



Research @ the iSchool

December 2008

At Home in the World: Learning about Information Ethics

Preparing information professionals to confront ethical dilemmas is the focus of a project led by **Dr. Kenneth R. Fleischmann** with support from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Dr. Fleischmann and his collaborators at the University of Pittsburgh and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute are developing innovative ways to help students understand the diverse values held by different national, local, professional, and organizational cultures.

This research project has led to the development of a new iSchool graduate course, Information Ethics. The goal of the project is to develop an educational simulation for information ethics. This simulation will be built around cases that were developed and tested in the Information Ethics course. Each case prompts students to make multiple interdependent decisions while playing culturally diverse roles to learn about information ethics.

Preliminary results from the first two semesters of the course will be published as a featured research article by Dr. Fleischmann and his collaborators in the January issue of *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*. Based on a qualitative analysis of feedback provided by students at the end of the course, they identified four key themes for successful intercultural information ethics education: diversity, perspectives, values, and pluralism.

This project is an excellent example of how sponsored research can contribute to innovative teaching. Dr. Fleischmann and his collaborators are now prototyping their simulation software. Many of the cases incorporated in that simulation are based on data collected in another NSF-funded study of the role of values in the design and use of computational models, some of the findings of which will be published in *Communications of the ACM*.

Interactive Fiction: Preserving Cultural Knowledge

Increasingly, we live at the intersection of the one physical world and multiple “virtual worlds.” How can those ephemeral virtual worlds be captured and made available for future study? This question is being explored by **Dr. Kari Kraus** in the *Preserving Virtual Worlds* project, with support from the Preserving Creative America division of the Library of Congress's NDIIPP program.

The principal aim of the project is to explore best practices for archiving complex, creative digital content, including games, virtual worlds, and interactive fiction. The project is led by the University of Illinois, with partners at our university's Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH), the Stanford University Libraries, and the Rochester Institute of Technology. Linden Lab, developer of *Second Life*, participates as an industry partner.

Preservation of computer games and interactive fiction has to date principally been the purview of communities of enthusiasts who have worked to keep them alive through a period in which adequately resourced institutional efforts have yet to develop. The project team is creating tools to help archivists capture user experiences across different platforms and operating systems in a structured way, using appropriate ontologies and metadata standards. Substantial intellectual property rights issues also arise, since some instances of these works survive only as pirated copies or on so-called “abandonware” sites.

The interdisciplinary nature of this project matches Dr. Kraus' research interests in textual studies and intellectual property particularly well; she holds joint appointments in Maryland's iSchool and in Maryland's English department.

Students in Action

Miriam Matteson has been appointed as an assistant professor at Kent State University; **Philip Wu** has been appointed as a Lecturer (equivalent to assistant professor) at the University of Surrey (UK); and **Yejun Wu** has been appointed as an assistant professor at Louisiana State University

Leshell Hatley won an entrepreneurial empowerment award for her *Black Scholars Index*.

Christina Pikas presented a paper on detecting communities in science blogs at the 4th International IEEE eScience Conference.

New Grants

Dr. John Bertot: \$124,200 from the American Library Association to lead a team conducting the Public Library Funding and Technology Access National Survey.

Dr. Allison Druin: \$100,000 from National Science foundation to lead a team studying and designing intergenerational mobile learning communities.

Dr. Jennifer Golbeck and archives student **Jeanne Kramer-Smyth:** \$14,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a project on visualizing archival collections.

Dr. Jennifer Golbeck: \$996,800 National Leadership Grant from IMLS as part of a team to develop methods to improve access to images in online museums.

Dr. Trudi Hahn and **Dr. Ann Weeks:** \$39,900 National Leadership Grant from IMLS to lead a team to investigate strengthening the public library's role in e-government.

Dr. Derek Hansen: \$8,800 from University of Maryland's General Research Board to explore opportunities to leverage online patient communities in clinical trials.

Dr. Kari Kraus: \$591,600 from IMLS to lead a team creating a digital humanities model internship program.

Dr. Jimmy Lin: \$200,000 from NSF as part of a team studying use of cloud computing for machine translation, and \$88,900 from the National Library of Medicine for research on biomedical text retrieval.

Dr. Bo Xie: \$15,000 from Maryland Population Research Center for a pilot study on improving older adults' e-health literacy.

Short Takes

Dr. Charles Lowry is on a three-year leave of absence to serve as Executive Director of the Association of Research Libraries.

Dr. Trudi Bellardo Hahn gave the keynote address at a conference in Monterrey, Mexico on transforming student learning through faculty/librarian collaboration that was jointly sponsored by the University of Maryland and Tecnológico de Monterrey.

Anne Caputo, an adjunct faculty member and Executive Director of Dow Jones' Learning & Information Professional Programs, has been named the 2009 president-elect of the Special Libraries Association.

Dr. Jennifer Preece gave distinguished lectures on online communities in Finland at Nokia, the Univ. of Tampere, Tekla and Profcom.

Dr. Allison Druin, presented a Tech Talk at Google on understanding how children use Google Search.

Dr. John Bertot has been named editor of *Library Quarterly* and **Dr. Paul Jaeger** has been named associate editor.

Dr. Bruce Ambacher, **Dr. Douglas Oard** and a dozen masters and doctoral students presented at the Partnerships in Innovation conference, jointly hosted by the University of Maryland and the National Archives and Records Administration.

Emi Ishita, Associate Professor of Cultural Information Resources, Surugadai University (Japan), is visiting on a one-year sabbatical.

New Faculty

Dr. John Carlo Bertot joins the iSchool as Professor and Director of the new Center for Library Innovation. His research interests include use of the Internet in public libraries, and telecommunications and information policy. Dr. Bertot was previously Professor and Associate Director of the Information Use Management Policy Institute at Florida State University. He earned his Ph.D. from Syracuse University, and he serves as editor of *Government Information Quarterly*.

Dr. Jean Dryden, Assistant Professor, earned her Ph.D. at the University of Toronto. Her research interests focus on how institutions operate under the constraints of copyright, particularly in the digital environment; standards for archival arrangement and description; and the behavior and needs of users of archival material.

For more information: <http://www.ischool.umd.edu/research>

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