

It is my honor and privilege to announce that the new constitution has been accepted with a resounding YES! Of those who voted, more than 99% voted for the adoption of the new constitution, less than 1% voted against it.

This result clearly tells us that the work of the past few years that went into developing the constitution, sharing it and debating it with the membership has resulted in this version that now has the full support.

A resounding YES also means a resounding thank you to our two most recent Past Presidents, Richard Green and Kevin Bradley for navigating our organization through this process in an open, transparent and democratic manner – and to the membership at large for participating in the process first by airing and debating the issues in a timely manner, and secondly giving a voice to your support by voting.

The new constitution will now enable this and future boards to respond to the challenges of the 21st century. This provides IASA with a constitution that will allow the board and the organization to respond to the changes the current environment brings.

It gives us a very clear mandate to move IASA ahead with the registering of IASA as a limited liability company. This will both give a secure ground for the board members, as well as the legitimacy necessary to participate in projects and cooperations that require a legal status, and even operations as basic as opening a bank account.

One of the new challenges that the 21st century brings is the ease of accessibility. When I started as an archivist 25 or so years ago, digital media and computer were in their infancy, archives were still protecting their contents with shut doors and multiple-copy applications. Around the turn of the century (millennium!), the biggest debate at the JTS was whether CD-R's or DATs were the medium of the future, or indeed neither: Tomorrow, we are likely to walk around just about anywhere in the world with access to the World Archive in our pocket – or perhaps a device will be implanted in one of our teeth? Please forgive this humoristic oversimplification of the quantum leap in information accessibility that the world has undergone in half a career's time – but we are in the middle of a snowballing transition between virtually no access to virtually all access – how are we going to deal with this?

Accessibility to information is today a fact and ease of access is on the increase. It brings with it a wealth of possibilities, enablement, choices and irresistible temptation. It's been said that access to information is the pillar of freedom – but it's also been said that freedom comes with responsibility.

What else is coming? What does it really cost? And who is paying that price? Is intellectual property a thing of the past? Does access to information increase the digital divide? Can you control a technological tidal wave? Where do we draw the line? Where does IASA fit into all this?

It's easy to welcome new technology – but we cannot afford to sweep the dilemmas under the rug, to hush the dichotomies and to ignore the debilitating damage that not addressing these issues may engender.

IASA's strength is based on a strong set of ethics and a fearless willingness to shed light on issues, debate these openly and inclusively, and mould them into constructive world-recognized guidelines. Richard Green made a famous speech at the London conference in 2001 about raising the bar. I'm proud to say we've collectively done so. Now, I'd like to build on that and ask: how are we going to keep raising that bar – and what kind of bar do we want to raise in the face of access and all its derivative issues?

The next IASA conference this Autumn will shed light on many of the facets of access – as Access for All is the main theme of the conference. The conference will take place in India, in a region that is very much in the eye of the storm of transition.

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to join me and the hosts of the conference in New Delhi, India. I am absolutely convinced that it will be a memorable conference!

Yours *soundly*,
Jacqueline von Arb
President IASA