

InfoTech Column
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Innovation at SLA

*My column this month is co-authored with SLA staff, Quan Logan (IT Director) and Nancy Sansalone (CFO/COO). Our SLA Staff have done a tremendous job in getting us prepared for some major SLA innovation in 2008. Starting with the implementation of a new AMS (Association Management System) and evolving through to a request for what started as a technology experience sandbox and has emerged as a major initiative of my presidential year. So, just in time for SLA's Annual Leadership Summit . . . Introducing ; . . . **drumroll** . . .*

The SLA Innovation Lab 2008

The Innovation Laboratory is an SLA member value initiative. It is designed to provide a safe sandbox for members to play and discover uses for the latest emerging technologies in their own context. It also provides tools to SLA units (chapters, divisions, committees, caucuses, task forces, etc.) to build and implement useful services and tools for their members. This new and innovative initiative adds deep value to acquiring and retaining the global SLA membership.

SLA has a long tradition in successful education initiatives. Educational initiatives are offered in many ways at SLA but this differs from continuous learning in that learning does not necessarily require a course or conference or event. It can be something members do for themselves, independently or in small groups. By offering a laboratory (or colloquially in the HR training world, a so-called "sandbox") for members to discover, play and learn, we have the framework for 24/7 independent learning opportunities. This is an expansion of SLA's learning strategies, like Click U, for those who choose to invest the time and have fun learning. Professionals invest in their own future success in many ways.

SLA is committed to its members' needs and these are increasingly represented in offering useful technological training and self-learning activities. The Innovation Lab will be populated with SLA-licensed software and Open Source applications. Tools offered will be edited and added to as member needs are identified and SLA budgets allow. Throughout 2008 both free and fee SLA Click University courses will be offered to members. These could include such topics as:

- how to set up and use a wiki
- how to set up and use a blog
- using Adobe for client communication
- understanding social networking

- doing podcasts
- etc.

The plan is to encourage members to visit SLA's Innovation Lab and to experiment with the new technologies to allow members to educate themselves about innovative technologies and then to share their learning in the traditional, collegial and wonderful fashion that SLA is known for.

Another part of the Innovation Lab is that members will share their creations as appropriate. This will allow the development of a virtual library of members' innovations and creations for other members to learn from, network, and share. This will be done, innovatively, using an SLA Innovation Wiki for members to provide feedback on each technology section of the Innovation Lab and to point to their own work. I expect SLA techno-stars to emerge (grin).

The SLA Innovation Lab takes SLA to the next plateau in becoming a virtual association. It adds to the value proposition of SLA membership (of course, you have to be a member to participate) and it creates an exciting opportunity for members and units to create programming that rises above and adds to the other successful face-to-face, temporal and synchronous methods already employed by SLA.

SLA President Stephen Abram will be appointing a few small groups of members to lead, facilitate and energize this initiative. There is still time to volunteer by using the volunteer form on the SLA website [Link here: <http://www.sla.org/content/community/committe/volunteer.cfm>]. Over 2008 we will have short learning opportunities and projects based in these tools to discover the strategies, tactics and the power of information technology and Web 2.0 tools to address the needs of our association, our profession and our enterprises.

Here is a list of what may be appearing on the SLA website (behind your member login!) during 2008. These are your staff efforts, Board and your member dollars working for you. It's now up to you to take advantage of them. We're here to help.

SLA Application Suite

Note: SLA can host applications for any SLA member initiative. This includes websites, wikis, blogs, discussion lists, social networks, communities of practice, and more.

Adobe Creative Suite – Master Collection (Licensed):

- Adobe InDesign
- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe Illustrator

- Adobe Acrobat 8 Professional
- Adobe Flash Professional
- Adobe Fireworks
- Adobe Contribute
- Adobe After Effects Professional
- Adobe Premier
- Adobe Soundbooth
- Adobe Encore
- Adobe OnLocation and Ultra

- Iron Speed Designer (RAD Tool)
- Cold Fusion 8 (Application Server)
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005 (Database)
- IIS 6 or 7 (Server)

Analytical Software:

- AWStats (Web Statistics) (Licensed)
- Google Analytics (Web Statistics)

Blogs

- WordPress
- TypePad (Licensed)
- webNetwork by Web Scribble (Licensed)

Wikis

- MediaWiki
- PBwiki
- Confluence (Licensed)

Discussion Lists

- Lyris (Licensed)

Social Networking

- SLA Community of Practice Software (Licensed)
- webNetwork by Web Scribble (Licensed)
- Facebook
- Myspace
- LinkedIn

Virtual Worlds

- Second Life

Multimedia and Podcasts

- YouTube
- ODEO (podcasts)

- Flickr

Communications

- Meebo
- Twitter

RSS

- Bloglines
- Google Reader
- Netvibe
- Newsgator (Sponsored License)

Broadcast and Custom search

- Rollyo
- Squidoo (Lensmasters)
- WorldCat
- Yahoo Pipes
- Ask
- MSN
- Google (CSE, Earth, Search, and Scholar)

Others:

- Mashups

To suggest other applications – fee or free – that SLA might consider for this SLA Innovation Laboratory please fill out this form [Link] or send an e-mail to qlogan@sla.org. Thank you.

Examples of SLA Unit and Member-driven Development:

SLA on Wikis

- 2008 Leadership Summit: Local Information
- Advertising and Marketing Division
- CE Wiki
- Centennial Commission
- Chapter Idea Bank
- Competencies for Information Professionals
- Competencies – Professional Development Advisory Council
- Knowledge Management Division
- Leveraging Library Leaders
- Seattle 2008 Attendees
- Seattle Planning
- San Francisco Bay Region Chapter
- Chemistry Division
- PAM Division

- Solo Division
- Webmaster Section of the IT Division
- Western Canada Chapter
- SLA also used a wiki to capture issues and questions for the keynote panel in 2007 in Denver.

SLA on Discussion Lists

- Discussion lists are housed within and outside of HQ. The majority of units and their boards have a discussion list.

SLA on Blogs (more than 30 blogs are hosted on SLA platforms)

- SLA Blog (including conferences)
- Info-X (CEO)
- Centennial Commission
- Systems Thinking Perspective Project (Biomedical and Life Sciences Division)
- Pharmaceutical and Health Technology Division
- Information Technology Division
- Blogging Section of Information Technology Division
- Government Information Division
- IPANDA Net
- Inclusion Caucus
- Petroleum and Energy Resources Division
- Maryland Chapter Conference Blog
- Rocky Mountain Chapter Blog
- New York Chapter Blog
- Hudson Valley Chapter Blog
- Leadership and Management Division Blog
- Pacific Northwest Chapter Planning
- Maryland Chapter Blog

Blogs on WordPress

- North Carolina Chapter

SLA on Social Networking –:

We would like to invent some social networking applications in-house using webNetwork by Web Scribble which SLA has licensed. Any early adopters out here? There are some benefits to a private social network.

SLA on Facebook

- Information Technology Division
- PAM Division
- Kentucky Chapter
- Arizona Chapter

- Toronto Chapter
- Upstate New York Chapter
- Student Chapter (University of Maryland)
- Special Libraries Association (student group)
- Brown SLA (student group)
- SLA@SLAIS (student group)
- Cincinnati Chapter

SLA Communities of Practice

Many committees, councils, and task forces use the Community of Practice software to conduct their association business. For example, the membership chairs, centennial commission, leadership summit planning group, treasurers, leadership, board, and staff, to name a few, use this application to share information, post documents, and chat.

To request a Community of Practice for your committee or unit, contact HQ.

SLA Websites -

- Only a very few SLA unit websites are not housed within SLA HQ controlled servers. Nearly all units have a website although the features and updating of each vary. With the Innovation Lab, you can experiment with new features that engage members and provide easier updating, such as wikis, blogs, and social networks, and then launch them for your units. You might also want to experiment with video or podcasts on your website.

Volunteers Needed (of course, but this will be great fun!):

Lastly, we have only planted the seeds here for innovation by SLA members and units with this initiative. We must take our individual power and extend it by sharing, collaborating and learning together. Stephen Abram is looking for volunteers to support these projects. Are you up for it? Here is a short list of some of the ideas we'd like to see investigated in the SLA Innovation Lab: We think this is exciting and hope you do, too.

- Can we try to collaboratively make short SLA podcasts on pay and performance – How did I get that raise? Job? Can we engage members who've 'been there, done that' to share their experiences?
- Are we ready for the whole Wikis Sandbox? Can we create sustainable knowledge such as ideas for programs, toolkits, advocacy ideas, etc. in a wiki?
- Is there a good use for blogs in special libraries or by independent information professionals?
- How can we use these tools to support new graduates and students in their transition to the workplace?

- Are you ready to volunteer for Click U? Can we collaboratively develop both free and fee reusable learning objects for fellow SLA members?
- Learning 2.0 – 15 minutes a day for every SLA member
- Tweet! Conference: Using Twitter at the SLA 2008 Conference and INFO-EXPO in Seattle
- Let's work on some more social networking pilots in places like Facebook and Ning or in our SLA licensed, private space, webNetwork by Web Scribble.
- We have to get some YouTube Videos out there. Shall we focus on the value of special librarians' stories, training, or what?
- The Face of SLA – we're collecting testimonials from leaders and decision makers and special librarians and info pros. Is this is a good Flickr and website combo?
- Hmm – just for fun can we use Second Life for SLA orientation? Can we share a collection of special librarian and member avatars?
- Are these the tools we need to aggregate case studies of the best practices and simple examples of using the Web 2.0 read/write and interactive tools to share across the association? It's up to everyone to commit to share their work and not hide their metaphoric innovation candles under a basket.

So, we're ready to "Innovate in 2008" at SLA. By the end of the year we want everyone to have GREAT answers to these questions:

- What are you experimenting with?
- What have you done in the Innovation Lab?
- What have you learned in the Lab?
- What do you like and why?
- And what did you tell your boss and clients?

Are we having fun yet?

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