Editor's Notes

Welcome to the second issue of the IASSIST Quarterly,

We are all interested in the future, because that is where we intend to spend the rest of our lives. At the 1999 IASSIST conference, there was a session called "Bridging the Past with the Future" which featured central and important IASSIST people assembled to celebrate the 25th anniversary of IASSIST. IASSIST began - as you will learn in this issue - in Toronto at "the meeting in the bar". IASSIST 1999 was appropriately held in Toronto and this special celebration session was chaired by Laine Ruus from the University of Toronto. The session involved looking backwards and forward through the following presentations: "IASSIST: Origins and Evolution as Revealed in Its Archives and Other Materials" by Margaret Adams, "Early IASSIST as Recalled By Its First President" by Carolyn Geda, and "Social Research Infrastructure from A European Perspective" by Ekkehard Mochmann.

Better late than never, we are now able to present the revised manuscripts from the American side. These pages summarize original material and present eyewitness observations, some of which had been in the personal information processor for longer than the 25 year span that was commemorated. In the early years, IASSIST had an archivist and I'd like to point out that the position is currently open. As the Adams' article demonstrates, there is a lot of material available on the formation and establishing of IASSIST for anyone who wants to continue documenting the organization's history.

The young readers might not fully grasp that when we use the words "mail" and "mailing", we are in the area of physics, the area of moving around physical envelopes with physical paper - often by foot for the last bit. Communication was slow; not instant like we are used to now that we can't imagine a world without e-mail. The technological revolution and the practical ease nowadays might make you feel that "I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now". However, our kids will - without being asked - tell us differently!

The first article is a contribution from Margaret O'Neill Adams: "The Origins and Early Years of IASSIST". In it, Adams compiles and researches the information found in the IASSIST archives and presents a view of how "ASSIST, International ASSIST, I-ASSIST, and IASSIST" started. No single person is given the credit for inventing the brilliant acronym. The Adams' article also explores some of the central issues, conflicts, and relations to other organizations. From the beginning, IASSIST has been an organization with people as members. Carolyn L. Geda, the first president of IASSIST looks further into the issue of

the acronym in her article "Recollections of the Formative Years of IASSIST". She credits no particular person or people, which, in my view, could be taken as an example of the solidarity within IASSIST: that IASSIST is a group consisting of individuals but often acting as a group or organization. In the article, Carolyn Geda writes: "The first task of the Committee was to construct and agree upon an acronym. This acronym evolved at the infamous bar in Toronto. Once the acronym of IASSIST was agreed upon, we had the problem of finding appropriate words for it. Although we were very pleased with the acronym, we frequently had and continue to have problems remembering the actual name of the organization!" Geda's piece demonstrates the "international" character of IASSIST when mentioning how regions where supposed to be involved in all Action Groups and how this evolved into Regional Secretariats for recruitment, fee handling and also regional meetings.

The third article is also from our very own world. It is not about 25 years ago, although the data are a bit aged. This is a self-look or what could be called an organization's narcissistic research. In 2001, Repke de Vries and I collected information through a questionnaire about the use and the future use of the IASSIST web-site. Some of this information has been presented earlier, and a lot of good people have worked hard and improved the IASSIST web-site tremendously since then. I gave the presentation a new wrapping when I used the information at the 2007 IASSIST conference in the panel session "Care and Maintenance of a Global Knowledge Community". More content was added and we ended up with the second article on IASSIST as a virtual community with the title: "Open Virtuality or Virtually Open? Openness on the Web as Viewed by the IASSIST Membership." Among the issues the article addresses is the balancing of access for and openness towards non-members of the IASSIST.

The IASSIST acronym is indeed very, very good. It's so good that others are using it too. Ever heard of "The Internet Server Manager For Mac OS X"? Or how about "SJ Asset Management IASSIST". Or iassist.org, not to be confused with our iassistdata.org? Or " iAssistHR - a Virtual Assistance firm"? The "iassist.co.uk"? Or "iassist. ca"? Etc. Most of these are new, small, or discontinued. Our IASSIST is certainly still here and with a history to tell.

Remember to have a look at the website http://iassistdata. org

Articles for the IASSIST Quarterly are most welcome. Articles can be papers from IASSIST conferences, from other conferences, from local presentations, discussion input, etc. Contact the editor via e-mail: kbr@sam.sdu.dk.

Karsten Boye Rasmussen, August 2007