Annual Report, 2002 - 2003

Our Founding

August 21, 2003 -- In March of 2002 Louis Rosenfeld and Christina Wodtke invited a group of people to discuss how to advance the field of information architecture (IA).

One previous effort, ACIA, provided valuable information but was too closely paired to a commercial company to be sustainable. Another, Info-Arch.org, generated many grass-roots ideas but few concrete results. The new group was large enough to represent diverse opinions yet small enough to stay focused on the task. After eight months of online discussions, phone calls, and a meeting at the Asilomar Conference Grounds in California, the idea of the Asilomar Institute for Information Architecture (AIfIA) was born.

Mission and Goals

AIfIA launched in November, 2002 and was soon incorporated and granted non-profit tax status. Our mission is to

> *...advance the design of shared information environments. We support a global community infrastructure that connects people, ideas, content, and tools. Through research, education, advocacy and community service, we promote excellence within our field and build bridges to related disciplines and organizations.*

Out of this mission emerged more immediate goals which act as criteria to decide which projects to pursue during the Institute's first year:

- Advance the field of information architecture
- Provide value to members in their practice of IA
- Create sustainable infrastructure & operations to support these goals

Members and Projects

With only a foundation of the Institute in place, 163 charter members joined us in the first week. These members represented 120 organizations in 13 countries. By August of 2003, there were over 400 members from 26 countries. It is these early members, as well as support from others, who have worked to make progress on our first projects, including:

- AIfIA Translations, translating Information Architecture articles into a number of languages
- Education Curriculum, developing a recommended curriculum framework to assist instructors in planning IA classes
- F2F, facilitating the ability for AIfIA members to meet face-to-face
- Job Board, providing a clearinghouse for position postings relating to information architecture and more broadly to information design, interaction design, and HCI
- Metrics for IA, creating a scale to measure the impact of Information Architecture work
- Membership Directory, designing, building and delivering a directory of member individuals and companies

...as well as other projects in development. An infrastructure was built to support these projects, including:

- **Financial support**
- **Legal support**
- **Mailing lists for members and project teams**
- **Public Relations and *Announce* mailing list**
- **Technology & program management**

- **Volunteer coordination**
- **Web operations team**

Also this year were more discrete but still significant achievements, such as the free, online publication of a seminal paper on faceted classification and surveys on IA myths, the future of IA, content management systems, and salaries. Most significant was the Leadership Seminar held at the href="http://www.asist-events.org/IASummit2003/index.shtml">IA Summit in March which generated great discussion and sparked quite a bit of networking. It also raised money to pay back the loans from our founders and to support ASIST, the organizer.

Finances

AIfIA's financial position is squarely in the black, and we are well-positioned to support AIfIA initiatives and maintain AIfIA infrastructure in the coming year.

Background

Seed loans from AIfIA founders covered significant start-up and infrastructure expenses, enabling AIfIA to achieve 501c6 status and establish bylaws and finances with professional assistance by the end of 2002. Thanks to the growing interest and generosity of the information architecture community, membership dues have constituted the greatest portion of income. Other major sources of revenue include a seminar taught at the IA Summit by AIfIA volunteers, and the conversion of a significant portion of founder loans to donations, especially impressive considering donations to 501c6 organizations are not tax-deductible.

Financial Milestones

September 2002: AIfIA's seed money: $7,301 (loans from founding members)
October 2002: Infrastructure expenses (legal, accounting/bookkeeping, incorporation) cost $5,966
November 2002: AIfIA public launch; steady flow of new charter memberships
March 2003: AIfIA Leadership Seminar at IA Summit raises $6,260 (as well as $4,173 for ASIS&T)
May 2003: $4,676 of founder loans repaid; remaining $2,625 converted to donations
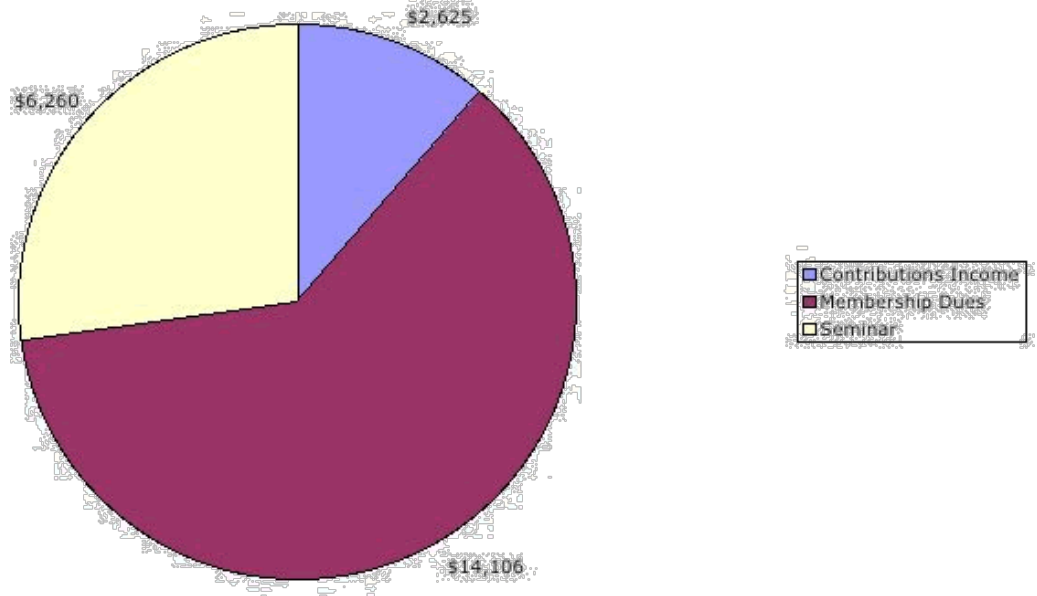July 2003: $14,106 in membership contributions to date
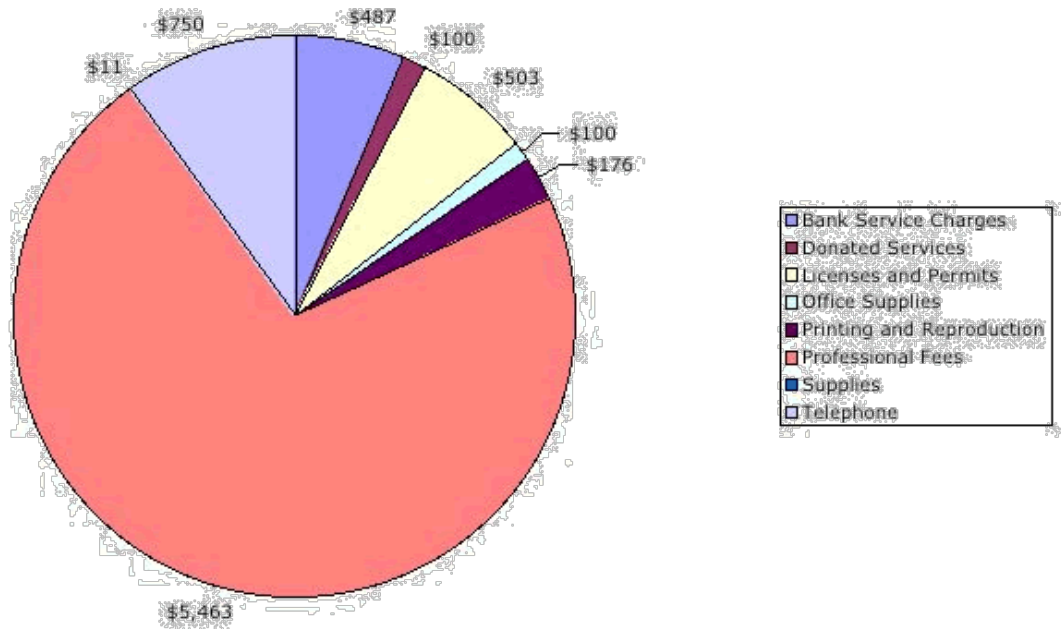
Financial Status as of July 2003

Total income: $22,991
Total expense: $7,590
Net income: $15,401

Income (inception through July 21, 2003)

Legend:
- Contributions Income
- Membership Dues
- Seminar

Pie chart values:
- $2,625 (Contributions Income)
- $6,260 (Seminar)
- $14,106 (Membership Dues)

Expenses (inception through July 21, 2003)

$750 $487 $100
$11 $503
                 $100
                 $176

Bank Service Charges
Donated Services
Licenses and Permits
Office Supplies
Printing and Reproduction
Professional Fees
Supplies
Telephone

$5,463

Partnerships

We received a great deal of interest from various organizations to become partners, but only pursued those which offered clear benefits to both organizations. One example is IA Slash, a news site for information architects. Michael Angeles generously donated the site and domain name to the Institute and we have agreed to maintain this valuable resource.
The University of Baltimore stepped up with the intention to participate in the Educational Curriculum initiative on an organizational basis. Their involvement can improve both the Curriculum and the university's own Master's program in Interaction Design and Information Architecture.

Organizational Structure

During our first growing year we recognized the shortcomings in our leadership structure. With a revision to our bylaws in July we reframed the Leadership Council as an Advisory Board appointed by the Board of Directors, providing AIfIA with a more traditional, more streamlined governance model.

Thank You

This short report cannot adequately recognize all those who helped make AIfIA's first year a success. Our heartfelt thanks go out to everyone who has contributed in even the smallest way. We look forward to furthering our mission together in the years to come.

Sincerely,

The AIfIA 2002-3 Board of Directors:
      Christina Wodtke, President
      Lou Rosenfeld, Treasurer
      Victor Lombardi, Secretary
      Peter Morville
      John Zapolski