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AIS PRESIDENT'S REPORT - 1998

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AIS

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This report presents the results to the end of 1998. It gives substance to the emergence of AIS as the international academic society for information systems. For updates on current activities, see <http://www.aisnet.org/>

INTRODUCTION

My report summarizes four years and highlights some 1998 results and initiatives begun in 1998. As such, it reflects the work of past and current officers and member volunteers.

The Association of Information Systems was founded four years ago, at the end of 1994, following two years of discussion and consultation led by Professor William King of the University of Pittsburgh. The objective was to create an international association for faculty members and other scholars in the field of information systems. Professor King provided the initial organizing direction for the association and served as the founding president for 1995 and as the Executive Director for more than three years.

With a fairly small academic community (compared to other disciplines such as finance and accounting), many of the major initiatives to build the field have involved the same people. AIS was therefore formed not as a competitor to existing successful efforts but as a way of rationalizing and improving the organization and effectiveness of the field. Although a faculty member or

researcher may belong to local, national, regional organizations and may be active in specialized groups focusing on parts of the IS domain, a membership in AIS is a vote to be part of the international core for the field. AIS encourages the other organizations in their specialized roles. A few examples of IS groups affiliated with larger, diverse international organizations are SIGMIS (ACM), TC8 (IFIP), and the College on Information Systems (INFORMS).

The AIS international objective is supported by an international governance structure with rotation of the president among three regions of the world: Americas, Europe/Africa, and Pacific/Asia. The first four presidents were Bill King from the Americas (1995), Niels Bjørn-Andersen from Europe (1996), Ron Weber from Pacific/Asia (1997), and Gordon Davis from the Americas (1998). The 1999 president is Robert Galliers from Europe/Africa. The president elect for 2000 is Michael Vitale of Australia. Our thanks to a large number of elected officers and volunteers who have made AIS a success.

THE FIRST FOUR YEARS

What was accomplished during the first four years, and where is AIS headed? In the first three years, the member dues included a subscription (for a small fee) to an information systems academic journal. In the middle of the fourth year, the subscription was replaced with an opportunity to subscribe to several leading journals in the field at reduced rates. Both the initial arrangement for one subscription and the change to reduced rate subscriptions provide support for academic journals in the field.

AIS was founded after ICIS, the leading international academic conference for the field. Rather than creating a new international conference, AIS became a vigorous sponsor of ICIS. The annual AIS member meeting is held at ICIS.

Two regional conferences were already operating, the European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS) and the Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS). AIS became a sponsor of these conferences,

especially for the doctoral consortia. Since there was no corresponding Americas conference, AIS assisted in developing the Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS, initially called AIS Americas). AIS members receive a discount on the fees for this conference. For 1999, the AMCIS the conference fee includes a year's AIS membership for those who are not yet members.

Because one of the most valuable activities for improving the quality of IS research lies in doctoral education, AIS has, from its inception, provided financial support for doctoral consortia at ICIS and at the European and Pacific Asia regional conferences.

AIS has become the association speaking for the field. AIS was recognized by the AACSB, the business school association, as the association for the field. Furthermore, cooperative arrangements on IS curricula were begun with ACM and AITP. These arrangements resulted in the IS'97 undergraduate model curriculum and a project in progress for masters programs.

The AIS-ICIS placement service, provides a very useful service to the field. It is self-supporting and contributes significant funds to AIS.

1998 INITIATIVES

During 1998, several initiatives were completed:

1. AIS achieved financial stability. A governing principle when AIS was established was to keep member dues low enough that faculty members throughout the world would be able to join. To achieve this goal, expenses were to be kept very low. This philosophy has been followed. The member dues for AIS essentially provide the office support and basic infrastructure. However, AIS needs funds to build reserves and initiate programs and services benefiting the field. During the first four years, funds for reserves and programs came from the frugal beginnings under Bill King, receipts from the AIS/ICIS placement service, and the sponsorship of the Americas Conference

on Information Systems. AIS is now financially sound with adequate reserves and some funds for initiatives. A statement of AIS's financial condition at December 31, 1998, is presented in the Appendix at the end of this report. The amalgamation of ICIS and AIS is expected to provide funds for initiatives to benefit the field.

2. The AIS and ICIS boards agreed in December 1998 to an amalgamation of the organizations. One office will serve the needs of AIS and the ICIS conference. ICIS will retain its conference governance structure. AIS will provide leadership and direction for initiatives to benefit the international development of the field.
3. The AIS office was moved to Georgia State University with Eph McLean as the Executive Director and Colleen Bauder Cook as the Administrative Manager. The office's full time staff serves both AIS and ICIS. The association continues to mature in its record keeping, budgeting, and financial reporting.
4. The AIS dues structure was altered to drop the journal subscription to one of three journals. Instead, AIS members may choose to subscribe to one or more journals at discounted rates.
5. AIS established a publications committee under Hank Lucas and initiated two electronic journals for its members:

- Communications of the Association for Information Systems. (CAIS) and
- Journal of the Association for Information Systems (JAIS).

A number of professional organizations are establishing electronic journals; these AIS electronic journals move the IS academic field into this important mode of publication.

CAIS began operations on January 4, 1999 with Paul Gray as editor. It publishes articles on a wide range of topics of interest to the membership but falling outside the focus of research journals. Examples are tutorials, comments, pedagogical articles, etc. Access to the journal requires a password provided to AIS to each member.

The articles are in both htm and pdf format and therefore easily downloaded.

J AIS is edited by Phillip Ein-Dor. The mission of this journal is to promote the production and widespread dissemination of new knowledge. It will electronically publish rigorously researched, methodologically sound articles on all aspects of information systems. The first articles should be published in the second half of 1999.

6. The Society for Information Management (SIM), the international organization for information system executives, working with AIS, established an institutional joint SIM/AIS membership option. This continues the strong role SIM has played in the development of the IS academic field. For example, SIM assisted the formation of ICIS, the early funding of the ICIS doctoral consortium, and the founding of the MIS Quarterly.
7. AIS formed an alliance with ISWorld. ISWorld has become one of the very important methods for communication and cooperation in the field (<http://www.isworld.org/isworld.html>). Its services are extensive. It was begun as an initiative by leaders in IS. Special thanks go to Blake Ives, Reagan ramsower, and John Mooney plus many volunteers. The alliance with AIS helps to regularize ISWorld and provides methods for funding its development and operation.
8. AIS and the ISWorld Net Virtual Meeting Center (VMC), developed by Munir Mandviwalla, Temple University, initiated the AIS-PERT workshop series. This ongoing series is designed for professional development. A recognized expert focuses on a particular aspect of IS research and moderate a four-day asynchronous virtual workshop (with up to 10 participants). The first AIS-PERT workshop, held 2-5 November 1998, dealt with "Structural Equation Modeling in IS Research." It was chaired by Wynne Chin, University of Houston. The second AIS-PERT workshop was scheduled for March 8-11, 1999 on the topic of "Ethnographic Research Methods in Information Systems"

under the chairmanship of Michael D. Myers, University of Auckland, New Zealand.

9. The AIS Salary Survey collects data on faculty salary offers. A person receiving an offer is invited to submit data about it to a web site run by Dennis Galletta. This effort provides targeted data more quickly than other salary collection efforts (such as that by AACSB). The data tends to be USA salaries, but these figures may be useful for negotiations in other countries as well. The survey can be accessed through ISWorld or directly from <http://www.pitt.edu/~galletta/1999sals.html>

10. AIS offers information services and links. Many are on ISWorld but others are elsewhere. The following are examples of resources/activities/ conferences available on ISWorld but can be also be found on www.aisnet.org under Resources with links to ISWorld:

- IS World Net Professional Activities page (sponsored by AIS; edited by Freddie Quek and Michael Vitale)
- "Plugging In" to resources compiled for AIS by Roger Clarke
- Conferences and Call for Papers, Page Editor: Mike Vanecek, University of North Texas, USA.

Examples of other information sources stored outside ISWorld that can be accessed by links from aisnet.org include:

- Under Conferences. Conferences sponsored or affiliated with AIS.
- Under Resources. IS '97: Model Curriculum and Guidelines for Undergraduate Degree Programs in Information Systems. Two versions: one on web for scanning and commentary and one as .pdf version (100 pages). This curriculum is sponsored by AIS, ACM, and AITP.

INITIATIVES TO BE COMPLETED IN 1999

Several initiatives were begun during 1998 that will be completed in 1999.

1. AIS sponsorship of the online directories of Information System Faculty Members. Three directories (Americas, Europe/Africa, and Pacific/Asia) are accessible from ISWorld or directly from the server at the University of Minnesota by <http://webfoot.csom.umn.edu/isworld/facdir/>
2. AIS will provide policy direction and collect funds from labels sold to organizations related to academic activities such as publishers and conferences. The database operation and maintenance of the directory entries will continue to be provided by the University of Minnesota where the Americas database and online access were developed. Faculty members Niels Bjørn-Andersen and Guy Gable, involved in the development of the Europe/Africa and Pacific/Asia directories, will continue to assist with these.
3. As part of its sponsorship of ISWorld, a searchable database of MIS dissertations (maintained by Janice DeGross, jdegross@csom.umn.edu, MIS Quarterly) will be available through MISQ Discovery, a part of ISWorld.
4. As part of ISWorld, a list digest allows subscribers to ISWorld to examine past announcements on a topic area and to restrict delivery of some types of announcements.
5. AIS will co-sponsor the Willoughby Monograph Series in Management Information Systems, providing AIS input for the series and making the monographs available to members at a reduced price. The series, supported by a grant from Theodore Willoughby, the first Ph.D. in MIS from Minnesota, will be edited by the MIS Quarterly and distributed worldwide by the University of Minnesota Press. The series will publish monographs on MIS concepts, theories, and research areas. The first monographs are scheduled to be available late in 1999 or early 2000.

6. An AIS speakers program will begin. The program provides a list of speakers and general arrangements for schools that would like to have faculty/student seminar speakers to improve or enhance awareness of the IS field. The contact person is James Senn of Georgia State University.

WHERE WE ARE

In summary, AIS is alive and well. It is achieving the goal of being the main international organization for information systems academics. It is financially sound. It supports existing IS academic resources such as regional conferences, ICIS, a set of well-regarded journals, ISWorld, and other initiatives such as AIS PERT. It provides electronic journals, information sources, and discounts on journals, conferences, and monographs. It instituted an amalgamation with ICIS and established a shared administrative office. It made an alliance to support ISWorld, a set of the most important informational assets in the field. These assets have been created by the hard work of many of our colleagues; AIS is able to enhance and preserve them.

Given its role in the academic field of information systems, every academic should be a member. It is true that many of the current services, typified by ISWorld, can be obtained without being a member. But the long run health and vitality of such open resources depends on the good will and modest dues from the entire IS academic community.

Editor's Note: Prof. Davis' report was received in July 29,1999 and published on August 11, 1999.

APPENDIX

ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL CONDITION

December 31, 1998

Assets (actual amounts rounded to 000)	
Bank accounts for operational use	32,000
Savings accounts	225,000
Receivables from AMCIS 1998, Baltimore	3,000
Other receivables	Nil
 Total Assets	 260,000
 Payables and Estimated Expenses Associated with Funds Received in 1998 but Services to Be Provided in 1999	
Annual memberships for parts of 1999, received in 1998	27,000
Estimated 1999 payments for journals included in 1997-1998 dues	7,000
Placement income for 1998 -- ICIS share to be paid in 1999	30,000
Payables for 1998 AIS meetings expenses in Helsinki	2,000
Commitment 1998 to ISWorld to be paid in 1999	10,000
Other payables and commitments	Nil
 Total 1999 Payables/Commitments	 76,000

AIS Funds (Assets less Payables and Commitments)

Communications of AIS Volume 2, Article 11

10

AIS President's Annual Report – 1998 by Gordon Davis

AIS Working Capital Fund	60,000
AIS Contingency Fund	40,000
AMCIS Conferences Operating and Contingency Fund	50,000
AIS Funds available for current and future initiatives	34,000
 Total AIS Funds for Working Capital, Contingencies, and Initiatives	 184,000

Notes to AIS Financial Statement:

The AIS Statement of Financial Condition at December 31, 1998, reflects the cumulative effect of the first four years. The \$260,000 in cash and receivables do not tell the whole story. AIS receives memberships in advance of the outlays to service the members, and some payments related to 1998 had not been made by the end of 1998. These are estimated since AIS does its bookkeeping on a cash basis. After reflecting estimated commitments and payables, we estimate that AIS has \$184,000 at the end of 1998. In order to run an organization like AIS, there should be operating funds of about \$60,000 and contingency funds of about \$40,000. Since AIS has managed the funds of the Americas Conference on Information Systems (and benefited from its surpluses), part of the AIS funds should be allocated to a \$50,000 contingency fund for AMCIS. This leaves \$34,000 at the end of 1998 available for current and future initiatives to benefit the international academic field of information systems.

The financial condition means that AIS is financially stable. The dues of the members support the administrative activities and some basic member services. To maintain this financial stability, AIS must run a low-cost operation. The outreach initiatives to advance the field require additional funds. Sources are the AIS/ICIS placement service and conference surpluses. AIS provides a member-elected organizational mechanism for applying conference surpluses to projects that benefit the field.

Mary R. Lind, Treasurer
Gordon B. Davis, President 1998

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