

Updates from the SIG III Social Media Squad!

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A lot has been said about social media and how easy they have made it for people to connect. Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and blogs have redefined information sharing and social networking in multiple ways. They have made it possible to bridge the boundaries of time and space so that relationships can be built and rebuilt; knowledge can be preserved and searched. Social media have also made it easier for people to form communities of practice where voices can be heard, support systems can be formed, ideas can flow, hobbies can be shared for which feedback can be sought, and so on. With the click of a mouse or a tap on a tablet, people can connect across geographic boundaries and contribute to various online communities.

Scholars and other professionals around the globe are also starting to rely on social media for professional purposes. Social media platforms – from popular sites like Facebook and Twitter, to more specialized ones, such as Academia.edu and ResearchGate.net – have enabled scholars to easily form online communities, discuss certain topics of common interest, share the results of their research, network and collaborate with colleagues from other institutions.

In recognition of these trends, SIG III has been active in building up its social media presence and engaging the ASIS&T community via social media. As part of our efforts in this area, we have officially created the SIG III Social Media Squad (SM Squad) in Spring 2012, followed by the launch of our new Twitter account - @sig3i. The SM Squad is currently made up of two social media administrators (Anatoliy Gruzd and Anindita Paul), coordinator (Jennifer Yurchak) and six volunteers (Anntoinette Arsic, Arryn Seburn, Hilary Stamper, Innocent Awasom, Sara Knezevic and Sarah Farrukh). While SIG III already had a Facebook page, the creation of @sig3i (<http://twitter.com/sig3i/>) was intended to expand its social media presence into the Twitterverse, a great platform for information sharing and community building across countries.

In just a few months since its creation, @sig3i's Twitter community has grown from zero to over a hundred followers, and it continues to grow. While the majority of followers are from Canada and the United States, @sig3i has reached a global community with followers also coming from Ecuador, the European Union, Australia and Pakistan (see Figure 1). It has also attracted several influential followers who often retweet our tweets including ASIS&T (@asist_org) with over 1,800 followers and LIS Research (@lisresearch) with over 3,200 followers.

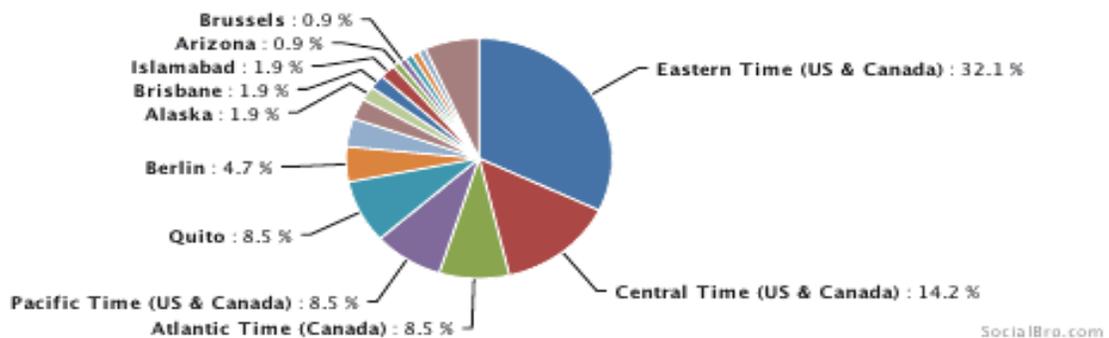


Figure 1: @sig3i Followers by Time Zone

SM Squad tweets cover a range of topics of relevance to the SIG III community including upcoming job postings, conferences and receptions, emerging technologies of interest to information professionals, and news about libraries and IT-related organizations around the globe. Thus far, the most retweeted links tweeted by the SM Squad were

- an information literacy infographic (<http://ow.ly/1NmUqo>),
- a blog post about an Austrian digital library initiative (<http://ow.ly/chvQ1>),
- a paper about open access publishing (<http://ow.ly/bnQON>), and
- a CNN World News story about social media in Africa (<http://ow.ly/chyL1>).

These four links demonstrate the breadth of subject matter being disseminated by @sig3i.

To celebrate the initial success of @sig3i and attract more Twitter followers, in July of 2012 the SM Squad conducted a random draw amongst its followers and awarded Isabella Peters (@Isabella83) from Heinrich-Heine-Universität Duesseldorf in Germany with a \$50 Amazon.com gift card. Most recently, to celebrate the 75th ASIS&T

Anniversary and the 30th SIG III anniversary, we announced a new Facebook draw among everyone who joins our Facebook group (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/asist.sig.iii/>), and who uploads either a photo/video from any past SIGIIIrelated events or their current photo holding a sign saying “Happy 30th Anniversary, SIG-III!” See some sample entries in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Facebook Draw Sample Entries

As we move into the future, the SM Squad plans to continue supporting SIG III’s goals by promoting global awareness, communication and interactions amongst ASIS&T and information professionals through @sig3i. For example, at the upcoming ASIS&T 2012 conference in Baltimore, the SM Squad will tweet about presentations of relevance to the SIG III community. Through these initiatives, the SM Squad hopes to encourage communication about information issues on a global scale.

Join us on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/asist.sig.iii/>) and follow us on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/sig3i/>)!