Updates from the SIG III Social Media Squad!

By Jennifer Yurchak (jennifer@yurchak.ca), Anindita Paul (aninditapaul@gmail.com),
Anatoliy Gruzd (gruzd@dal.ca)

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](image)

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

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.

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)!