

## **Summary Report of the ICSTI General Assembly, Stockholm, Sweden, June 15 to 19 2002**

The General Assembly was hosted by KTHB in the new library facilities, officially opened on 18 May 2002. These are truly magnificent, providing a wonderful mix of the old and the new, with state of the art library and meeting facilities. ICSTI is extremely grateful to KTHB for the invitation and for all the effort put in by Marie Wallin, Gunnar Lager and all the other people who worked so hard to make the 2002 Assembly so successful.

35 Members were present in Stockholm and this year we had two observers from the developing world, from India and Sri Lanka, whose attendance was funded by the Swedish Development Agency.

During the Technical Meeting held on June 17, attended by over 80 people, we heard a wide ranging series of papers on the Challenges of Creating and Maintaining Access to STI. This included an overview of the techniques for measuring use of the newer access facilities such as the web by Elliot Siegel of the NLM; a masterly overview of the prospects offered by the second generation web – the Semantic Web, by Professor Assmann of Linköping University, a series of views from users by Ian Butterworth of Imperial College and Ana Maria Cetto on the developing country prospects; then we had the overview of the Swedish scene from the viewpoints of the provider of a Web based dissertations storage service and a very interesting experiment in remote teaching at the Karolinska Institute. Finally we had a round up of the opinions from the private sector users in the Chemical industry, from the publishers, Elsevier, from the secondary suppliers, INIST, and then an overview of NordInfo's role given by the National Librarian of Sweden, Dr Tomas Lidman.

During the working meetings of ICSTI's various committees Members discussed a wide range of topics.

The Technical Activities Co-ordinating Committee reviewed the status of the work on Digital Preservation, in particular the progress towards the publication of the Proceedings of the February 2002 Seminar and a paper on Advocacy by David Russon. Members will provide David with further input by 1 September and then the ICSTI position paper on how and why digital material might be made available permanently will be finalised. The discussion forum on the ICSTI web site will be used to generate the various viewpoints.

The committee also reviewed the progress on the preparation of the **Technical Meeting for Winter 2003, which will be held in Paris on January 23 and 24, 2003**. The subject will be the state of the art on the issues surrounding access to the STI generated by Public Institutions. INIST and INSERM will be hosting the meeting with ICSTI. The meeting will follow a meeting in September 2002 at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington and precede a meeting to be hosted by UNESCO, CODATA and ICSTI amongst others, in March 2003, on the same subject.

A proposal was made by CISTI that ICSTI Members should participate in a project on measuring the socio-economic impacts of STI. As pressure on government and other resources for funding becomes more intense and as funding agencies are demanding

increasing justification for funding of information activities in the light of the development of the Internet and other apparently “free” resources, the STI Community needs to be able to justify its activity. The Members present welcomed the proposal and a number of those present undertook to subscribe to the projects.

**The opportunity to participate is still open to ICSTI Members, and the preliminary results will be available by January 2003.** If you want further information please contact Bernard Dumouchel at CISTI, Canada by email at [bernard.dumouchel@nrc.ca](mailto:bernard.dumouchel@nrc.ca) immediately.

Finally a proposal to examine the effect of offering journal material on the Web on subscriptions to the journal was discussed. It was felt the project was viable but needed further study. If you have views on this area please contact Elliot Siegel at [siegel@nlm.nih.gov](mailto:siegel@nlm.nih.gov)

The Information Policy Committee discussed a number of proposed Directives in the field of information recently launched by the European Union. Members are invited to comment on these so that ICSTI can formulate an input to the decision making process. The details will be communicated to Members as soon as possible.

The Committee also discussed the various implications for distribution of STI to small and medium sized enterprises by libraries under the new licensing arrangements that are increasingly being implemented by publishers. It was agreed that Members affected would exchange opinions with a view to formulating a position from ICSTI on the topic.

A number of policy related issues concerning the use of CrossRef like facilities to provide access to STI and particularly to interlinking sources were raised. The whole question of how the various linking options provided by suppliers was working was a topic which was of interest to ICSTI Members. The Secretariat will be sending Members a series of questions on these for their input and experience which will then be collated and circulated to ascertain what actions might be launched.

Another topic of interest was the effect that automatic translation services was having on the IPR issues surrounding STI. Again Members will be asked for their experiences which will be gathered before deciding on actions.

Finally the Information Policy Committee addressed the effects of increasing automation on the authenticity of STI as more and more versions of documents are distributed and the efficiency of automated indexing in ensuring that the information was available for searching.

Overall, the IPC meeting concluded that there were a number of matters with policy implications or potential implications for the STI community and that Members should be kept alerted to these as they came along.

The Annual Meeting approved the audited accounts for 2001 and the Secretary General's report for 2001. The status of Membership gave rise to some anxiety and the new Chairman of the Membership Committee Wally Finch of NTIS appealed to Members to make special efforts to recruit new Members. The Web committee would be working closely with the Marketing Committee to ensure that the ICSTI web site became the centre of activities for Members now that the secretariat situation was stabilised.

Overall the 2002 General Assembly was a very successful meeting, helped considerably by the programme of events organised by our hosts and the wonderful Stockholm weather.

The 2003 General Assembly will be held in Ottawa, Canada, May 8-12 2003, hosted by CISTI.

Barry Mahon, June 20 2002  
ICSTI Executive Director