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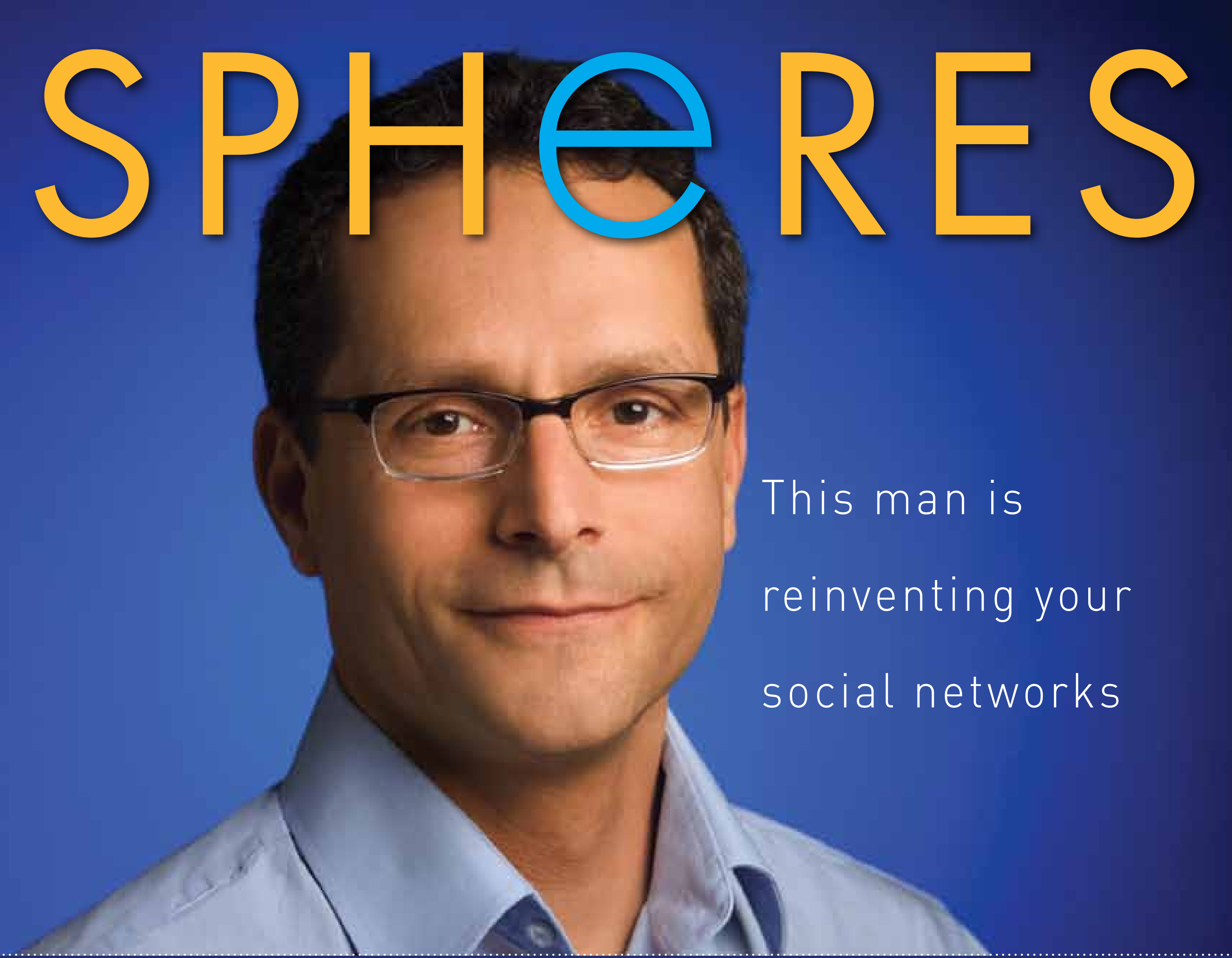
SPHERES



This man is reinventing your social networks

FALL 2011

"It is my hope that individuals with special needs enjoy the tools they use to communicate, while looking cool doing it."
— Jacob Steinerman

Jacob Steinerman is off and running with his ideas for helping those with special needs.

Spubble:

Informatics student creates special needs app

Inspired by years of volunteer work with a special needs organization, Informatics social computing student **Jacob Steinerman** and a team of fellow students developed a smart phone app called Spubble for individuals with autism, speech impairments, and other communication issues.

Spubble uses touch-screen technology and categories of icons that can be tapped in a meaningful order to communicate with others.

"The current set of tools available to children with special needs is outdated and inefficient," Steinerman says. "The goal of Spubble is to fully bring augmentative and alternative communication tools into the 21st century, at a low cost."

Spubble was released in the iTunes App Store in December and to date has grossed nearly a thousand downloads. Following its release, Steinerman began jotting down other ideas for special education apps.

The mission of his start-up company, MoBlue Technology, is to define what will be "Special Education 2.0": designing and building apps for special needs individuals and special education.

Says Steinerman, "It is my hope that individuals with special needs enjoy the tools they use to communicate, while looking cool doing it."

MoBlue Tech is currently looking for dedicated iOS developers (proficient in Objective C), Web and database developers and funding opportunities for app development. Steinerman can be contacted at **jastman@umich.edu**

Social media and the new world order

This past spring, the world watched with hope and fascination as revolutionary fervor swept aside long-standing dictatorships in the Middle East. These popular uprisings were facilitated in no small manner by the ability of the populace to communicate instantly with each other and the outside world using social media such as Twitter.

Four years ago, Barak Obama launched his presidential campaign on the steps of the Illinois capitol before thousands of supporters and press reporters. In April, he formally announced his re-election campaign with an online video. As an incumbent, he has participated in the first presidential virtual town hall meetings on the Internet from the White House and at Facebook's Palo Alto headquarters. Last month, he promoted his jobs agenda via a town hall on LinkedIn, merging old school campaigning with new media capabilities.

With over 750 million active users on Facebook, with Twitter logging over 200 million tweets a day, with Google introducing its own social networking platform and attracting 40 million users in its 12-week pre-launch phase, social media is more than a phenomenon: it's the way in which a huge percentage of the population is voluntarily choosing to connect and share information with others.

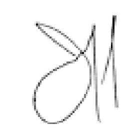
That's why we decided that social media was the ideal topic with which to introduce our re-imagined alumni magazine, *Spheres*. You've told us that while you appreciate alumni and school news, what you most want to see in *Spheres* is feature articles on the subjects that concern and absorb information professionals today. As a result, we've redesigned the magazine to offer more space for articles that reflect contemporary issues in information that impact our society.

In this issue, we explore the influence of social media in the realm of political discourse, its adoption by the public sector, and its implications for our personal privacy now and in the years ahead. We are also pleased to feature a personal interview with U-M alum Bradley Horowitz, one of the creators of Google+ and a member of the SI External Advisory Board.

Pleased as we are to be introducing this new magazine, we realize that it's probably not the best vehicle for regular communication with you in the fast-changing information field. Therefore, beginning in November, you will begin receiving a monthly, e-mailed newsletter with thought-provoking features that offer you the opportunity to interact online with the author and fellow readers and take part in conversations within the SI community. We believe this will be an exciting new platform that will connect us all in additional, valuable ways.

I invite you to share your reactions to *Sphere's* new format with us and I look forward to your participation in our new online forum.

Sincerely,



Jeff MacKie-Mason

Dean, School of Information

Arthur W. Burks Professor of Information and Computer Science

Professor of Economics and Public Policy

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Not just another app

Bradley Horowitz, vice president of product for Google+ and one of the creators and leaders on the project, is a Michigan alum and member of the School of Information's External Advisory Board. Recently he provided an insider's look at the newly released Google+, Google's latest social networking project.

SI: The first and most obvious question is how Google+ differs from other social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter.

BH: When we constructed Google+, we did a lot of research to discover what users like about existing services and what could be improved. We heard resoundingly that satisfaction with existing services was very low. In fact, some research said that leading social networking services rank on a par with or below the IRS. So, consumers are not necessarily elated with the choices that they have in the market today – it's just that there haven't been many good alternatives.

We talked to them about what could be improved. One of the things we heard was that people didn't feel they could be authentic on these services. There's one social graph that puts my mother on a peer level with my kindergarten friend, a colleague, and someone I met at a conference last week. Suddenly I have hundreds of "friends," all of whom have very different relationships to me, and it means there's almost nothing I can say to such a diverse audience that's relevant to everyone. So, conversations trend to the lowest common denominator. You say "checked into Olive Garden," "had oatmeal for breakfast," "I'm caught in traffic." Meaningful conversations become very difficult.

We want to build something that allows people to be authentically themselves. That is to say, when you walk in to a bar on Friday night you're one person, when you go to church on Sunday morning you're a different person, when you're at work you're yet another person. Because it's contextual, you know who you're with. You know what the expectations are, what the rules are. But today's online systems don't capture those nuances.

What we've tried to do with Google+ is give people the ability to segment parts of themselves into what we call Circles, and so be contextually appropriate for the audience you're speaking with. In that model is a new approach toward privacy that lets you always understand who is going to be seeing the content that you're producing. That underlying Circles model is core to everything we've done.

SI: One of the biggest issues that people seem to be waking up to in using social media is privacy. What's Google's reaction to the belief that the era of internet privacy is over?

BH: We don't believe that privacy is dead. We're bringing privacy back and raising the bar, setting new standards of what it means to respect users' wishes. Unlike some other networks, we don't think privacy is something that should be buried six panels deep, that you set and forget. We think privacy should be brought to the forefront and be part of every decision you make about how you contribute content into the system.

For instance, when you post, you should determine the audience that can see this post. When you comment, you should be able to know who's in the room. In the real world we have walls and windows, and we understand the physical space we inhabit, but we don't understand that online there are also virtual rooms and we have to do a better job of conveying who's in the room.

SI: What are users telling you they like/dislike about Google+? Any surprises?

BH: One surprising thing is the deep and visceral level of engagement that people experience on Google+. People are saying that they got more audience and more followers here in weeks vs. other services where they've been investing for years. Not only that, this audience wasn't passive, it was deeply engaging and they were having dialogue. The threading model allowed for much more meaningful interaction, so it wasn't as much a broadcast as it was a discussion. That's been really gratifying and why I think we've seen so much interest from pundits, celebrities, personalities who want to connect to their fans and followers in a more meaningful way.

SI: Of the many features that Google+ offers, which are proving to be the most popular?

BH: People are most excited about Hangouts. Hangouts is literally hanging out, it's like you're on your front porch. If somebody walks by and they want to drop in and say hi, they can. If they see you and another friend up there as they're walking by, they might feel compelled to join the party, so it's a different social dynamic, it's more serendipitous and relaxed, and I think that's been really attractive for people.

We're seeing a lot of usage of Hangouts and a lot of novel usage. We heard a story about someone who conducted a surgery in a Hangout in a rural hospital in Kentucky, dialed into a major metropolitan hospital in Chicago, and they were able to guide the surgeon through a complicated orthopedic surgery. There are all kinds of novel uses of Hangouts that we never imagined.

SI: How does Google expect to benefit from having its own social networking site?

BH: We have done a relatively poor job over the past decade of understanding people. When I type "John Smith" into the Google search engine, we treat that as a sequence of nine characters and we return Web pages that contain those characters. That's really a disservice to the entity that is John Smith. We think if we understand people, we can do a much better job of fulfilling our mission in serving users. For example, when most users come to Google today, we fulfill their request in 180 milliseconds. We pride ourselves on how quickly our search engine delivers the best possible results.

But there are a lot of queries where time is not of the essence. If I'm in the market for a mortgage, I don't need the mortgage in 180 milliseconds. I need a mortgage this month. And so we've had a less durable knowledge of who our users are. We want to get to know them, get to know their interests, get to know their relationships, and turn that around as value for them so that we can provide a better, more interesting service. For us, it's less about building a monolithic social destination, and more about understanding people and in particular our users, and doing great things for them based on that understanding.

SI: Most people still think of Google as primarily a search engine. What are the ways that Google+ is going to be integrated into our search capabilities?

BH: It's important to understand that Google+ isn't another experiment like Wave or Buzz. It is in some ways the shortest modifier on Google itself. It's Google with a tiny little plus sign, to indicate it's Google plus you, plus your interests, plus your relationships. In doing that, we wanted to signify that all of Google will be made better by understanding our users in this way. That includes search and ads and Chrome and Android and YouTube — all the parts of Google where we interact with users can benefit from this deep understanding. So, it's not a siloed, independent effort. It is a redefinition of how Google serves its users.

Read the full interview with Bradley Horowitz online at **si.umich.edu.**

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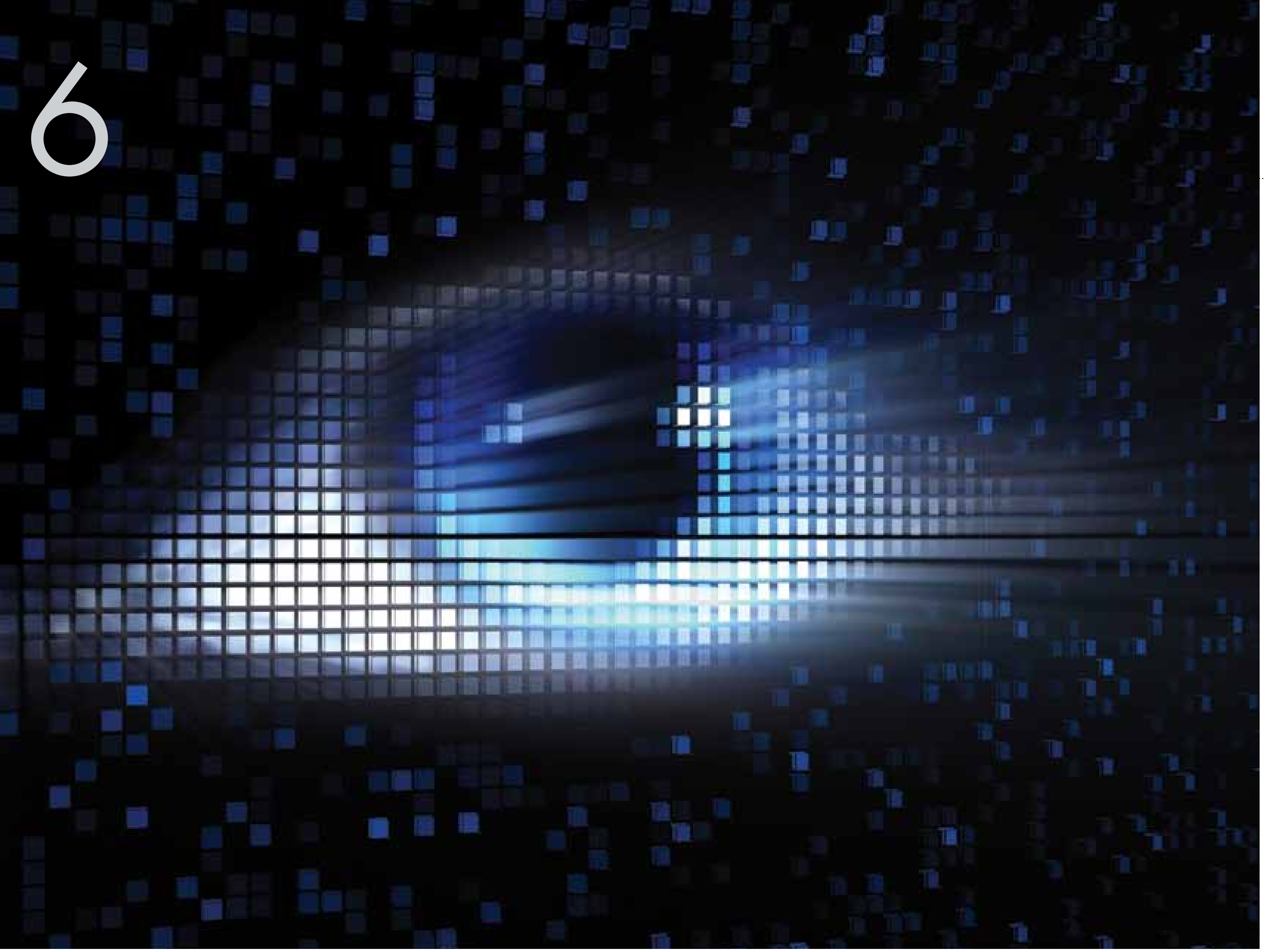

Is privacy an issue if all spaces are public spaces?

This article appeared in the September-October issue of *IEEE Security & Privacy* (**computer.org/security**) and is reprinted here with permission of the publisher. The author is **Jeffrey MacKie-Mason**, dean of the School of Information and a professor at the University of Michigan. Contact him at **jmm@umich.edu**.

Today, private lives are lived in public. In the future, all space will be public space. Those are fighting words for many security and privacy researchers. But they're true enough that adopting this perspective provides a powerful design stance.

In the 1990s, techno-utopiast George Gilder pressed the following point: Moore's exponential cost decreases in silicon and sand (microprocessors and fiber-optic bandwidth) meaning that in a short time information processing and communicating will essentially be free.[1] Those with foresight will design as if both indeed are free. Gilder asserted, "Just as the entire world had to learn to waste transistors, the entire world will now have to learn to waste bandwidth."[1] He was right: compare today's smartphone app capabilities to what we had on an early 1990s mainframe.

I claim something similar about privacy: for design purposes, we should design as if all space is public. Sure, privacy-protecting technology is improving all the time, but not as fast as privacy-releasing technology advances. And even more important, people are making behavioral choices to live their lives more publicly, or at least, less privately. The challenge for system designers is in understanding enough about behavior to design safer public spaces in which people can share private information; designers can't ignore behavior and blame users for not using systems in "intended" ways.

Simple e-mail illustrates this problem. Yes, we have PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) mail, but we might as well accept that essentially no one uses it. It's great for those who want it, but for most users, designers should think of all e-mail as essentially public: once it's sent, the user can't control it. Same with texts, social network posts, and so forth. Instead of wishing that people would behave differently, we should try to understand their motivations and behaviors and use that understanding in design.

For those who choose to do so, living in public is risky. It can be embarrassing, or worse. Your daughter might lose her job. Your son's spouse might divorce him. Yet, even when educated about the potential consequences, an increasing number of people choose to take these risks.

Fear, or at least healthy concern, is an old message. There is a complementary optimistic message: people benefit from sharing their lives. We as individuals can benefit — ditto as families and communities, as a nation, as citizens of the world. By sharing our lives, we can improve business opportunities, increase civility in political dialogue, build bridges across cultural and national divides, radically transform education, and enrich our social lives. Designers shouldn't second-guess the motives of those who share.

Because of the risks, people will be better off if system engineers create safe spaces and safe practices for sharing. The National Mall in Washington, DC, is a great public place and the scene of some our most important civic gatherings. It's a great place, in part, because it's fundamentally safe. People can enjoy the great personal and social benefits from sharing their lives publicly, if we create safe public spaces.

Public space

That there are many challenges to privacy should not come as a surprise. Some loss of privacy is institutional, thanks to government, commerce, and the media. Closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras are becoming ubiquitous on subway platforms, in grocery stores, at traffic lights and toll booths, and just about everywhere in England. A bureaucrat somewhere might be getting paid to watch you walking down the street, having sex,[2] or throwing away a cat.[3]

Much privacy is lost because living our lives publicly has commercial value. For example, Google Satellite shows fairly good images of my wife's well-tended gardens; Google Street View shows the world my front door, and sometimes more revealing information about others' lives.

If you purchased a house in the past two or three years — or will in the future — there's a good chance that neighbors or burglars can go to Zillow.com to open a complete set of floor plans, and even see a portfolio of interior photographs. If you own a cell phone, your phone company and the police department have access to your location to a high degree of accuracy — more so if you have a smartphone with GPS.

And yet, CCTV and Google are small potatoes among the forces causing us to live our lives publicly. The biggest factor outside our control that will make our private lives public is smartphones. Soon essentially everyone on the planet will have a high-definition video camera in their pocket that is connected to the Internet. The media are everywhere, and they are us. Anyone can record you (or take photos, but that's so 2010) while at a party in your house, yelling at your spouse stopped at a traffic light, or sunbathing on the beach, and then publish it to the world in a blink.

How significant is this? Last semester, one of my colleagues gave his undergraduates an assignment to take a photo or video of something relevant and upload it to the class Facebook page. This required no lab-assistant support: every student in the class already had a Facebook account and a digital video recorder or camera and knew how to upload pictures and videos to the Internet. This probably isn't surprising in Ann Arbor, Michigan. But 80 percent of Egyptian citizens carry a cell phone.[4] How long until everyone on the planet has an Internet-connected phone with a camera?

Increased voluntary sharing

So far, I've described involuntary ways in which our lives are recorded, tracked, and published. These observations are not new, of course. Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis made them in a seminal 1890 *Harvard Law Review* article, "The Right to Privacy";[5] David Brin brought us up to date in his 1997 book, *The Transparent Society*.[6] My point is somewhat different. Although cheap, ubiquitous Internet-connected video cameras on smartphones are accelerating the pace of involuntary public sharing, the new, surprising factor is that we're volunteering to live publicly like never before.

A prosaic example is customer loyalty cards. Grocery store and other purchasing decisions let marketers sell reports on us that include hundreds of personal details, from age and gender to whether we suffer adult incontinence and how much liquor we purchase.

Loyalty cards, like Web tracking cookies, are somewhat passive, and many users might not realize they're providing so much private information. But often, other types of sharing are quite explicit and intentional. A 2010 study found that 10 percent of people under age 25 say they text while having sex (a steady stream of tweets are tagged #havingsex) and 24 percent while using the toilet.[7]

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In 1999, Internet entrepreneur Josh Harris wired his apartment with approximately 30 cameras that broadcast all aspects of his life with his girlfriend.[8] In just a few years, reality shows dominated broadcast television. Today, people — you, me, our children — write our own reality shows. When 20-somethings breakup with someone, they post it on Facebook. When people have a full bladder, they tweet it (search #tmi bladder). People publish their travel itineraries on Dopplr and TripIt, and announce their current location on Foursquare, Gowalla, Google+, or Facebook Places. More than 35 million people have revealed their tastes and personal experiences in hotels and restaurants by publishing TripAdvisor or Yelp reviews.

People go online to confess things in public through blogs, special-purpose websites, and Twitter and Facebook: "A Georgetown law student's life has completely unraveled. His way of dealing with losing his wife, his mistress, his supposed baby, his military assignment, and good standing at Georgetown Law School? A public confession on Facebook."[9]

The public-sharing footprint is huge and growing. Thirty billion new items are posted on Facebook every month.[10] Forty-eight hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute.[11] More than 5 billion images are uploaded to Flickr by individual users.[12] Every day, 140 million tweets are posted on Twitter, and 90 percent of these are completely public.[13] All of this public sharing affects peoples' lives. Today, 30 percent of couples meet online, and in the last three years, 1 in 6 marriages began online.[14]

What is it about social media that makes it so antithetical to privacy? danah boyd has identified four key features:[15]

- Persistence — what we share today will be available tomorrow, and next decade.
- Searchability — it's often easy to find our digital traces.
- Replicability — what we inscribe in one space need not stay there. We have high-fidelity copy-and-paste. The forwarded e-mail, the blog entries about college indiscretions—these can reappear anywhere.
- Invisible audiences, or the friend-of-a-friend phenomenon — you might trust your 500 close Facebook friends with your intimacies, but what about each of their 500 friends, and their friends' friends? We're each less than six degrees of connection away from Kevin Bacon, not to mention Perez Hilton and Fox News.

People increasingly want to share their private lives, but they want to do so safely. This is what we should be working on. What sort of risks do they face? Identity theft through systems that assume one type of user behavior becomes easier because people are making name, birth date, home address, and even Social Security numbers available. We can't yet guess all the risks that will follow for those who publicly share their DNA information, but already, several companies will genotype your DNA if you send in a saliva sample, then ask you to share your DNA data. By sharing, you and others can discover to whom in the database you are related. Maybe Queen Elizabeth is your cousin. But, suppose your father isn't who you think he is, because of secret adoption, sperm donation, or simple deception. You might find this out and seek out your father's family, who might not want to be found. Even scarier, suppose someone is the child of incest or rape, and discovers that?

Designing safe spaces is getting harder. Consider those people who post personal information and a picture anonymously to Match.com, hoping to find love or intimacy in a safe space. Match.com provides a message relay service, so you only reveal your name to individuals if you choose. But, maybe it's not so safe. Alessandro Acquisti and colleagues took a sample of anonymous dating service photos associated with a particular city, then downloaded Facebook profiles and photos of people likely from the same city based on publicly disclosed information. Automatic face recognition software enabled them to correctly identify 10 percent of the dating-service participants. In a related experiment, they correctly identified 31 percent of students in a building foyer by matching a photo to a database of Facebook profiles.[16]

Challenges

Like it or not, we're living our lives more publicly. So, what can privacy folks do?

When all spaces are public, do we need effective ways to communicate privately? It's a truism that one shouldn't put anything into e-mail that must be kept secret. E-mail can exhibit all four characteristics of networked publics (persistence, searchability, replicability, and invisible audiences). "Solutions" such as PGP mail have utterly failed to catch on. Do we need a better solution, or will secure, private communication be unnecessary in the future?

One alternative is to whisper in public, for instance, by using slang and vernacular. This is a form of steganography — hiding in plain sight. boyd has observed young people learning to speak in layers in public spaces, sharing intimacies with friends while knowing that their parents are listening.[15] Of course, using slang the old folks don't know is nothing new, but slang is being created and evolving faster than ever.

Another approach is to offer better, albeit imperfect, privacy controls. Google released its social network, Google+, this summer, with "Circles" its most noted feature. [See an interview with Google+ co-creator Bradley Horowitz on page 4.] Users can post status, photos, and links publicly, or limit them to circles of their own choosing, letting them send some information only to friends, other information to family members, and yet other information to work colleagues, for example. Of course, this is imperfect: others can resend the information to people outside the circle. But it provides a way to signal to recipients that you'd prefer the information not be shared more widely. Better information control might result from user-aware system design: the same degree of control has been available for about a year on Facebook through Groups, but these tools have been largely ignored, whereas Google+ Circles are being quickly adopted, apparently because of a more user-behavior-sensitive design.

Because living private life in public is in large point a behavioral choice, we should be looking to the behavioral sciences to design safe spaces. Findings there make clear that the way we design online systems is important for privacy-relevant behavior, and this research is finding its way into privacy and security research. Framing is one foundational finding — the schema of interpretation around a choice might affect the choices made, even resulting in violations of the axioms of rationality.[18] A more recent, related finding of considerable practical importance is the significant influence that the presentation of the default choice has on the choice made: for example, whether to opt in or out of a privacy-preserving feature.[19] Another is the endowment effect — how giving up versus receiving something can influence choice, even when the net effect is the same.

Humans are communicating creatures. We live better when we communicate more. The Internet and the emergence of social media provide amazing new communication opportunities. But sharing our private lives in public is also risky.

In a world in which people voluntarily live their private lives in public, we need to work with behavioral science to design and create safe public spaces. Rather than bemoan the "stupid" or "lazy" users who won't protect their privacy more, let's design privacy-enhancing technologies to make public spaces safer and to give people who want to live most of their lives in public some safety. And, maybe, a technology that lets us whisper now and then.

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Social media and political discourse

IS ANYONE LISTENING?

by Mary Jean Babic

Sean Munson was a political blogger in high school and college. But eventually he grew dissatisfied with being read only by those who agreed with him and, after the 2004 presidential election, gave up his blog. "I wasn't achieving any goals for discussion and debate that I'd hoped to achieve," says Munson, now an SI doctoral student.

The 2004 campaigns happened to be the year first to draw heavily on the Internet for organizing and fund-raising. Although unsuccessful, Howard Dean's run for the Democratic nomination put in place elements—huge e-mail rolls, large numbers of small online donations, social networking among supporters — that Barack Obama's campaign would capitalize on, to stupendous effect, in 2008.

In a few short years, the role of social media in campaigns — the fund-raising and organizing power it offers candidates, as well as the sense of personal connection it can lend voters — has been cemented. According to a study by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, 22% of online adults used Twitter or sites such as Facebook or MySpace to connect with campaigns in the 2010 elections, and there's no reason to think those numbers won't grow in the 2012 presidential race. By comparison, in 2008 only 14% of Internet-using adults reported forwarding or posting political commentary, and 8% contributed money online.

With the spread of social media, more of our online experience is tracked, tagged, aggregated, and personalized. If an educated, well-informed citizenry is essential to a flourishing democracy, the tendency of the Internet to present us with more of what we've already seen, or selected, or liked, and to filter out what we don't want, is a worrisome consequence — the much-lamented echo chamber. The polarization that caused Sean Munson to give up blogging in 2004 hasn't gone away.

Civility in unexpected places

Not long after he ended his blog, Munson noticed, while playing Go online, that political discussions sometimes cropped up among players. Though usually brief, those discussions tended to be more diverse and respectful than conversations found on overtly political blogs. Munson arrived at Michigan interested in encouraging diverse discourse and seeking out nontraditional places it might be occurring.

He teamed up with Professor **Paul Resnick** on a study published this year examining the prevalence of discourse in non-political blogs. They found a "substantial" amount of political discussion in the 8,675 diary, hobby, and fan blogs they surveyed. While they didn't investigate whether the quality of discourse was less polarizing on these sites than political blogs, they wouldn't be surprised to discover that's the case.

"There's a lot of handwringing about the nature of political discourse online," Resnick says. "I think partly that's because we're looking in the wrong places." When people gather around some other shared interest, they are likely to be more cordial when politics comes up, in order to preserve those relationships or because they're unsure of others' political sympathies.

A little too personal

There's also a lot of handwringing, Resnick believes, about personalization — algorithms used by Google, Facebook, and other sites that, based on what you've clicked on in the past, filter out information and show you only what they think will interest you. An alarm was raised this year in *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding from You*, by Eli Pariser, former executive director of MoveOn.org. The book, published this year, warns that because of the widespread use of personalization, there are huge swaths of the Internet that we never even see. As an experiment, Pariser had friends type the same search term in Google, and was horrified by their differing results.

In Resnick's view, the solution isn't no personalization; it's good personalization. "What people want is not always more of the same," he says. "They want the interesting, good-quality things from the opposition. They don't want the polemic, but people want variety." What's needed are better algorithms. Toward that end, Resnick, Munson, and doctoral student **Daniel Xiaodan Zhou**, conducted an experiment on Digg and Reddit, sites that aggregate news and other content from across the Web. Reader votes determine what appears on the main pages. But, as the authors wrote, "algorithms based solely on popularity may lead to a tyranny of the majority," a slight input bias produces a large output bias. If a site has 60 liberal readers and 40 conservative readers, all of whom can vote as many times as they want, liberal articles will likely occupy most or all of the front page, which then won't reflect the true makeup of the readership nor offer a variety of viewpoints.

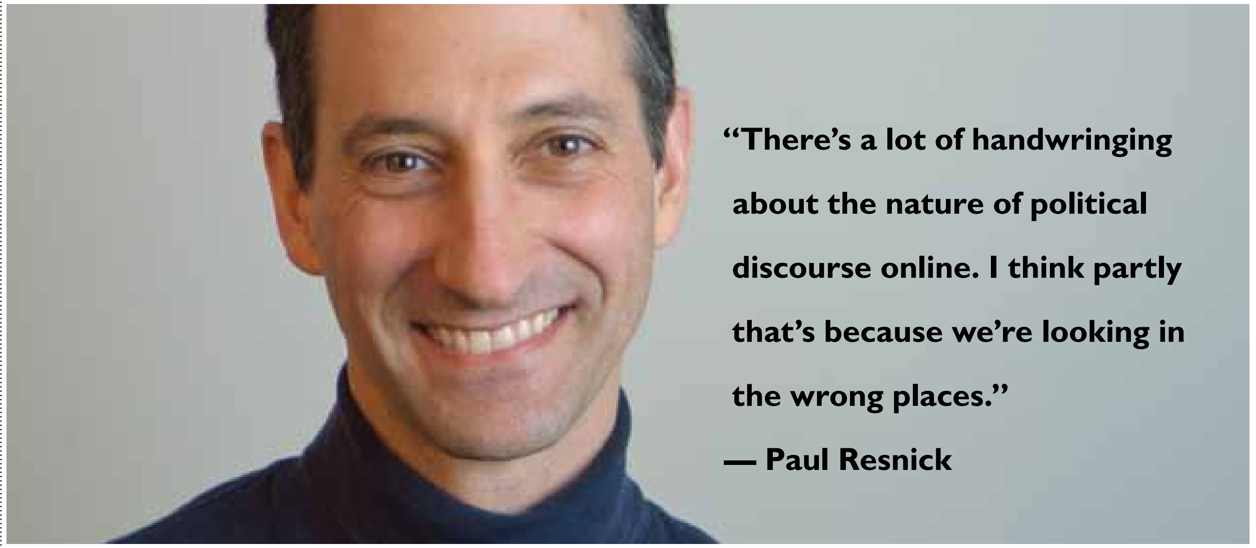
"In practice, we see things like Reddit and Digg being very heavily skewed toward liberal stories," says Munson. "So conservatives go somewhere else, and people end up more polarized."

Achieving balance algorithmically

Resnick, Munson and Zhou created an algorithm, called Sidelines, that reduces the influences of voters by suppressing their votes — sidelining them — for a time after they select an already voted-for item. The authors found that participants who used Digg and Reddit with the Sidelines algorithm installed had an 89% chance of finding something challenging in the results, compared to 50% with results generated by a popularity-only algorithm.

Of course, offering a diverse set of links doesn't mean readers will click on any of them. Resnick and Munson currently are working on methods to make readers aware of bias in articles they've chosen — a software add-on for Digg and Reddit that color-codes stories as blue (liberal) or red (conservative), and presents a

Sean Munson



tightrope-walking stick figure that is either in balance or falling to the left and right with a look of horror on its face — and to redress imbalances by offering sidebars with links to articles of the opposite political orientation of the one currently being read.

The voice of the voter

Liking or voting for things is a hallmark of social media, one that politicians and campaigns are tapping to connect with their constituents. For example, Senate Majority Leader Eric Cantor's office operates YouCut, a site that every week lists three potential spending cuts in the federal budget; the item with the most votes is proposed to Congress.

In the social media age, people now expect to be heard, says **David Weinberger**, a noted thinker on Web issues and author of *The Cluetrain Manifesto* and *Everything is Miscellaneous: The Power of the New Digital Disorder.* He was also the senior Internet adviser on the 2004 Dean campaign. Weinberger was the featured speaker at this year's John Seely Brown Symposium on Technology and Society at SI on October 3.

In taking advantage of social media, one of the biggest challenges is scalability, says Weinberger. Polling sites such as Cantor's are all well and good, but what to do with all the pointless information that floods in with the few bits of valuable stuff? "It's probably why it's a representational democracy," he says. "The set of issues you need to know to know what to cut is enormously complex." Likewise, citizens may enjoy a frisson of satisfaction when they get a tweet from their member of congress or vote for something on YouCut, but does one data bit out of billions really amount to an authentic connection? Nonetheless, the passion and volume of political discussion online is too important for politicians to ignore.

Getting heard

The Howard Dean campaign, which built an e-mail list of 800,000, encountered this dilemma, Weinberger says. "They knew how to broadcast down from the top, but they wanted to engage the citizenry as well," he says. It would be chaos for all 800,000, or even 80,000, to flood the mailing list with messages, so the campaign began connecting its supporters in smaller groups, based on geography or shared interests. Dean dropped out of the race before his fledgling social network had a chance to get up to speed and running, but it demonstrated how conversations among large groups of people can be scaled laterally, says Weinberger.

It works something like this: There's a forum where some topic — carbon emissions, trade with China — is discussed. A candidate's policy people monitor the discussion, because their boss wants to be seen as caring about the topic. Over time, a few people emerge as the conversation leaders; they're committed, outspoken, well-informed. The staff contacts one or two of the leaders and asks for their input, and they do this publicly to demonstrate the candidate's engagement. Those people, then, become the thread's representative to the campaign.

"Campaigns are self-interested and focused," says Weinberger. "They want to get their person elected, and that's it, so they have every reason to engage with the most passionate, partisan people they can find, and those people show up in these types of online forums." Handled correctly, he says, this approach can resemble "a vision that our forefathers had for this country — brilliant, engaged citizens' voices would be heard."

The tools of social media make it easy to get any voice, brilliant or not, out there. What's much harder is being heard.

Mary Jean Babic is a freelance writer living in Brooklyn.

3 GRADS, 104 LIKES, AND 1 EXPERIMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA

The debt-ceiling crisis in Washington this summer infuriated a lot of people, and one of them was new SI grad **Jessie Mannisto**. Her disgust at the spectacle sent her flying to her computer, determined to organize others as fed up as she was. On July 22 she launched the Facebook group Americans for Rational Compromise.

"I didn't know what I was doing," says Mannisto. "I was like, 'I'm mad! I'm creating a Facebook group!'" The tweeting protesters of the Arab Spring served as inspiration. "If they can use social media to bring down corrupt regimes, why can't we?"

Americans for Rational Compromise sought to be a bipartisan call for elected leaders to come together to avoid financial catastrophe. "[W]e elected you to do the hard work of representing us as the complex, opinionated country we are," declares the group's information page. "[I]f you have the maturity to compromise, we will praise you, not punish you."

And since Mannisto happened to be in D.C. for the summer — on a Google Policy Fellowship, based at the American Library Association — a physical element figured prominently into her plan: members could write elected officials letters, which Mannisto would print out and personally march over to Congress.

"If I went to the Capitol myself with a book of printed letters, that would make more of an impression than a bunch of e-mails," says Mannisto.

Within days, two of her fellow '11 grads, **Morgan Burton** and **Alexis Antracoli**, were assisting from Ann Arbor. They bought Facebook ads for the group; they set up a corresponding Twitter account and Tumblr web site; they promoted the group on the just-launched Google Plus. They banked on the viral nature of the Internet to kick in, producing a thick stack of letters for Mannisto to deliver in time for the fast-approaching debt-ceiling vote, which took place August 2.

It didn't, in the end, work out as they had hoped. While Americans for Rational Compromise attracted 104 members in a single weekend — a number they cite with pride — no one wrote letters. "I had a few people saying, 'Where's the letter I can use?' " says Mannisto. "I was like, 'No, you write the letter.' " Next time, she says, she'll include boilerplate language and also stress that "it's not just enough to like it; you have to join the conversation."

Another challenge, says Burton, was distinguishing their group amid the cacophony of social media activity relating to the debt-ceiling crisis in the days leading up to the vote. "With all that noise, it's very, very difficult to get your voice heard," she says. "Most of it depends on whether you have influential outlets or, especially on Twitter, influential people pick it up." None did, though they were thrilled when Jennifer Granholm, former Michigan governor, liked Americans for Rational Compromise. Still, that wasn't enough for it to become a viral smash.

Antracoli has a hunch that compromise, as a rally cry, "doesn't quite get people's blood boiling as much as other things. But," she adds, "that's purely my opinion." Getting people to engage beyond liking something, she learned, proved harder than she would have thought. "We hear how regular people are using social media for marketing and organizing," she says, "but if you don't have expertise in those areas, it's not easy."

In the end, the clock simply ran out. Congress voted, and although the deal disappointed almost everybody ("This is not compromise," Mannisto wrote on the group's page) the country moved on. Mannisto and Burton are now back home — Mannisto in Michigan, Burton in Texas — looking for jobs. Mannisto would like to work in government; Burton is interested in interaction strategies and usability testing. Antracoli has a one-year appointment at the Bentley Historical Library, processing new collections.

They all value the lessons from their summer experiment in social media, and while it didn't change the world, they're proud of what their organic, low-funded, seat-of-their-pants Facebook group accomplished in a short time. "It was just three of us students," Burton says, "trying to make an impact."

— Mary Jean Babic

"It was just three of us students, trying to make an impact."

— Morgan Burton

Social Media and the Public Sector

"Nessie" in the river was one of the artworks at the Grand Rapids, MI, ArtPrize competition. Social media played a large role in voting for contest winners.

Public sector organizations, including government agencies and nonprofit organizations, are turning to social media to engage stakeholders in new ways and improve the ability of people to make positive changes in their communities.

The term "social media" is shorthand for a diverse set of technologies and social practices that share a few common traits. First, they depend on the users of the technology to create the information that's being shared. Whether that information is a video, a status update, or a comment on a news story, it all comes from the users. Second, social media is based on direct user-to-user interaction. Unlike traditional media where editors and publishers acted as gatekeepers even when interaction was possible, in social media people have few if any barriers between each other.

Another common characteristic of social media is that they typically are constructed of bundles of applications for interaction. Facebook, for example, has synchronous chat, asynchronous messaging, picture sharing, rating, commenting, and a host of other tools collected into one framework.

Public sector builds social platforms

The federal government has been utilizing social media to inform and interact with the public for several years. Nearly all federal agencies now have some kind of social media presence. Here in Michigan, both state and local government have been trying to join the bandwagon as well. Most state agencies have a Facebook, Twitter or YouTube presence, and sometimes all three[1]. You can follow the tweets of the Michigan Department of Transportation to get traffic updates[2], or check out the YouTube feed for the Department of Human Services to learn how to fill out applications for assistance or become a foster parent[3].

Counties and cities are also using social media. Washtenaw County, home to the School of Information, has Twitter, Facebook and YouTube channels for many of its agencies[4]. The county sheriff's office has been using social media in multiple ways to engage community members, especially youth. The City of Ann Arbor employs these popular channels to share news and ask people their opinions of events.

Service-oriented nonprofit agencies have begun using social media in similar ways. The Right Place, an organization in Grand Rapids devoted to the economic development of the region, has used social media to organize multiple events, as well as keep its stakeholders informed.[5]

Similarly, the Grand Rapids ArtPrize[6] is a nonprofit organization that promotes a city-wide art competition. Art is placed in venues throughout the greater downtown area and the winner is determined by attendees, who vote using QR codes and mobile phones. In 2010, over 200,000 visitors to the event cast just under half a million votes on over 1,700 art installations. Nonprofits of all shapes, sizes and missions have turned to social media to get the word out and harness the energy of their stakeholders.

All public sector organizations use social media in hopes of realizing the same specific benefits. There is a cost to social media, of course, and public sector groups are not known for deep pockets. So what are they hoping to get out of their investment?

- New channels to stakeholders

Given the public's huge adoption of services like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, public sector organizations want to be where the action is. Common to all these organizations is the belief that social media are particularly effective in reaching younger users, who use these channels for everyday communication and media consumption. This is a dominant use of social media by public sector organizations, but in many ways it is one that takes least advantage of the interactive features in social media. There is a cost savings, in that the sites are providing platforms, so the organizations are free to focus on content, but it's not very interactive.

- Harnessing the "wisdom of the crowds"

A use that does attempt to leverage the features of social media is soliciting large groups of stakeholders to come up with creative solutions to problems faced by the organization. Ways to save money, opinions on whether an area should be commercially developed, or how to stop kids from leaving Michigan are examples of complex problems that these organizations hope to "crowd source." Large, distributed groups have at times been very successful in coming up with novel solutions to problems. The ability to tap into a large pool of stakeholders is a tempting prize for resource-strapped public sector organizations.

- Delivering services in new ways

Many public sector organizations have attempted to use social media to deliver new services to stakeholders or maintain services in the face of budget cuts. For example, a county may use social media to organize a volunteer park cleanup when it can no longer afford the service. Many new nonprofits use social media to allow people to become directly involved in philanthropic work, or to match them to opportunities for community service. In these ways, the organizations try to catalyze community action through social media services.

In sum, these organizations are all interested in changing the world in some meaningful way. Their hope is that social media interactions will lead to offline action.

Barriers to success

Over the past several years, I've been involved in a series of projects that have attempted to use social media to enact change in local communities in Michigan. Whether it's to prevent the "bright flight" of youth leaving the state after high school, promote regional economic development, or provide stronger coverage of environmental news stories in the Great Lakes area, these attempts have had many challenges that hamper the realization of the above goals.

- The cost/benefit problem: Many public sector organizations hope that stakeholders will add content, share knowledge, or engage in action through their social media sites, but they rarely think about what the stakeholders would gain from their participation.
- The top-down/grassroots problem: Most successful social media efforts are grass roots efforts. How can top-down agencies like those in government really lead a grassroots effort? This is also expressed as a question of authenticity in terms of the how the organization sponsoring the effort is interacting with stakeholders. Do they really want the interaction?
- The outcomes problem: Public sector organizations often engage in a social media effort with no clear idea of what their outcomes are for that effort. What does a critical success look like? How do we know if we've failed? What will we actually measure, and how?
- The "Field of Dreams" problem: We like to focus on the big successes in the social media world, but for every Wikipedia there are hundreds of failed social media efforts. Still, there's a persistent myth that "If you build it, they will come." Nope. We know from many studies that only a small percentage of the people who view a site are willing to participate in it. Even fewer become active participants. Public sector organizations that believe the myth rarely invest in the human time it will take to build relationships and post content in the social media, and rarely think about how to convert site viewers into site participants.

Even when things do actually take off, and people flood a site, there are issues public sector organizations struggle with. How do they handle "flaming" posts in forums without looking like they are censoring? How do they choose between creating their own sites vs. posting things on Facebook? When can they stop sending out their paper newsletter?

Getting it right

While social media is hardly a silver bullet in increasing the engagement between public sector organizations and their communities, the promises of that social media engagement still hold true. People are invested in these channels at an ever-increasing rate[7], and they are blending their personal communication, advocacy, and civic engagement in those channels to a large extent. Challenges exist in how we activate civic engagement through social media, but if we can get it right we can help people express their better angels through participation in the community. As information professionals, our role is to help get it right.

Cliff Lampe, who wrote this story on social media, joined the SI faculty this fall as an assistant professor. For more about him, please see page 16.

Many new nonprofits use social media to allow people to become directly involved in philanthropic work, or to match them to opportunities for community service. In these ways, the organizations try to catalyze community action through social media services.

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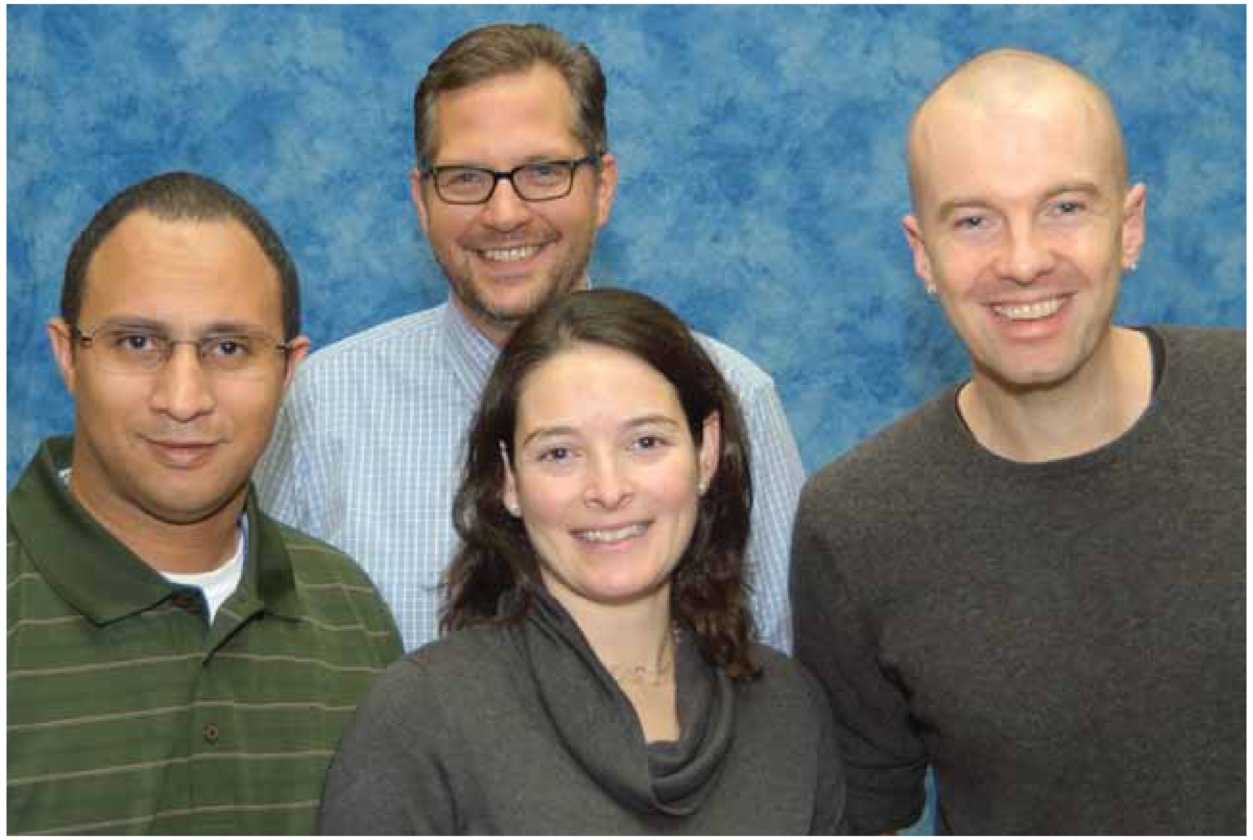


From left: Lionel Robert, Cliff Lampe, Julia Adler-Milstein, and Finn Brunton are all new assistant professors at SI this fall. You can hear brief presentations by them on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/schoolofinformation.

Four join faculty ranks

The SI community welcomed four assistant professors this fall.

Lionel Robert was assistant professor of information systems at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Sam M. Walton College of Business. His research focuses on team collaboration in virtual environments. He was a doctoral fellow and KPMG scholar at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business, where he completed his Ph.D. in information systems. He has written a book, *Social Capital and Knowledge Integration in Virtual Teams*, and is a member of the editorial board of *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communications*. His teaching and research will be in the area of information in organizations.

Cliff Lampe focuses on social computing. He earned his Ph.D. in 2006 from SI. He has been an assistant professor and director of graduate studies in the department of telecommunications, information studies, and media at Michigan State University. He also held a joint appointment in AgBioResearch. In 2010, he received an MSU Teacher-Scholar Award. His research concerns how social systems and technical systems interact and the outcomes of participating in e-communities.

Julia Adler-Milstein earned her Ph.D. in health policy management at Harvard University, where she was twice awarded certificates of distinction in teaching. Her research focuses on policy and management issues related to information technology in health care delivery. She received the Outstanding Dissertation Award from AcademyHealth, the leading professional organization for health services researchers. She will be contributing to both the information in organizations and health informatics curricula at SI.

Finn Brunton came from a postdoctoral research position in the Department of Media, Culture and Communication at New York University. He works primarily on digital media, particularly adoption, adaptation, misuse, and abuse. He has written and presented on privacy, anonymity, and trust online; mediated subcultures; the unbook; and the design of social networks. He is finishing a book on the history of spam and preparing another on radical agendas and encrypted digital currencies in the 1990s. He earned his Ph.D. in modern thought at the University of Aberdeen.

SI moves into health field

Health Informatics (HI) is a new graduate program offered jointly by the School of Information and the School of Public Health. The program joins the expertise of the School of Public Health's faculty in population health, health policy, and individual health behaviors with the School of Information's expertise in human-centered design, social engagement information and computing, and the development, implementation, and evaluation of information resources. Graduates of the program will be prepared to be leaders and innovators who revolutionize the ways information is used to enable better health.

Health informatics is one of today's fastest growing professions. As a result of many factors, including innovations in technology and new federal legislation, the health field is undergoing radical transformation. There is an established and increasing need for well-trained health informatics personnel. The health informatics program at Michigan reflects a major national effort to encourage the widespread use of new information tools in health care to increase the quality of care while reducing costs.

Students in this new program learn analytical skills relating to individual health, health care delivery, and population health. Graduates will have mastered concepts and acquired methodological skills from information science; behavioral, cognitive, and organizational science; health policy; and highly powered analytics.

Careers following graduation will depend significantly on the background and expertise of students enrolled in the program. Those with strong technical backgrounds may find roles as application designers and developers, consultants, system analysts, and entrepreneurs. Individuals with analytical and quantitative skills could become quality improvement analysts, data miners, evaluation specialists, or clinical and public health researchers. Policy-minded graduates might be part of a new generation of informatics-enabled policy analysts and engage with ongoing health reform.

The program offers a Master of Health Informatics (52 hours + internship) and Graduate Certificate in Health Informatics (18 hours). Students are already participating in the certificate program, restricted to graduate students enrolled at the University of Michigan. Applications are currently being accepted for the first class of master's students, who will begin studies in fall 2012.

For more information, visit **healthinformatics.umich.edu**.

Former senior federal scientist heads new joint master's program

Charles Friedman, director of the Health Informatics program, was chief scientific officer of the Office of National Coordinator for Health Information Technology in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services prior to accepting the appointment to head Michigan's new joint-degree program.

"I was profoundly attracted by the University of Michigan's distinctive emphasis on game-changing information technologies that will be used by health care consumers — which means all members of society — to promote health and wellness in entirely new ways," says Friedman. "The graduates of this program will be innovators at the forefront of a revolution."

From 2007-09, he was the deputy national coordinator for health IT. He also held federal positions as associate director for research informatics and information technology at the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute at the National Institutes of Health and senior scholar at the National Library of Medicine.

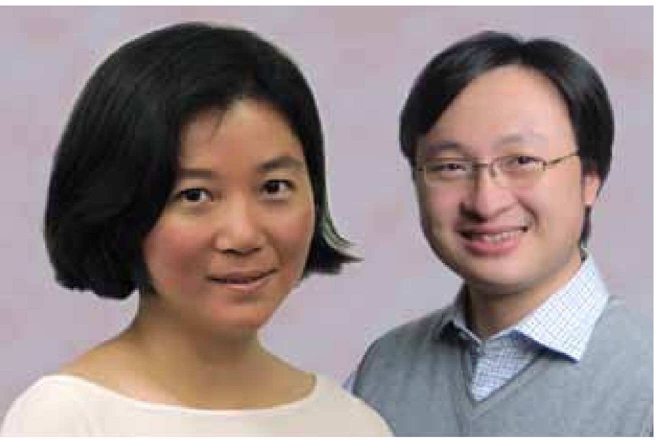
Friedman has over 30 years of experience in higher education as a faculty member and administrator at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He led the creation of health informatics programs at both schools.

"We are extremely fortunate to have attracted a candidate of Charles Friedman's stature and experience to head this cutting-edge program," said SI Dean **Jeff MacKie-Mason**. "Our goal is to have the leading graduate program in health informatics in the nation, and we can't imagine anyone better qualified to help us achieve it."

Charles Friedman

Professors ask: why do we lend money to strangers?

Most people are familiar with loaning money to a friend or relative, but what motivates someone to loan money to a complete stranger in a foreign country?



Yan Chen and Qiaozhu Mei

That's the subject of research by Professor **Yan Chen** and Assistant Professor **Qiaozhu Mei,** who have received a $500,000, three-year grant from the National Science Foundation to study "Social Identity in Online Microfinance and Public Goods Provision."

Microfinance is the practice of making small loans of as little as $25 to the self-employed and entrepreneurs in developing countries. These loans allow individuals to purchase goods for resale, materials or machinery to produce goods to sell, or farming necessities such as seeds and fertilizer.

Over one billion people globally live in poverty, and these low-income families are generally shut out of the formal banking sector and forced to pay exorbitantly high interest rates from private moneylenders, if they can obtain loans at all. To help alleviate poverty, microfinance programs have emerged in many parts of the world to provide small loans and other financial services to the poor.

One such program is **Kiva.org**, the first peer-to-peer micro-lending site. Kiva matches citizen lenders with low-income entrepreneurs in developing countries. To date, most of the studies of microfinance have focused on the borrowers. Kiva allows researchers to study the motivations of the lenders, who are able to indicate their reasons for giving when making a loan.

Chen and Mei will be looking at the role social identity plays in lender behavior in an online microfinance community. Among their hypotheses they will test are whether joining a team increases an individual's lending activity and the amount of their loan, whether people join teams based on the team's motivations, and whether people choose teams based on the group's perceived success.

The results will assist nonprofit microfinance organizations such as Kiva to increase their effectiveness by better understanding the motivations of their lenders and suggesting additional strategies for them to employ.

The findings can also be employed by other online communities that contribute to the public good. Increased participation in lending activities will help realize the World Bank's goal of eradicating hunger and poverty by 2015.

Adamic among U-M best

Associate Professor **Lada Adamic** is the recipient of the University of Michigan's Henry Russel Award in recognition of her scholarship and conspicuous ability as a teacher. This is one of the highest awards the university bestows on junior faculty.

Professors' papers earn kudos

Associate Professor **Paul Conway** received the Ernst Posner Award from the Society of American Archivists (SAA) for his outstanding article "Modes of Seeing: Digitized Photographic Archives and the Experienced User." The award was conveyed at the SAA's 75th annual meeting in August. Previous SI recipients include Ph.D. graduate **Magia Ghetu Krause** and Professor **Elizabeth Yakel**.

Conway was also the recipient of the U-M Provost's Teaching Innovation Prize this past spring, for integrating creative pedagogies into his course "Teaching Ethics of/with New Technologies." In addition, he is the first U-M professor to publish all of his course materials on **Open.Michigan.** Conway says he thinks publishing openly is important and encourages other faculty can do it.

Assistant Professor **Tiffany Veinot** received the 2011 Outstanding Paper Award from the *Journal of Documentation* for her paper "A Multilevel Model of HIV/AIDS Information/Help Network Development."

Associate Professor **Soo Young Rieh** won her second Best Paper Award from the American Society for Information Science and Technology for her paper, "The Seventeen Theoretical Constructs of Information Searching and Information Retrieval." She won the award in 2005; only three other researchers have won this honor twice in its 40-plus-year history.

Zheng cited as researcher

Assistant Professor **Kai Zheng** has received the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) New Investigator award. This award recognizes an individual for early informatics contributions and significant scholarly contributions on the basis of scientific merit and research excellence.

Sharing their passion for SI

Sherry Aschenbrenner

Volunteer service

As the 2010-11 president of the SI Alumni Society Board, Aschenbrenner (MILS '94) gives SI the generous gifts of her time, passion, knowledge, and commitment. Like many others, she gives back to organizations with which she has a personal connection.

"I am still grateful not only for what I learned at SI, but also for the friends I made. I still see many of them, work with some, and even married one of them! When I consider the impact that SI has had on my life, it inspires me to remain involved," she says.

Aschenbrenner has been involved with the SI Alumni Society Board since 2008. Of the experience as president, she says: "I never expected to enjoy being involved with the Alumni Society as much as I have. I would encourage other alumni to get as involved as they can as a way of keeping in touch with the school and with each other."

Karen Horny

Bequest and scholarship donor

Karen Horny's initial interest in the library profession was sparked by a job with the special collections library while an undergraduate at Brown University. She inventoried rare items that wouldn't fit in the library vault.

Returning to her native Michigan and working in Detroit Public Library bookmobiles confirmed her interest in this career where she could see firsthand how much libraries mean to people.

Horny (AMLS '66) decided to endow a scholarship at SI as a way to give back that has a personal meaning for her. Her goal with the scholarship is to give people an opportunity they might not otherwise have for a career that they enjoy and love, as she has enjoyed and loved hers.

Phyllis Mirsky

Annual Fund donor

After graduating from SI, Phyllis Mirsky (AMLS '65) went on to a distinguished and highly successful 40-year career at the University of California. She began as a health sciences librarian at UCLA Biomedical Library in 1965 and has been recognized as a pioneer in health sciences librarianship.

On giving back to SI, Mirsky says it is a personal ethic she learned from her family.

"Giving back to the community is part of what we all should do," she says. Rather than giving to a specific program or scholarship, Mirsky always gives unrestricted gifts. She says that "as a library administrator for many years, I know how important the flexibility of unrestricted donations can be for any program."

Anne Beaubien and Phil Berry

Scholarship donors

Anne Beaubien, a 1970 SI alum, was initially motivated to give to honor treasured colleagues who had endowed scholarship funds at SI.

As the representatives for the Sharon A. Hogan Scholarship Fund at the annual SI scholarship luncheon one spring, Beaubien and her husband Phil were so impressed by the caliber of SI students and the importance of the scholarship program that they were motivated to endow their own SI scholarship. "We are mindful of the high costs of graduate education. The need for scholarships is greater than ever," Beaubien says.

In a career spanning over 40 years, Beaubien has worked in almost all facets of the University of Michigan Library. She has mentored and employed SI students and has also taught at SI. Both Beaubien and Berry stay connected to the school through their student scholarship recipients and enjoy meeting the recipients of both the Anne Beaubien Berry Scholarship and the Sharon A. Hogan Scholarship at the annual SI scholarship recognition luncheon each year.

Sherry Aschenbrenner

Karen Horny

Phyllis Mirsky

Anne Beaubien and Phil Berry

ALUMNI TRANSITIONS

Keeping in Touch

1950-1969

Elizabeth M. Salzer (AMLS '67) retired as university librarian, Santa Clara University, on July 1.

Richard Guy Wilson (AMLS '68) has been appointed the chair of architectural history at the University of Virginia, returning to a position he has held many times before.

Adeane Alpert Bregman (AMLS '69) began a new job at Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Library as interim head of research and engagement services for the Boston College Libraries.

Shirley Iversen (AMLS '69) retired in July after 42 years at the Rochester Public Library in Rochester, NY.

Sally Jaeger (AMLS '69) retired from the Flint Public Library in 1999. She is co-coordinating the effort to establish an archive at the First Presbyterian Church in Flint, celebrating its 175th Anniversary in 2012.

1970-1979

Anne Beaubien (AMLS '70) and **Kristina Eden** (MSI '05) presented a paper at the 12th Interlending & Document Supply Conference in Chicago in September.

Patricia Johnson (AMLS '70) was an acquisitions librarian and cataloger for the University of Oklahoma and library director of the Air Force Institute of Technology in Wyoming. She does volunteer work and has run successful political campaigns for her husband's representative and senate races.

Valerie J. Edwards (AMLS '71) is a high school teacher-librarian at Desert Christian Schools in Tucson.

Thomas Graham Lee (AMLS '71) got into prison librarianship by accident after years as a school librarian, working in corporate philanthropy and then starting a publishing business. He spends his time sailing on Lake Superior on a classic Seawind 30 ketch. Thomas is always in the need of used textbooks to help prisoners prepare for CLEP and AP exams. Contact him at **LeeTG@Michigan.gov** for details.

Judy Johnson (AMLS '72) was a school librarian in Flint until 1992 and worked as the district librarian for the Bentley district from 1997-2005. Since 2005 she has been the librarian for the Flint Institute of Arts.

Donna A. Atkins (AMLS '73) On June 10, 2011, Donna retired from her position as senior librarian in Kennedy Space Center Library, where she worked in the Documents, Specifications, and Standards department for 24 years.

Ken Haycock (AMLS '74) is professor emeritus and former director at the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia and at San Jose State University.

Sylvie Jacque (AMLS '74) is currently chief of User Services Sections with the United Nations Library in Geneva, Switzerland.

Mary Benson Muller (AMLS '74) is a retired information resources officer with the U.S. Department of State. This year, Mary was awarded the "2011 Outstanding Trustee Award" by the Library Trustees Association of New York State.

Connect!

Have news to share? Don't be shy. We'd love to hear what you're up to, as would your fellow alumni. Submit your news, both professional and personal, at **si.umich.edu/giving/update-your-contact-information**.

William Black (AMLS '75) is interim dean of the James E. Walker Library, Middle Tennessee State University and coauthor of a chapter of the new book, *The Generation X Librarian*.

Don Beagle (AMLS '77) has been named winner of the 2012 John Brubaker Memorial Award for an article which appeared in the March 2011 issue of *Catholic Library World*, vol. 81, no. 3.

Marcia (Colwell) Warner (AMLS '77) is currently director of the Grand Rapids Public Library and was recently elected president of the Public Library Association.

Catherine Suyak Alloway (AMLS '78) is currently serving as director, Schlow Centre Region Library, State College, PA and is co-director of the Federation of Centre County Libraries.

Larry J. Frank (AMLS '79) is working on a second novel, ghostwriting, staying abreast of multi-disciplinary approaches to non-profits and consulting with nonprofit boards, directors, and public and corporate officials.

1980-1989

Barbara List (AMLS '82) has been director of Collection Development, Columbia University Libraries since May 2001 and plans on retiring at the end of October. And then the adventure begins!

Mary Minow (AMLS '82) has been appointed Dominican University Graduate School of Library and Information Science Follett Chair. Recently confirmed by the United States Senate as a board member of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Mary is currently a consultant, lecturer and author, and former librarian and library trustee.

Cass Hartnett (MILS '88) has co-authored an introductory library science text. She works as U.S. documents librarian at the University of Washington Libraries and is an adjunct lecturer at the University of Washington Information School.

Rebecca Melvin Johnson (MILS '88) received the Waldo Gifford Leland award this year for an *American Political Archives Reader* she co-edited. She currently serves as librarian and coordinator in the manuscripts unit, special collections, University of Delaware Library.

1990-1999

Maria Almaguer (MILS '91) is a full-time librarian in the Reference Services department at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Main Library as of this past April.

Valeda Dent (MILS '92) is chief operating officer and dean for the University Libraries at CW Post/Long Island University in New York. She and her husband continue to work with rural libraries in Uganda; the BBC recently featured the project in a brief video.

Katherine Kelly (MILS '92) was offered an adjunct faculty librarian position at St Petersburg College in Florida but continues to look for a position with a few more hours. Katherine is trying to set up a class of 1992 HL reunion for next summer in Ann Arbor.

Karen Jean Hunt (MILS '93) is packing for IFLA, in Puerto Rico. After San Juan, Karen will make her way to Roseau, Dominica where she'll be researching African influences in Creole culture.

Michele Mecha-Fuher (MILS '93) is Campus Librarian at South University in Novi, Michigan. Michele oversees all operations of the library.

Samantha Bailey (MILS '96) has run her own user experience consulting firm, BaileySorts, specializing in information architecture and usability for intranets and websites since 2007.

Randy Horton (MILS '96), after 15 years of post-SI consulting for different firms in Chicago, has just opened his own consulting firm, 94 Westbound Consulting.

Andrea Richeson (MILS '96) is the user experience director at Trade-Mark Media, a web strategy, design and development firm in Austin, Texas. In the last year, she's also rediscovered her passion for cycling.

Keiko Yokota-Carter (MSI '97) is the Japan studies librarian at the University of Washington Libraries and chairs the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources.

Alicia D. Crumpton (MSI '98) was appointed director of the Center for Global Studies at Johnson University in Knoxville, TN.

Amy Cooper Cary (MSI '99) has been featured in a profile on the School of Information Studies website highlighting her appointment to reviews editor for *The American Archivist*.

Anthony Hand (MSI '99) moved to California to take a job with Samsung Research in the Mobile Lab of the new User Experience Center, America (UXCA). They're looking for creative, passionate people with a wide range of backgrounds who need an outlet for their innovative energies to join their team.

Carol Parker (MSI '99) is the associate dean for finance and administration at the University of New Mexico School of Law. She continues to direct the Law Library and IT Departments as well.

IN MEMORIAM

Robert Frost, associate professor at the School of Information, died March 26, 2011 after a lengthy battle with cancer. He'll be remembered for his forthright manner, his deep concern for the welfare of others, and his unwavering commitment to teaching.

He joined the U-M faculty as a visiting associate professor of history in 1995 and came to the School of Information in 2000.

Frost and his wife, Margaret Hedstrom, the SI associate dean for academic programs, were supporters of the University of Michigan beyond the classroom. They established the Frost Open Access Fund by donating the royalties that he received from the works of his great-grandfather, poet Robert Frost. The fund supports innovative projects that utilize open source software, or that study or promote the open access movement.

Memorial contributions may be made in his memory to the Frost Open Access Fund by mailing a check (with "In Memory of Bob Frost" in the memo line) to:

Frost Open Access Fund
c/o Andrea Daly
School of Information
4322 North Quad
105 S. State St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285

Contributions may also be made online at **www.giving.umich.edu/give/si-frost**.

ALUMNI TRANSITIONS

IN MEMORIAM

Anne (Mary) Baker (AMLS '57) passed away August 4, 2011 in Royal Oak, MI. From 1957-60 she was employed as a librarian at the Caitlin Library of the *Detroit News*. She is survived by Robert E. Baker, her husband of 46 years.

Schelle Simcox (MILS '96) died May 14, 2011 in Alameda, CA, following a long illness. She was 46. She was a law librarian and information professional at Paul Hastings, LLP, in San Francisco and Palo Alto. Earlier in her career, she was a reference librarian at Heller Ehrman, LLP, and an instructional service librarian at California State University, Monterey Bay.

Celia Ross (MSI '99) has a book forthcoming from ALA Editions. She is an associate librarian at the Kresge Business Administration Library at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. Celia and her husband, Jack Simpson (also MSI '99), have two daughters. Jack was the curator of local and family history at the Newberry Library in Chicago. He is an independent researcher.

2000-2011

Linda Williams (MSI '00) works in a federal government position in patient safety. She was recently published in *Critical Care Medicine* and is working on a book chapter.

Avalon Yangchen Hu (MSI '01) works at R/GA in New York as an interaction designer.

Wendy Mason, (MSI '01) is starting her third year as a technology/media specialist (K-8) at St. Fabian School in Farmington Hills, MI.

Susannah Livingood (MSI '02) is the assistant director of Institutional Research, University of Oklahoma.

Erik Dahl (MSI '03) is a user experience director at Lextant, the local leader for IxDA (Interaction Design Association), and the co-founder and organizer/producer of the 2011 Midwest UX Conference.

N. Sadat Shami (MSI '03) is a workforce analytics researcher, IBM Corporate Headquarters.

Susan Hooyenga (MSI '04) is a collections processing assistant with the new Media Preservation Initiative at Indiana University.

Sarah McNitt (MSI '05) is a study abroad advisor at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

Laura Schmidt (MSI '05) has been working with the Society of American Archivists on a publication due out this fall: "Using Archives: A Guide to Effective Research." The guide will be published on the SAA website.

Alejandro C De Baca (MSI '06) went into the financial sector after SI, and is currently vice-president of modeling and technology at Element Capital Management, a New York City hedge fund.

Michelle Gerry (MSI '06) became the systems librarian for the Flatirons Consortium (Boulder Public Library, Lafayette Public Library and Mamie Doud Eisenhower Public Library) in Colorado last November.

Emily Campbell (MSI '07) is a special projects librarian-technical services, at the U-M Library.

Maura Seale (MSI '07) just started her third year as a research and instruction librarian/bibliographer at Georgetown University and has recently published several book chapters.

Woo Yong Lee (MSI '07) is a marketing analyst in small business marketing at Google and will move to San Francisco in October 2011 from Tokyo for the same position.

William Cron, Jr. (MSI '08) married Beth (Panozzo) Cron (MSI '08) last summer. Beth works as a program specialist for the National Archives and Records Administration and William works as a records manager at the Government Accountability Office.

Aalap Doshi (MSI '09) has been an interaction designer, business analyst, Michigan Institute of Clinical and Health Research (MICHR), University of Michigan since 2009, and has won several awards for his work there.

Maureen Hanratty (MSI '09) married Peter Arcuni in Pescadero, California in June. In May Maureen joined Autodesk as an interaction designer in the San Francisco office.

Hung Truong (MSI '09) is starting a new position as a senior software engineer at Threadless in Chicago this October.

Betsy Eggers (MSI '10) has been working as library director at Napoleon Public Library in Napoleon, Ohio since January 2010 to help bring the library into the 21st century.

Kevin Nam (PhD '10) moved to New England near Boston in October 2010 to start a job at MIT Lincoln Laboratory. A baby girl is on the way!

Michael Shallcross (MSI '10) was recently hired as an assistant archivist in the Bentley Historical Library's new digital curation division.

Annelise Doll (MSI '11) is finishing an internship at the Michigan Technological University Archives in Houghton. She will soon be leaving MTU to begin work for History Associates as a processing archivist.

Bethany Harris (MSI '11) has been accepted into the National Library of Medicine Associate Fellowship Program, a one-year postgraduate training program with an optional second year. Her class of four began their fellowships in September.

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SPHERES

SPHERES is published periodically by the University of Michigan School of Information for alumni, faculty, students, and friends. Correspondence may be sent to:

SPHERES
School of Information
University of Michigan
4322 North Quad
105 S. State St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285
(734) 763-0074
si.publications@umich.edu

Dean
Jeff MacKie-Mason

Director of Development and Alumni Relations
Tom Wamsley

Marketing and Communications Officer
Glenda Bullock

Editor/Photographer
Jay Jackson

External Photos

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Join us for homecoming! October 27-29

CLASS OF 1961 LUNCHEON

Noon-1:30 p.m.
Thursday, October 27

NORTH QUAD TOURS

10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Friday, October 28

LECTURE BY SI DEAN JEFF MACKIE-MASON

"Do Social Media Matter?"
2:30-3:30 p.m.
Friday, October 28
Henderson Room, Michigan League

SI SOCIAL MASH-UP

6-8:30 p.m. Friday, October 28
Anderson Room D
Michigan Union

GO BLUE TAILGATE AND FOOTBALL GAME

9-11:30 a.m. Saturday, October 29
Oosterbaan Field House, 1202 S. State St.

U-M vs. Purdue
Kick-off: Noon

To register for all events
and for more details,
visit us on the web:
si.umich.edu/aboutsi/homecoming-weekend