Information Outlook
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Innovate in 2008

by Stephen Abram, SLA President 2008

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Here it is - my first column as President of SLA. You'll be receiving this as we meet for our annual SLA Leadership Summit in Louisville Kentucky. Such a rush! By now I'll have completed the appointment process as president and started to implement some of my ideas to help SLA become an even greater association.

The focus that I am encouraging for us in 2008 is **Innovation**. Innovation is a multifaceted goal. It can't happen purely from any leader. It can't begin and end with your elected board and leaders. It's not the sole responsibility of staff. Then again, for any individual member to innovate in SLA on any scale it is beneficial to have the support of all of these people. It is also my firmly held belief that our members have the best ideas for innovation. It is our Association's mandate to release the energy and ideas of its members. I want to focus us on that in 2008.

One way to release energy in an association is to have an easy way to volunteer. You will have noted in my communications with you in autumn 2007 that I have appointed a small participation committee to advise me on the appointment process, as well as having staff create a great, simple form on the SLA website. I believe that this is the first formal **e-volunteering system** at SLA and I hope to have helped to remove some of the unintended secrecy over the appointment process. You may continue to register your willingness to volunteer through the website for international, division, or chapter activities. Every member is welcome to volunteer at SLA. With this innovation, I hope to have a pool of willing volunteers for many exciting projects throughout 2008.

In my 'other' column in this issue of *Information Outlook* you'll find an announcement we're making at the Leadership Summit. Go there now and check out the ideas for the **SLA Innovation Laboratory**. More ideas like this will emerge over the year. Innovation at SLA depends on our fellow members. If you've got an idea, send it to me or volunteer for one of the projects on the SLA site.

I stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before me in this role as president. We owe them our gratitude. In 2008 SLA is the best prepared we

have ever been for innovation, change and success. For example, internally we have a great staff and a spanking new, modern association management system which gives us greater flexibility than ever before. We have member research and task force reports over many years that have informed our strategic thinking at the association-level and continue to bear fruit. This work is not forgotten.

I am most excited that in 2008 we will receive the results of SLA's major investment in **member market research** to more tightly align our association's strategies to drive the success of the SLA membership. This is one of the most important events to happen in SLA's history. Some of the early results of the research will be shared at the Leadership Summit in Louisville. We will also be meeting separately as a Board for a short retreat in early 2008 to make sure that our members get the most value out of this research.

Now on to Seattle 2008! Our theme for the Annual Conference is "**Breaking Rules, Building Bridges".** This is the first year that we are instituting the recommendations of the Conference Modeling Workgroup that was approved by the Board of Directors in 2006. We are initiating a series entitled, "Spotlight Sessions" as well as a mini-conference within the conference addressing cyberinfrastructure. There will also be more variety in the length and format of programs. And, watch your e-mail for more on this – we will start our '**green**' conference initiative in Seattle.

I am especially thrilled with our great and **transformational innovator keynotes** – Seth Godin, bestselling author and former Chief Marketing Yahoo, and Vint Cerf, one of the fathers of the Internet. And don't miss the conference-wide wrap party on Wednesday afternoon following the keynote address to set the mood for our upcoming SLA Centennial Year.

Innovate in 2008. Join me for the ride! Watch this space.

Stephen