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THIS IS LONDON CALLING: PRATT SILS SUMMER PROGRAMME AT UCL



By AllyWazir Rahemtulla

One can conjure up innumerable whimsical, banal, and stereotyped imagery of London: quaint cobblestone streets, a Dickensian city with the paradoxes of wealth and poverty, fish and chips wrapped up in paper, pints of warm ale, lager and Guinness on a warm afternoon, Cadbury's chocolates, and the punctual chimes of Big Ben. Of course you will find this "English" façade which camouflages the true dynamism of the city.

The presence of Europeans, Africans, Asians, and Americans is unmistakably apparent. Having become a home for hundreds from the wide arc of the Colonial British Empire, spanning a third of the world, it is the reversal of the centre-periphery relationship of the colonial enterprise making the city a tour de force of modern cosmopolitanism.

The thrust of London into the 21st Century is amply evident by its affirmation of this pluralism reflected on the composition of its districts from Westminster to Walthamstow. It has become a premier hub of international art, culture, media and education, besides finance and air transport. Stepping into the modern living pulse of London is far more exciting than seeking the illusions of "Englishness." Equally educative is to discover the

social and economic disparities which Karl Marx diagnosed a century ago in the throes of industrial revolution, nuanced in different ways in the post-industrial Internet media age. Aristocrats with blue blood in their veins and shady nouveau riche from across the breadth and width of fortress Europe and the world stand in sharp contrast to the cockney accent of the working class lads in the building industry. The colonial mother of cities harbors in its imperial folds princes, sultans, kings, dukes, sheikhs and despots as well as undesirable world leaders who seek haven along the Million Pound Mile Road.

Yonder is that world to glimpse. We the Pratt SILS Post graduate students went to the cloistered recesses of the University College London, one of the premier universities of the United Kingdom established over 180 years ago. The UCL and the University of London sit alongside each other in the district of Camden hugged by the Euston Road and Russell Square along the western fringe of Central London within brief walking distance to Oxford Street, The Strand, and Regents Park. The SILS & UCL-SLAIS partnership Summer program was organized by our Dean Tula Giannini along with Andy Dawson

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SILSSA upcoming events

Bar Night

@ Flannery's - 205
W. 14th Street by 7th
Avenue) 8 p.m.

From the Editor's Desktop **KEYWORD SAVED!!**

Welcome to our new students and welcome back to returning students!

As you may know, Pratt's Student Government Association recently decided that student publications, as a part of Pratt's sustainability initiatives, should forgo traditional printing and make the move to an entirely electronic format. As professionals, we are at the forefront of the migration of printed matter to digital format, and the issue is generally hotly contested in our field and in publishing. This move by the SGA forces the question here: Should KEYWORD continue to print on paper? Should we move to an entirely electronic format? And if so, what form should that take? A static PDF, or something more interactive?

With the support of the Dean's office, Keyword will continue to be found in a print format for the time being, and we have long posted our print editions online in pdf format and encouraged students to look for them at our website (they can be found at: <http://mysite.pratt.edu/~silssa/keyword/archives/>). However, we are looking into the question, and would appreciate commentary and feedback from the SILS community, both as readers (and staff) of the publication, and as professionals. What format would you like to see? A full archive of past Keyword issues is held by Dr. Sharify. If we move to a digital format, what will we need to do to continue to build that archive?

Some of you may not know this, but KEYWORD has been in print for over 30 years, and we hope to continue in that fine tradition for many years to come, no matter what form "publishing" Keyword takes. Keyword is a forum created primarily and especially by and for students, but it is

also widely read (and enjoyed!) by alumni, faculty, and the Pratt SILS community at large. I hope that we can use this space to encourage lively debate about our field and our program of study; inform each other about news, trends, resources, and tools; stay informed about events and activities; and share our academic work.

I hope that each of you will consider writing a review of your favorite book, or an opinion piece about privacy or copyright policies, or interviewing a librarian you admire, or even a letter to the editor! No matter what sort of librarianship or information science you hope to pursue after leaving Pratt, it is likely that you will have to write occasionally in a professional way. Consider this a training ground for that writing.

I look forward to being a part of the conversation in these pages!

Jessica Godden Speer
Editor, Keyword

KEYWORD

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note from the president

A new semester and a new frantic schedule that goes up and down like the stock doesn't make for happy SILSSA year so far. And then you have your publication budget ripped from you (without notice or response from Student Government Association to boot) one could be cynical but I don't think that would be the librarian or information scientist way.

With the growing financial problems in the United States, and the world for that matter, librarians will face daunting tasks like the rest of the population. That's when we need to be as creative as possible with the wealth of resources of knowledge that we have and that we can share with others and vice versa.

KEYWORD, with all due thanks to Dean Gianinni, will continue to be our community's voice. But we can't do it alone, we need your participation and help in all of our activities so that they are successful.



Just in case you don't know who we are: Kate Kosturski, Treasurer; Romel Espinel, President; Jessica Speer, Vice President; Lili Schestag, Secretary

On October 23rd, SILSSA is hosting a forum on the elections and what they mean to librarians. We encourage everyone to .come out, ask questions, and hang out afterward at Flannery's so we can start preparing now for what will be interesting times ahead.

Romel Espinel
SILSSA President

new faces

by Kate Kosturski,
SILSSA Treasurer

It is often said that out of crisis or frustration comes opportunity. For Gilok Choi, the newest member of the Pratt-SILS faculty and full time instructor for the Information Professions course, dissatisfaction with certain websites and difficulty in using them led to research and educational opportunities to revolutionize design, usability, and information sharing. As librarianship and technology collide even further, optimal usability and design will lead to optimal information processing and sharing. This truth motivates her research and instruction to students.

Gilok Choi comes to Pratt from the University of Texas at Austin, where she earned her doctorate in information science earlier this year. The desire to explore communication extends back to her undergraduate and early graduate studies in communication at Korea's Ewha University. The door to integration between design, communication and information did not fully swing open until she enrolled in the Master of Immersive Media Environment (MIME) program at Indiana University. The MIME program was a practical course of study, emphasizing creativity and artistry in hands-on, intense digital design work. Students participated in the creation of video, audio, animation, movie trailers, and games—a combination of the practical and the lighthearted. One of Choi's favorite projects from the MIME program was a mystery game that used networked palm pilots to search for clues. Innovation and ingenuity motivated Choi and her classmates, even in simple applications meant to divert from everyday activities.

During a class on human-computer interaction, Choi discovered the concept of usability, along with this simple truth: "If you have trouble using a system, the problem is probably due to the system's developer, not you." This truth set Choi free from the nuisance of poorly designed websites and a misplaced belief that she was at fault for not being able to use a website. It motivated her research and desire to find the gold standard of website design—a design that every user can navigate quickly and easily, finding information to satisfy their needs in

a timely manner.

Achieving this goal is not easy. For Choi, her most troubling challenge was, "communicating with clients and discovering their needs. In most cases, I felt discrepancies between my view and that of my clients. In those situations, I found myself trying to persuade them to use my technical knowledge instead of listening to their ideas." It is a truth that she may have found ironic—a student of communication not able to do just that—communicate! In these struggles with clients Dr. Choi learned the value of exploring all facets of a question or issue, and more central to her work, the concept of the usability study which formed a bridge between the desires of users and the programmer's expertise.

In spite of a usability study, challenges

'Choi strives to embrace the user in her design, realizing that the user is the heart of the matter.'

still abound in web design today due to changes in technology and hardware applications. Choi acknowledges the advances made in website design (thanks to social acceptance of the Internet as a vital part of daily life and commerce), but expresses concern about web design and integration with newer applications such as mobile phones, iPhones, and iPods. While her research still focuses on people-centered design, Choi has shifted this focus to include "the investigation of user needs and interface issues in the context of new applications." This desire, to build the "perfect system" across any and all platforms, cannot be fulfilled without the user's input and assistance. Even as technology evolves, the heart that keeps it beating—the user—remains front and center. Without the user, the technology is nothing.

Among these new platforms and environments is the interactive web, "Web 2.0." Choi does not ignore Web 2.0 and the connections it can make with users. She is actively interested in Second Life, and is preparing to establish a Pratt library in the 3D world of SL, with the assistance



of interested SILS Students. If this project succeeds, Choi would use it to develop a course for the SILS curriculum in the use of virtual platforms and environments.

The SILS community will have the chance to see Gilok Choi as an educator as well as an author. She contributed a chapter on service learning and methods of linking classroom theory to real world application to an upcoming ALA publication on the topic. This book, edited by ALA Past President and University of Texas at Austin professor Lorlene Roy, will be published in 2009.

Choi's creativity extends outside of the digital realm. She enjoys photography and has studied music (particularly the piano) since her pre-teen years. Her musical talent brought her to one of the finest art schools in Korea; then her career was cut short because her fingers were too short!

Whether the environment is real or virtual, Choi strives to embrace the user in her design, realizing that the user is the heart of the matter. The prospect of new skill sets and developments excite her, but that is not the sole focus of her work. She recognizes that knowing how to build a website is useful, but it is more important for students and librarians to "engage in new thinking about how they can use these technologies for their professions—that is to expand boundaries of current information services by using new technologies." Perhaps another student, aggravated by a poorly designed website, will remember Choi's yearning for perpetual innovation and creativity and then push those boundaries and doors even further than the professor herself could even imagine.

Gilok Choi's resume, portfolio, and research can be found online at: <http://choigo.info/index.html>.

THIS IS LONDON CALLING: PRATT SILS SUMMER PROGRAMME AT UCL

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and Anthony Watkinson of SLAIS and held for a fortnight between June 16-27, 2008. The program was capped towards the end by the Second Bloomsbury Conference on E-Publishing and the Virtual Scholar. Our group was joined by a librarian from the Australian National Library in Canberra, an online post graduate student from the University of Tennessee, and a Library Technologist from Cyprus.

An array of major international e-publishers, ranging from commercial to academic to open access and open source publishers, was laid before the students in order to understand first hand and critically weigh the *modus operandi* and points of departure of these publishers.

It is apparent that the processes of digitization of creative works such as journal articles has accelerated full steam ahead with the advent and advantages offered by the Internet. As a consequence, almost all academic journals and, slowly but surely, books are increasingly found only in digital databases, mostly in by-subscription block packages. This has resulted in commercial corporations owning and maintaining huge chunks of

e-repositories of e-journals largely, and a sliver by academic publishers. Of the total e-publishing industry dealing with academic journals, a hefty 45% is owned by Elsevier through its enterprise and conglomeration with other companies. Such hegemony has had a great impact on both academic and public libraries in terms of escalation of costs of block packages. Similarly, it has created a problem regarding copyright and ownership for the virtual scholar who themselves are the creators.

The wrench in the works is the challenge to the commercial publishing industry to deny willy-nilly acceptance of the hierarchically imposed diktat of their model of publication and communication and seek collaborative alternatives. As the Cambridge University Chemistry Professor Peter Murray-Rust argues, information and communication in the Internet age ought to be fully open source and openly accessible if we are to advance scholarship and culture in the 21st Century. Upon our visit to the Molecular Informatics Group Professor Murray-Rust, an authority in open data and data mining, demonstrated the necessity and possibility of open source information in all disciplines including science in order to

advance them.

To gain this learning and critical experience, the Pratt students were introduced to various commercial publishers, including ProQuest, Elsevier, Thompson Reuters, Oxford University Press, Nature Publishing Group, MacMillan Group, the governmental Office of the Public Sector of Information (OPSI) and the preeminent British Library, which is building its own digital repository with cutting edge technology. Such excursions away from the ivory tower at Pratt provide a stimulating educational moment which I would recommend for students as part of Information and Library Science studies. Thus we are able to fundamentally change the outlook of libraries in the United States to serve the public and the scholarly community in the best possible manner. It also is a lovely respite to the city of dreamy spires of Oxford and London amidst the season of the Derby and Royal Ascot horse races, Royal Chelsea Flower Show, Henley Regatta, Shakespeare's Midsummer Night and strawberries with cream.

eats . . .

by Adam Schefflan

Rai Rai Ken, 214 East 10th Street, New York, NY 10003 (btw 1st and 2nd Avenues) Tel: (212) 477-7030, no credit cards

Ignore that place with the wood paneling around the corner to the north where they're lined up. Also ignore that place with the marble around the corner in the other direction. This is New York's first and only authentic *râmen-ya*. Forget what you think you know about *râmen*. This is not the deep-fried and freeze-dried stuff you find for pennies at the bottom of a Styrofoam cup that will kill you for having a week's worth of sodium. Step inside and you'll think you're in another country, despite the apparent lack of Japanese staff (wait, was that guy behind the counter Japanese or Latino?). Hipster music plays on the stereo, and warmly

colored stucco walls greet you. Sit down at one of the 14 seats, and prepare for the perfectly flavored *al dente* goodness that awaits.

It's the perfect temporary cure for the winter blues—comfort food to the extreme. A whopping five varieties of that featured noodle await you, ready for slurping loudly, which include *shôyu* (soy sauce), *miso* (fermented soy beans), *shio* (salt), *kâre* (Japanese-style curry), and a new variety that has ground pork and tofu. In the summer months, two more sure-to-please varieties await, one of which includes the unlikely use of sun-dried tomatoes—but somehow it works brilliantly. For the *râmen-averse*, there are several stir fries, dumplings, the ubiquitous *edamame*, beef curry, and more. You might not be full at the end of your short culinary journey, so you might want some *shiroi gohan* (white rice) as an additional condiment, and



Photo from spinachdip's photostream on FLCKR

don't forget those delicious neon-colored pickled radishes. Even though the place raised its prices at the end of the winter, and the wait is longer than it used to be thanks to the excellent word-of-mouth over the years, the place is still a bargain, and maybe you can practice your Japanese-language skills on that person if you see him/her.