

Institution Wide Information Strategies (IWIS)

CALL FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST AND EXPERIENCE

Background

The Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) is preparing to undertake a new initiative to promote institution-wide strategies in several key areas of networked information resource and service development. The focus of this initiative is on information -- its use, its users, and the strategic allocation of resources in support of networked information across an entire institution.

Information strategies are shaped, in part, by the way an institution deploys its capabilities in such areas as:

- Information Technology Resources: institutional hardware and software infrastructures.
- Financial Resources: institutional budgets, cost models, price structures, and financial plans.
- Organization and Human Resources: the staff, skills and organizational structures of the institution.
- Information Policies and Practices: the institutional rules that govern information behaviors.
- Strategic Alignment: the relation of information strategy to the mission and business strategy of the institution.

Information strategies which cross organizational and technological boundaries are sufficiently complex that most institutions and organizations which act independently cannot address all of the issues necessary to develop comprehensive, institution-wide approaches. By participating in this initiative, individual institutions will be able to work on a manageable piece of the challenge (most likely in an area where work already is underway), share experiences and findings with other participants, and learn about problems and alternative strategies.

Some examples of strategic information initiatives might include:

- a user-centered design program to integrate diverse information resources and tailor them to the empirically-defined information needs of specific

- groups -- undergraduate students, research faculty, institutional planners, etc.;
- an information policy program to establish standard rules for information use, access, sharing, disclosure, protection, etc.;
 - an electronic license program to negotiate and fund institution-wide agreements for acquiring digital content or widely-used commercial software;
 - a professional development and career tracking program to support the training (or retraining) of information professionals and to facilitate their transition from one department, position, or job family to another;
 - a strategic information planning program that aligns investments in information resource development with institutional priorities and goals;
 - a collaborative user service program that builds teams or other structures that cross a variety of organizational boundaries -- library and technology, central and departmental -- to support the use of information resources institution-wide.

These are only examples, intended to suggest the range of possible projects that might participate in this initiative. By no means is the list exhaustive of potential projects for the development of institution-wide information strategies.

(For further background on this initiative see the CNI White Paper: Institution Wide Information Strategies <<http://www.cni.org/projects/iwis/>>.)

Goals and Objectives

The Institution-Wide Information Strategies initiative seeks to identify, improve upon, and promote exemplary practices in the field of information strategy. Specific objectives of the project are:

- To identify "best practices" in information strategies -- institutions who are thinking strategically about the management and use of information on an enterprise-wide scale, and are actively engaged in applying these ideas to the information needs of their institutions and users.
- To bring these institutions into communication with one another so they can share their experiences while their work is still in progress, learn from one another, and improve or expand upon efforts at their own institutions.
- To develop a framework of common understanding among participating institutions for the analysis and description of institutional information strategies.
- To create a vehicle for sharing the experiences and insights of the participants, presenting this knowledge in a comprehensive case-study format, so that others might benefit from these experiences.

And, drawing on the Coalition's goal to encourage dialogue and promote collaborative effort, it is an objective of this initiative:

- To forge productive working relationships among a variety of information professionals at participating institutions and promote such collaboration more generally in research and educational institutions and organizations.

Among the information professions who might be expected to participate in the initiative are: technologists, librarians, archivists, scholars, digital media and electronic text developers, other "content specialists", information system and information resource managers, registrars, auditors, institutional researchers, marketers, and others who depend upon the exchange and use of information in the course of their work.

Process and Outcomes

The initiative will be launched with a "Call for Statements of Interest and Experience," by which institutions will be invited to participate in and make a contribution to the project.

Selection of institutions to participate will be based on a variety of factors, including a commitment of time and resource to work on the project. Selection will also seek diversity of institution-types, teams that represent collaborative efforts within their institutions, and institutions with work-in-progress which may be advanced by participation in this initiative. Inter-institutional or multi-organizational proposals would be welcome.

Preliminary plans are to hold an invitational conference at which the institutions selected will present project overviews, discuss common themes and alternate approaches, and develop their plan of work for the initiative. The conference will be followed by electronic publication of institutional project overviews and other meeting materials.

Following the plan of work established at this conference, participating teams will further develop or enhance their own information strategy efforts, either individually or in partnership with other institutional teams. Various structures for collaboration may be formed and will be encouraged.

Using a framework developed at the opening conference, participating teams will develop written analyses of their work in the form of "best practice" case studies. Each case study will follow a common format that addresses the five key resource dimensions of:

- Technology Platforms
- Financial Resources

- Organization and Human Resources
- Policies and Practices
- Strategic Alignment

The completed case studies will be published by CNI and distributed electronically to Task Force members and others. Depending upon the plan of work established for the initiative, a second conference, either invitational or open, will be held to present these case studies and discuss possible follow-on activities to the initiative.

Instructions and Further Information

Representatives of institutions and organizations interested in participating in this initiative are encouraged to send via e-mail information about their proposed involvement, using the form provided below, to the person identified below. Responses to this Call must be received on or before April 21, 1997.

Participating institutions will appoint one individual to serve as liaison to CNI, to coordinate project work at her or his institution, and to be responsible for case studies and institutional project reporting. Participating institutions will be responsible for the travel and lodging expenses of their teams attending project conference(s) and any expenses on their own campuses related to engagement in this initiative. CNI will be responsible for other expenses associated with project conference(s), and for expenses of program management and publication of project reports and case studies.

Institution-Wide Information Strategies: Project Proposal

Please provide the following information about your proposed participation in this project:

- Institution
- Contact Person (Name, Title, Address, Phone, Fax, Internet)
- Other Institutional Team Members
- Experience (Provide a 200-500 word description of the information strategy initiative at your institution that you would propose to enhance or develop through participation in this CNI project. Include a brief statement of your initiative's current status, recent accomplishments, and planned next steps.)
- Interest (Provide a 200-500 word description of your goals for participating in this initiative, its value to your institution, and the specific information issues you plan to focus on.)

Proposals and Inquiries

Please submit project proposals or address inquiries to:

[Gerry Bernbom](#)

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Additional Information

CNI, a joint project of the Association for Research Libraries, CAUSE, and Educom, was founded in March, 1990 to promote the creation of and access to information resources in networked environments in order to enrich scholarship and to enhance intellectual productivity.

Currently 202 organizations and institutions belong to the CNI Task Force, a group that makes special contributions to the CNI's projects and activities. Included in the Task Force membership are higher education institutions, publishers, network service providers, computer hardware and system companies, library networks and organization, and public and state libraries.

Periodically CNI issues a call for statements of interest and experience as a vehicle for announcing initiatives in a manner that promotes the widest and fairest possible identification of institutions, organizations, and individuals willing and able to contribute to those initiatives. Each call provides a brief description of the initiative in question, and some calls include supporting documents.

Institutions and organizations do not have to be members of the CNI Task Force, or of ARL, CAUSE, or Educom to respond to a call for statements of interest and experience.

Statements of interest and experience are reviewed by CNI staff with the assistance of the leaders of relevant CNI working groups and the guidance of members of the CNI Steering Committee. Other parties are involved as needed. Additional information is sometimes requested during this review process.

Reviews of statements of interest and experience are carried out in as expedient and as flexible a fashion as possible, taking care to balance the benefits of a wide and fair search for institutions and organizations able and willing to

contribute to particular initiatives with the benefits of focused and timely action on those initiatives.

Upon selection of the institutions and organizations to participate in a given initiative, CNI staff will notify all those who submitted a response to the call of their status.

Additional information about CNI and its program can be obtained from the person identified above and from the following Internet servers:

URL: <ftp://ftp.cni.org/>

URL: <gopher://gopher.cni.org:70/>

URL: <http://www.cni.org/>

Interested parties are encouraged to stay in touch with CNI and its program by subscribing to its Internet news distribution service by sending the following, single-line message to listproc@cni.org:

subscribe cni-announce <your name, first name first>