call your buddy and revel in the ecstasy. Without office-mates, it’s easy to turn to your partner, your sister, your next-door neighbor as your sounding board. That’s great. They want to listen. But finding a high-low friend—deep in the trenches with us—is transformative. The healing power in ringing up your high-low bud and asking, “Do you mind if I vent for a minute?” is nearly limitless.
Treat yourself.
Offices have Hawaiian shirt days, Cinco de Mayo parties, birthday cake in the breakroom (!) and half-day summer Fridays because employers know sometimes you just need to treat yourself. Teleworkers need treats, too. First day of spring? Lunch outside. Closed a huge deal? Celebrate over a fancy dinner. Completed a huge deliverable? Knock off a bit early. Just because you’re riding solo doesn’t mean you don’t deserve a treat from time to time. Enjoy! You’ve earned it.

Express gratitude every day.
The happiness dividend associated with telework means different things to different people: no rush hour, meeting the kids after school, avoiding office politics, working in your bunny slippers, flexibility, freedom and more. The biggest mistake I make when contemplating these items is not expressing enough gratitude every day that I get to count these joys among the universe’s gifts to me. No matter the home-office frustration—your laptop crashes, the Internet goes down, it’s quarterly tax time—those of us fortunate enough to work from home have truly hit the job lottery. To whomever is pulling the levers above, I thank you!

Dan Odenwald is founder and principal research consultant at Capstone Information Services & Consulting in Washington, D.C. Contact him at dan.odenwald@capstoneinformation.com.

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Thriving in the new normal: 
The AIIP 2018 annual conference in Minneapolis, MN

by Lynn Strand, Chair AIIP Conference 2018

AIIP’s Annual Conference is always a highlight of the year. Every time I have attended, I’ve returned home energized and excited about my business. There are always new tips, tricks, or ideas to try out. Networking and hanging out with old friends—and meeting new colleagues and friends—is really the foundation of this annual gathering.

The 2018 conference theme, Thriving in the New Normal, comes from a term coined following the financial crisis and the 2007-2012 global recession. This concept is also used to describe changes and disruptions, as well as shifts to new thinking, working, and technology. As entrepreneurs, we offer our clients speed, flexibility, innovation, creativity, and access to difficult-to-find technical and functional expertise. AIIP members have a unique opportunity to thrive in the New Normal.

Our conference will help us look into the future by offering sessions that can stimulate ideas for the growth of our businesses during the significant changes in political, social, and economic spheres that seem to be occurring on a daily basis. We are also looking forward to sessions that will help us become more efficient, more focused and ultimately thrive as independent information professionals and entrepreneurs.

Keynote Speaker
Our keynote speaker, Mary Meehan, is a well-known serial entrepreneur with a column in Forbes magazine. Mary is an engaging speaker with deep expertise in cultural and business trends. Her insights on consumers, brands and business will be an excellent kick-off to our conference. Our keynote session will also include a dynamic Q&A conversation. We are excited to have Mary with us!

Location
Minneapolis is a wonderful city and has so much to offer. Minneapolis is a hotbed for start-ups, big businesses, venture capitalists and non-profits. The Greater Minneapolis area has 18 Fortune 500 companies. Our hotel, The Millennium, is situated at the end of Nicollet Mall, which runs the length of downtown and has recently undergone a lengthy refurbishment. If time allows we may have a walking field trip to view the iconic Mary Tyler Moore statue, just a few blocks away.

Minneapolis has a thriving arts and culture community with museums, theaters and galleries in literally every neighbor-
Walker Art Museum: The Walker Art Center is a catalyst for the creative expression of artists and the active engagement of audiences. Focusing on the visual, performing, and media arts of our time, the Walker takes a global, multidisciplinary, and diverse approach to the creation, presentation, interpretation, collection, and preservation of art. Walker programs examine the questions that shape and inspire us as individuals, cultures, and communities. The museum also includes a gorgeous outdoor sculpture garden that is just a 20-minute walk or a 5-minute ride away. It’s famous for this Cherry Spoon sculpture, and recently a giant blue rooster has joined the collection.

Dining Options
Within a few blocks of our hotel, dining choices abound. There’s a British Pub; an Irish Pub; an elegant steakhouse; a Mediterranean café; authentic Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai; a Jamaican kitchen; crafted cocktails; Mexican food; and coal fired pizza…just to name a few. Watch for more information on Dine-arounds to come.

And finally, there’s always a weather concern when traveling for our spring conference. But not to worry. According to WeatherSpark, Minneapolis is very pleasant in April, with average highs in the mid-50’s.

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hood. Some of the arts locations near to our conference hotel include:

• The Guthrie Theater: The Guthrie Theater was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature, developing the work of contemporary playwrights and cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under the artistic leadership of Joseph Haj, the Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages, and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance.

• Mill City Museum: Originally designed by Austrian engineer William de la Barre and declared the world’s largest flour mill after its completion in 1880, the structure housing Mill City Museum is a National Historic Landmark. Known as the Washburn A Mill, it was nearly destroyed by fire in 1991. After the City of Minneapolis, working through the Minneapolis Community Development Agency, cleaned up the rubble and fortified the mill’s charred walls, the Minnesota Historical Society announced plans to construct a milling museum and education center within the ruins.

• Minneapolis Institute of Art: MIA inspires wonder with extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest, wide-ranging art collections in the country. From Monet to Matisse, Asian to African, 40,000-year-old artifacts to world-famous masterpieces, MIA links the past to the present and enables global conversations.

Need Primary Research?
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Envisioning the information profession’s future: It’s not so easy
by Barbara van Veen, Contexts

All of a sudden, students and entrepreneurs create algorithms to do jobs that used to require years of study. Take the legal profession: DoNotPay helps thousands of Americans to defeat their parking tickets. Robot Lawyer LISA helps you to create binding documents with other parties. VisiRule automates frequently asked questions. And finally, Ravel Law is working hard to provide open access to American case law, so that lawyers can make data-driven decisions about years of jurisprudence. It makes me wonder: if it can happen to the legal profession, what about the information profession? Is our industry also on the brink of algorithmic takeover? Do we have a fighting chance of maintaining meaningful work? Read on and decide for yourself.

Electronic data is growing exponentially, and even though data mining technologies are also proliferating and maturing, experts still expect that in 2025 only 5% of all data will be analyzed.1 Our information flows are rapidly becoming more complex and moving quickly under the influence of the Internet of Things, snowballing Internet penetration in the world, advances in Internet speed, and learning skills of search and analysis algorithms. We can point out these trends, but how they may impact our work is a different kettle of fish. It is hard to envision a future without information search and knowledge absorption as we know it, but that doesn’t mean that such a future is impossible. A sad reminder of that truth is the composition of the Fortune 500. During the last 15 years, more than half of the listed companies have disappeared from the Fortune 500 as a consequence of the effects of digitization and the problems their CEO’s had with foresight.

It is hard to envision the future because it is built with data from our memories. Simply put, we can make new combinations from memory fragments, but we can’t create original thoughts. For that, we have to make new memories by learning and experiencing new and unfamiliar things. The examples in this article are meant to help you create the fresh associations you need.

Envisioning is also hard because our brains are always simplifying. We can’t deliberately process all data for all decisions because we lack time, information, and brain capacity to do so. We use rules of thumb based on experience with similar situations. In most cases that suffices, but historical data don’t help us to foresee trend breaches or entirely new phenomena.

Even experts in their field make incorrect predictions, precisely because of the tunnel vision of their extensive experience. For instance, one of the founders of YouTube could not image the growth we now know that the company would experience. When asked about his company’s long-term viability Steven Chen said, “There’s just not that many videos I want to watch.” Just as painful was the reception of the iPhone by its competitor Microsoft. CEO Steve Balmer said, “There’s no chance that the iPhone is going to get any significant market share. No chance.” Yet it’s Microsoft’s smartphone platform that is nearing zero market share.

Chen and Ballmer fell into the same trap as Nassim Taleb’s Thanksgiving turkey. In his book The Black Swan, Taleb portrays a turkey who feels that the farmer must love him more and more because of the increasing quantity of feed he’s getting each day. It was a trend that was reconfirmed for weeks, until it abruptly stopped on Thanksgiving eve.

Yes, it is hard to envision the future, but now that we know our limitations and biases we can do something about it. We can create new memories by searching for unfamiliar events and trends that do not fit our mental
frames. We can look out for the early symptoms of change in meta-trends and recent innovations or emerging technologies. We can see the contours of possible transformations if we know where to look and how to extrapolate from our findings. Let’s take a look right now.

Robotic automation, although a relatively small industry now, may lead to the development of new information capabilities, may have significant systemic and long-lasting impacts, and may create new opportunities for, and challenges to, addressing issues that previously needed information professionals to analyze and uncover. And it’s not just robotic automation. Don’t forget there are a growing number of emerging technologies out there that are likely to mesh and subsequently accumulate impact.

I’m thinking of developments in mixed realities, such as virtual and augmented reality applications. The sensory Internet will allow us to transmit how things feel, taste, and smell, and to express ourselves using these senses. In development are brainwave technologies that can assess when our brains are fit to work and when someone or something needs to take over, and software that can interpret brain activity and guess, rather closely, what visual information we’re processing. Granted, these technologies are in their infancy, but they are rapidly evolving due to the international scholarly contacts enabled by the Internet.

We have to realize that emerging technologies such as robotic automation and artificial intelligence will also lead to new tasks and jobs that we can’t envision right now. There was a day, not so long ago, when the Internet wasn’t born yet, and microfiche and printed directories ruled. We couldn’t envision researching without them, let alone doing it anywhere and anytime we like, and then designing and producing reports like a publisher at the same time.

Today, we can’t foresee new levels of information search and analysis, but we can borrow from the legal field to make a start. IBM’s Watson, the machine that won Jeopardy by a landslide, is used by start-up ROSS Intelligence to help lawyers work through much more data more quickly to connect many more dots than used to be possible. A lawyer can ask ROSS questions using normal language. It then collects and analyzes a wide variety of data to get the lawyer up to speed on the specifics of her case. ROSS doesn’t replace the lawyer, but elevates her decision quality significantly. Perhaps we will have a ROSS of our own and move beyond the current scope of our work. With new technology, we might be able to improve global challenges significantly or set whole new goals for the quality of life for the billions of people on our planet.

Let’s expand the debate on the future of information with new arguments and insights to help all of us create a sustainable profession that will continue to be meaningful and rewarding. Let’s not be overwhelmed by accelerating change, but actively shape our future together. Let’s use our minds and skills to find new purpose and to innovate our way out of the algorithmic trap.

Let’s start by incorporating emerging trends and technologies into our research and familiarize ourselves—and our clients—with tantalizing new opportunities that arise from future-oriented analysis. That way, we will satisfy our curious minds with exciting information and have a fighting chance of remaining relevant into the future.

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Let’s get one thing straight right from the beginning. I did everything wrong in becoming a research consultant, which I’ve been for over 13 years. I didn’t market correctly. I put all my eggs in one corporate basket. And, I didn’t know the meaning of consultant. But, I survived and even thrived. And you might, too.

In 1999, I was in the C-suite for a nonprofit that brought together government projects and private investors to create public/private partnerships in the social sector. A colleague of mine who was working for a large philanthropy in Baltimore, Maryland, asked if he could have three months of my time to help launch a new technical assistance project. The timeline kept moving and more work kept coming my way. I realized that all my time was focused on foundation projects. Five years later I started my own business with one client. In actuality, what I had become was an outside freelancer. I did whatever they asked for whatever they would pay. I turned in my hourly invoices and waited for them to throw me more work. While I was supposed to be looking for other clients, I spent my time dogging the philanthropy’s staff. Finally, a seasoned consultant took me aside and taught me how this game is played.

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The advice? I needed to start acting like a consultant, establish a respectable daily rate, and ask for a set contract, a memorandum of understanding, or a letter of agreement (LOA). Instead of waiting for them to ask if I could do something, I needed to show them my expertise and present plans that would help move their work forward. And, I needed to leverage these actions to market myself to other foundations.

It was good advice. However, the main thing I had to do was up my confidence and really understand what I had to offer. My future depended on me realizing that I could play with the big boys and hold my own with players like PolicyLink, Mathematica Policy Research, Fenton, and McKinsey. Once I felt like I belonged in this field, the work flowed naturally.

On paper it looks like I had the one foundation as one client for over 13 years. In reality, I had one corporate-sized organization with many different grant-making divisions, administrative departments, and pots of money. Most new projects for me took a separate contract with oversight from a different director. I got to know the staff in different departments and learned who was in charge of what. I shifted to a daily rate and changed to the foundation’s annual LOAs instead of per project contracts, and I submitted monthly invoices against the LOA.

Over the years, I worked with long-term grant initiatives and individual grantees; the communications department and administration; external affairs; community change; and knowledge management. As everyone does when you own your own small business, I made sure that I not only presented a quality product, but that I enjoyed each assignment and established trust among the people with whom I work.
worked. I probably sold my soul a bit to be at their beck and call—especially traveling back east so much—but it was an easy attachment, as I believe in the foundation’s philosophy and its stand for social justice. The work was interesting and I had intelligent and energetic contacts. I had the best of both worlds—a great home consultancy and a great client.

The only glitch in my one-organization business model came in 2008, with the Bernie Madoff scandal more than the housing market crash. Many philanthropies and nonprofits that invested with Madoff and partners were hit hard and several smaller ones lost everything. As with every other business entity at the time, the philanthropy reined in the troops and its project portfolios until the dust settled and the fallout was somewhat known. It dawned on me that I should have been marketing myself on more levels, not just in one sector to one institution.

Another revelation was that, even though I could define and present and strategize for others, I had no idea how to market myself on paper. I did the only thing I knew how to do, I started networking and volunteering and presenting, and found AIIP members-extraordinaire Amelia Kassel and Mary Ellen Bates for coaching.

After their excellent mentoring, I went hunting for different work with middling results and found out I really am not good at small projects. In fact, I suck at them. I am good at leadership, strategy, and planning, and at management and long-term development, not at the in-depth, turnaround research results which can be the bread and butter of most research businesses.

Nonetheless, through thick and thin I learned that people worked with me because they liked me, not my skill set. More than once I was put on a project because of my attitude and my energy, not because of my innate ability. Don’t get me wrong, I was good, but I might not have known all that I should have. That may not be the best endorsement, but it kept the paychecks rolling in.

And through it all, I survived as a consultant—a role I still love to this day.

Marilyn Harmacek is an information strategist with a background in advertising, marketing and strategic communications. Marilyn established MHConsulting, Inc. MHC Info Solutions in 2004 as a communications consulting firm focused on online research, strategy and management. She recently added professional business intuitive to her list of talents. Contact her at Marilyn@MHCinfosolutions.com.
If you’ve been around AIIP for any length of time, you’ll know that our members are diverse. We come from different areas of the world and from different cultures and religions. We bring different educational backgrounds, political affiliations, domain expertise and varying years of experience to the table.

Just as our membership continues to be diverse, so do the reasons for becoming independent in the first place. And the reasons for some people to work less than full time in their independent business are also varied. Being a part-time, independent infopreneur isn’t usually discussed much within our group, but AIIP does not discriminate against those who choose to work that way.

So, why might we not talk about it? In my own humble opinion, I think that some people may fear they’ll be treated as second-class citizens if they admit to working less than full time in their independent businesses. They may fear being seen as not serious about their venture. They may feel their input will not be viewed as pertinent to all members. Some may feel they just don’t look like those other driven and successful members they see running committees, on the board, or giving presentations at conferences.

I believe the reasons for going part time are just as diverse as the reasons for going independent. Some are testing the waters while keeping their full-time job to see if they even want to make this brave jump. Some need to keep their part-time job for financial or insurance reasons. Others have personal reasons or have health issues that don’t allow them to put in as many hours as they might prefer.

Hi, I’m Jan and I was a part timer for ten years!

I was always willing to ‘fess up to the part-time nature of my business. Looking back, I’m not sure if it was just my naivety, thinking it didn’t matter, or just my propensity to be honest. Either way I would stand up at the introductions at AIIP conferences and tell everyone about my business AND my part-time position at a university. I’d often talk with other AIIP members about the two hats I wore if they were curious and asked about it.

I will admit though, when I was marketing myself or just talking about my business, I did not bring up that fact—nor did I ever see any reason to. Here’s how I made it work for ten years before I went full time in 2011:

• I made sure I never took client calls at my campus desk. Legally and ethically, that’s just not good. I’d find myself a quiet corner on stairwells or in lobbies of buildings around campus (or even in parking lots) when I needed to make a call. Sometimes I could be seen balancing my notebook on a garbage can in the only quiet place I could reach in time to make a call.

• In the local community, I was typically known for my business, except among my campus colleagues. Many knew, though, that I had “another gig” I loved and many were jealous.
• My LinkedIn profile highlighted my information business. This seemed fine to me. I didn’t need to market my university position. I wasn’t looking for a job of that type. And I did prefer that potential clients had a clear picture of me and my offerings.

• Managing client expectations is really no different for a part-timer as we all have other clients and projects we must balance. I tried to be as responsive to colleagues, clients, and potential clients as I would have been if I’d been sitting at a desk in my home office. I responded to voice mail as quickly as I could, suggesting a time to talk for a more in-depth conversation that just happened to coincide with my home office hours.

• My cell phone was my business phone and I used that most of the time when away from my desk.

• My wardrobe was sometimes a bit of a saga. Anybody who has trekked around a university campus knows you rarely need to dress up and heels are just not practical. If I had a business lunch, I’d keep a jacket and dress shoes in the car. I did get to be known by others in my building as “the woman who dressed nicely.”

• My ability to be somewhat flexible in my part-time job was crucial. The fact that I could take breaks when I wanted, take longer lunches, or come in late after a client meeting was essential to making this work. But it was still work! I worked both late and from home when necessary.

• Most important to me, I always thought of my own business as my “real job.” The other 20 hours a week, however flexible they were, was time I spent at a job I did well and honored—but just didn’t talk about much. My attitude toward my business was much more important than the number of hours I worked or when those hours were worked.

I’ll be the first to admit that things can get crazy wearing two different work hats. Only once did I make the error of introducing myself in a university campus meeting as Jan Knight, the owner of Bancroft Information Services.

So, if you’re a part-timer through choice or by necessity, be proud. AIIP is a diverse organization and there’s room for you too.

Jan Knight is President of Bancroft Information Services based in Tucson, Arizona. Jan likes to say she provides insight to entrepreneurs from start-ups to grown-ups. Much of her work helps to shape business plans, marketing strategies, business development, commercialization plans and funding requests.
Malcolm Gladwell, author of *Outliers: The Story of Success*, advocated the principle that it takes 10,000 hours of what he called “deliberate practice” to become an expert in your field, whether it’s programming, performing music, or playing basketball. Subsequent studies have called his premise into question and, in any event, not all of us aspire to become the next Bill Gates, Yo-Yo Ma, or Michael Jordan of our field.

However, I believe that a version of this metric applies to infopreneurs, both those just starting their business and those who are pivoting to a new market or providing a new service. In a high-end service business like ours, it takes time to build name recognition and a strong reputation—the two things that most clients consider key in engaging a consultant. Our word-of-mouth referral networks require hours of work on our part. We have to identify our clients (those who need, value, and can hire us), establish our credibility with that market, create familiarity with our services and who we are, and stay consistently in front of our market with valuable content.

**400 Hours**

Based on hundreds of conversations I’ve had with fellow infopreneurs, I believe that it takes 400 hours of work to get a business to its first paying client or its first client in a new field. The thought of spending 400 solid hours on marketing (or anything, for that matter) sounds daunting, doesn’t it? It did to me at first, until I calculated how long it has taken me whenever I have shifted my business focus and realized that this is about how much time it takes. When I started my business, I logged 15 to 20 hours a week in various initiatives to raise my profile. I talked with my prospective market, started writing articles, got active in the local chapter of my clients’ association, volunteered for AIIP..., I even tried a couple of direct mail campaigns. After three months of solid effort, I sat back, looked at what had gotten me any tangible results and what seemed fruitless, and redoubled my efforts for another three months, concentrating on the activities that looked most promising. And after six months, or about 400 hours of strategic marketing, I had two paying clients and could see the momentum building.

Over the years, I have pivoted my business several times in response to the evolving market and expectations of my client as well as my own changing interests. Each time, it has taken about six months of 15 or 20 hours of marketing a week, with frequent checks along the way to ensure my efforts are making tangible progress, to get my first client in a new field.

**Mile Markers**

One of the challenges info pros face is knowing when to say when. For many
of our projects, it would be possible for us to spend an almost limitless amount of time, trying to get the very best result for our client. Profitability means being able to stop frequently, evaluate our progress, and decide how to best spend our time to get the most cost-effective outcome. Similarly, knowing that we do not have an endless supply of non-revenue-producing hours for marketing, we have to set clear mile markers along the way to our first (or newest) client. Here are the expectations I have for my 400 hours as I ramp up in a new direction.

100 hours
These are your foundational hours—conducting your primary research in the form of informational interviews, honing your value proposition and testing it out on people in your market, then developing your online and social media presences. By the time you have invested 100 hours, you should know who your clients are, what their biggest concerns are (in their words, not yours), and why they want to pay you well for your services—and you can articulate that in one sentence.

200 hours
By now, you have reached out in strategic efforts to show your value to your market. You have identified your measurable goals for social media—number of new followers, retweets/shares, inquiries, downloads of a white paper, or whatever is most meaningful for you. At this point, your word of mouth network is starting and you have been mentioned by others in a context that highlights your value to clients. People are beginning to notice who you are and what you in particular bring to a problem.

300 hours
After 300 hours, you are seeing tangible results of your marketing efforts. Some of these efforts haven’t worked out; based on your metrics, you have undoubtedly decided that certain approaches are not an effective way to reach your market. You have pivoted your marketing strategy and focused on the methods that you have found to be productive for your client base. You have had numerous conversations with prospective clients; you understand how they frame their biggest issues and what your most strategic value is for your clients. You have had at least a few project inquiries.

400 hours
At this point, you have at least one client who has paid you for your services. (And by “client” I’m not talking about someone who had a great conversation with, who said they will definitely use you as soon as the need arises. I mean someone who has engaged you on a project and paid your invoice at the end of the project.) You also are seeing a steady increase in engagement with your marketing efforts: your newsletter subscriber list continues to grow, your social media posts are regularly shared with others, or your webinars are attended by people who represent your market. You feel confident that you understand your most strategic value to your clients and you know how to describe your value so others can refer business to you.

400+ hours
Of course, after your 400 hours of concentrated effort, you still need to continue your marketing, but at this point you will know that you are effectively communicating your value to the people most likely to engage you. If you are still working on getting that first paying client after 400 hours, it’s probably time for some more informational interviews. You can watch a recording of a first-year members’ meeting on the art of the informational interview. And if you need some additional encouragement as you are creating or re-creating your business, check out the resources from Jenny Blake, 2017 AIIP Conference keynoter and author of Pivot: The Only Move That Matters Is Your Next One.

Mary Ellen Bates has been an infopreneur since 1991. In addition to strategic business research and analysis, she offers insightful coaching to new and long-time solopreneurs. See more at Reluctant-Entrepreneur.com, call her at +1 303 772 7095, or email her at mbates@batesinfo.com.