

Being president of a dynamic organization like LITA is truly a humbling experience. Every day I am awestruck by the dedication, energy, creativity, and excitement exhibited by LITA's members. I see it in everything that LITA does, from its stellar publications and communications—including this journal, *ITAL*—to its programming and contribution to standards and system development. None of this would be possible without the hard work of all the dedicated members who volunteer their time not only to advancing their own professional development, but also to advancing the profession. Thank you all.

For forty years now, LITA members have been dedicated to the association's work, and we have been celebrating our fortieth anniversary throughout 2006. The celebration continues as we prepare to convene in Nashville for the ninth LITA National Forum, October 26–29, 2006. LITA has had a long tradition of providing quality conferences. The first, held in 1970, was the Conference on Interlibrary Communications and Information Networks, more familiarly known as the "Airlie Conference," which had published proceedings. The second was a cooperative effort held in 1971 with the Library Education Division and the American Society for Information Science (ASIS), entitled "Directions in Education for Information Science: A Symposium for Educators." In later years, LITA held three national conferences: Baltimore (1983), Boston (1988), and Denver (1992). In 1996, LITA and the Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA) held a joint conference in Pittsburgh. While the national conferences were very successful, the idea of a more informal, intimate event to be held annually took form, and in 1998 LITA held its first annual National Forum. Next year we will continue the tradition of successful conference programming as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the LITA National Forum in Denver.

This year's theme is "NetVille in Nashville: Web Services as Library Services." We have an exciting lineup of keynote and concurrent-session speakers as well as several poster-session presenters who will stimulate lively discussions in all of the wonderful, informal networking opportunities this small conference offers. The Sponsor Showcase allows plenty of time for attendees to talk to our valued sponsors and learn more about their products. The two preconference programs offer in-depth experiences:

"OpenSource Installfest" and "Developing Best Project Management Practices for IT Projects." LITA bloggers will be out in force producing summaries and reactions to it all. One of LITA's strongest membership benefits is the personal networking opportunities it provides. By providing an informal and enjoyable atmosphere, the National Forum is one of the best places to network with others dealing with the same issues as you. I hope to see you there.

Besides the National Forum (just one of LITA's many educational programs), one of the things I like most about LITA is its flexibility to quickly accommodate programming to cover the latest issues and trends. LITA's programming at ALA Annual Conferences attracts attendees from all divisions for this reason. Every year, the highly successful Top Technology Trends attracts more and more people who come to listen to the experts speak on the latest trends. The LITA Interest Groups, like the technologies they focus on, also exhibit great flexibility because they can come and go—it's easy to locate a few other members to create a new group where interested parties can come together for focused discussions or formal presentations. Since its inception, LITA has had traveling educational programs to provide programming opportunities for people who cannot attend the ALA conferences. These in-depth programs, now called the Regional Institutes, focus on a topic and are offered as long as that issue is relevant. Look for new electronic delivery of LITA programs in the future.

Of course, LITA's publications provide a very lasting educational component. LITA launched *Journal of Library Automation (JOLA)*, the predecessor of *ITAL*, in 1968, one year after the formation of the new division of ALA. *JOLA* and, later, *ITAL* have consistently been a place for library information technologists to publish in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. These well-respected publications have had a wonderful group of editors and editorial boards over the years. We are pleased that *ITAL* is now available online for members from the moment of publication. I want to thank all the people who work so hard to produce this publication on a quarterly basis. I also want to thank all the authors who submit their research for publication here and make a lasting contribution to the profession.

All of these programs are just a sampling of what LITA provides its members. Is it any wonder I am awed by it all? I hope you are as well. I also hope that, in my year as your president, you will communicate with me in an open dialogue on the LITA blog, via e-mail, or in person at conferences regarding how LITA can better meet your needs as a member. We have been focusing a great deal on our educational goal because that is what we have heard you want out of LITA. I encourage you to let me and the rest of the LITA board know how we can best deliver a quality set of educational programs.

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