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Gates Keynotes Upbeat SLA Conference in Seattle

'Information Professionals at the Crossroads' hosts nearly 7,000 visitors and 446 exhibits

by Kathy Miller

The weather was great, and so was the information, at the 88th Annual Special Libraries Association Conference in Seattle, held June 7-12. The keynotes were top-notch, the exhibit hall was packed with new products, and many sessions were standing-room-only.

Perhaps it was this year's message that drew a great number of what seemed to be earnest information professionals, intent on grasping the new technologies and the new trends. Or perhaps it was the opportunity to see the famous Bill Gates as the keynote speaker. Then again, maybe it was the area's beautiful, famous scenery or its bountiful, steaming coffees. Whatever the cause, "Information Professionals at the Crossroads: Change as Opportunity" had a lot of people excited about this conference.

Attendance numbers proved this point: There were 6,935 attendees and 446 exhibits. Both numbers are slightly down from last year.

The conference actually began on Friday, June 6 with meetings and continuing education courses that went on

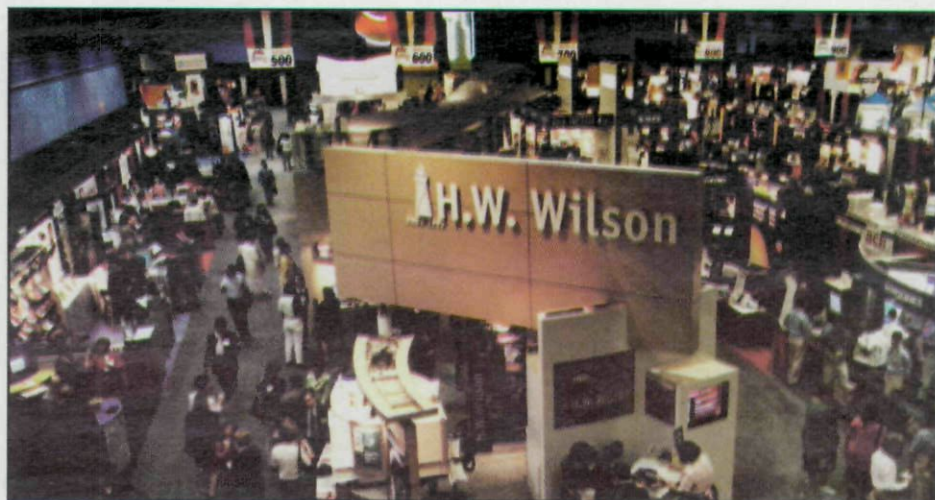
throughout the weekend. However, my initial look at this year's SLA didn't come until Monday morning, when I headed for Bill Gates' keynote session. I suspected that there would be a great number of people there to see the local Microsoft icon, and that was certainly the case. I walked into the largest suite of adjoining rooms that I've ever witnessed at a library conference. Chairs were set up facing the stage from several directions. Luckily, there were many huge screens that displayed the action in real time, since the people on stage looked like large ants from where I was sitting.

Bill Gates' Keynote Speech

Of course there were welcome messages from several people, including SLA president Sylvia Piggott, who went on to relate the funny story of how Bill Gates was actually a driven library assistant in the fourth grade. She did a great job of warming up the crowd for Gates.

He finally appeared and stated that "This is a very exciting time in the world of information management." He did dis-

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THIS SLA CONFERENCE WAS A BIG ONE FOR VENDOR ANNOUNCEMENTS, and the show floor was buzzing with interesting news from a number of companies. There were also a couple of new companies showing their information services.

DowVision Now Available Through First! News Service

Dow Jones Interactive Publishing has announced that DowVision, its popular subscription-based, direct-to-the-desktop custom news service for corporations, is

now available through Individual, Inc.'s First! custom news application for Lotus Notes platforms. An intranet version of First! with DowVision was to become available in early July.

Individual joins the international network of Dow Jones Alliance Developers that provide server and client software to store and deliver news, making DowVision available on virtually any computer platform. The news and information delivered by DowVision is filtered by the Alliance Developer software so that subscribers receive only the news that meets their personal profiles.

DowVision is a rich source of domestic and international news, providing the exclusive combination of the same-day full text of *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*,

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UMI Announces Release of ProQuest Director Tool

UMI has unveiled ProQuest Director, a tool that enables users to customize their access to published information from UMI's ProQuest Direct online information system.

ProQuest Director can be used by information professionals or Webmasters to embed hyperlinks to published information in ProQuest Direct. With ProQuest Director, direct links can be built to specific articles, searches, or tables of contents and then shared across an intranet or extranet.

"ProQuest Director is another step forward in fulfilling ProQuest Direct's potential in opening our vast archives to those who look for answers to their questions on the World Wide Web or as a part

of a corporate intranet application," said Jim Tumolo, UMI's vice president of corporate and international marketing. "ProQuest Director is a one-of-a-kind delivery system that builds upon the success of ProQuest Direct. With ProQuest Director and the vast breadth and depth of content in ProQuest Direct, UMI has a winning combination that surpasses anything now available for the corporate and international markets."

Tumolo cited another important benefit of ProQuest Director. "By incorporating ProQuest Director links into an organization's intranet or extranet," he said, "every desktop can have access to valu-

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- For all the news from the SLA conference, read Kathy Miller's general report, then Shirley Kennedy's Net's Eye View. Pages 1 and 17
- Sue Feldman reports from Orlando on **Advances in Digital Libraries '97**. Page 12
- In this month's **Internet Publishing Feature**, Judy Luther highlights some of the ways that publishers are capitalizing on the Web's interactive environment. Page 45

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West Group Announces New Business Structure, Names Chief Operating Officer

West Group, a leading national legal publisher and a division of The Thomson Corporation, has announced the creation of its computer-assisted legal research service, WESTLAW, as a separate business unit with its own chief operating officer. The WESTLAW unit joins West Group's three existing business units: Print and CD-ROM, the Legal Education Group, and Information America.

To oversee the WESTLAW business unit, West Group president and CEO Brian H. Hall appointed Andrew Prozes to the position of executive vice president of West Group and chief operating officer of WESTLAW. Prozes will report directly to Hall and will be responsible for providing executive leadership to ensure the strategic, operational, and financial growth of WESTLAW. Hall said Prozes will lead the effort to build up legal information data on WESTLAW and to keep in step with future technology trends and Internet development.

"As West Group's newest business unit, WESTLAW will partner with our existing business units to guide West Group into the 21st century," said Hall.

"We will continue to harness the latest in business technology to provide our customers with easy-to-use products and services that enhance their productivity."

Legal researchers have depended on WESTLAW for their information needs since it was founded in 1975. According to the company, WESTLAW serves over 900,000 legal professionals and has more than 9,500 databases, which provide access to a complete range of legal resources, public records, and business

and financial news and information.

"West Group has organized its primary businesses into individual units to ensure that a focused executive team is dedicated to the strategic and financial growth of each business," Hall said. "While other information formats still exist, this decision to create a WESTLAW business unit reflects the company's commitment to the important role WESTLAW will play in West Group's future."

Prior to joining West Group, Prozes,

51, served as group president at Southam, Inc., Canada's largest newspaper and electronic news information company. Before his 8-year tenure at Southam, Prozes founded MFS Limited, a computer systems and services company serving the financial industry.

Prozes is a graduate of the Executive Management in Strategic Marketing program at Harvard Business School. He also holds a master's degree in business administration and marketing from York University in Toronto and a bachelor's degree in mathematics and computer science from the University of Waterloo, Ontario.

Source: West Group, Eagan, MN, 800/778-8090; <http://www.westpub.com>.

DowVision

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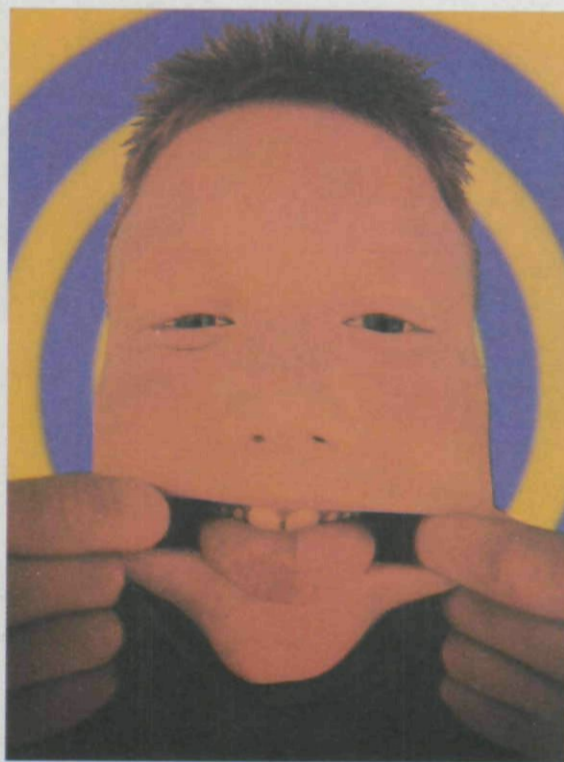
The Washington Post, and Los Angeles Times. Also among the essential business sources available through DowVision are the Far Eastern Economic Review, Barron's, and continuously updated newswires, including the Dow Jones News Service, Dow Jones International News Service, and other newswires.

"We're excited to have Individual on board as an Alliance Developer," said Tim Andrews, editor and executive director of enterprise products for Dow Jones Interactive Publishing. "Individual is a highly respected and significant force in the corporate information marketplace. Now corporate customers around the world can choose to access DowVision through Individual."

In addition to being offered through Alliance Developers, DowVision is also available directly from Dow Jones.

Dow Jones Interactive Publishing, the electronic publishing arm of Dow Jones & Company, provides business and financial news and information products including The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition on the World Wide Web and Dow Jones News/Retrieval, to corporations, consumers, and private investors through a variety of electronic media: computer, telephone, facsimile, and radio.

Source: Dow Jones & Company, Inc., Princeton, NJ, 800/369-7466; <http://www.dowjones.com>.



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