A Guide to Information Science History Resources

[Initial sketch for discussion. Anything in [square brackets] to be deleted.]

[INTENT:] An introductory guide as an aid to encourage historical inquiry, a concise “how to find out” pathfinder of the kind commonly developed by librarians to support (i) finding the existing literature; and (ii) how to actively advance it.

[DESIGN: Short, selective and accessible; to reveal possibilities with genre and topical entries and examples.
Each entry would have (as desirable and feasible):
- Explanation if not obvious from the heading
- 2 or 3 good examples.
- 2 or 3 sources to find more: Indexes, catalogs, directories.
- Where to find guidance on best practice for doing / making more.
- Note of major needs.
- Preference to digital resources and open access.
  Suggested target size: 3-5,000 words. As and when material on any topic gets long enough, spin it off to make a separate specialized guide and link to it.]

Scope: ASIST’s traditional interest in documentation and knowledge organization: the history of the discovery, enumeration, description, analysis, and critique of documents (in the broadest sense of physical evidence) and the design and operation of systems to facilitate both access and use. Other topics in “information history” (e.g., origins of writing) and the history of information technology (e.g., technical development of telephony) are excluded unless closely related to ASIS&T’s interests.

How to
National Council on Public History https://ncph.org/

General IS Guides

General IS History Texts
  General books on IS history are lacking. Useful specialized texts include:
Farkas-Conn, I. From documentation to information science (Greenwood Pr., 1990).
  Old general textbooks can be useful for historical purposes and also convenient resources for detail on topics that have since been neglected, e.g., for the theory and practice of classification:

Literature reviews


The state of the library art series ed. by Ralph R. Shaw. Graduate School of Library Service, Rutgers – the State University, 1960-61. 5 vols in 9. Some accessible at the HathiTrust https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/010597416


v. 2, Reader services. Pt. 1 Training laymen in use of the library, G. S. Bonn. Pt. 2 Bibliographies, indexes and abstracts, by M. S. Bryant.


Scholarly books, encyclopedia articles, and dissertations typically include reviews of prior work. For book reviews: Journal of documentation, Information & culture, Library quarterly.

Leading journals on Information Science of historic importance and/or historical focus [Separate?]

American Documentation later Journal of ASIS /ASIST, 1950-


Journal of documentary reproduction 1938-1942. The model for American documentation.

Journal of documentation 1945-. Note book reviews and occasional historical reviews and biographical items.

Needed: Guide to past ADI, ASIS & ASIST publications with access details.

Content analyses, e.g.,


Terminology


Encyclopedias


Wikipedia has a few biographical items, e.g. Paul Otlet, Suzanne Briet.
NEED: Enrichment of the Wikipedia.

Bibliographies

Library & information science abstracts. Online.
Bibliography of the History of Information Science and Technology, 1900-2004. 8th ed,
https://www.asist.org/about/history-of-information-science/bibliography-of-the-history-of-information-science-and-technology/

Chronologies and timelines:

Chronology of chemical information science https://www.asist.org/about/history-of-information-science/chronology/

Newspapers

Searchable database of U.S. newspapers https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/

Biography

Appreciations, e.g. Ray R. Larson. https://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/events/2017/tribute-ray-larsons-academic-life
Dictionary of American Library Biography (1978 & 2 supplements) is an excellent model, knowledgeable biographical articles with notes on related sources and location of personal papers, e.g. Jesse H. Shera (First supplement, 119-123) and Vernon D. Tate (Second Supplement 209-211) but few information scientists.
Encyclopedias and the Wikipedia have some biographical articles.
Obituaries and appreciations can often be found in professional journals and academic websites. Membership directories and who's who-type directories where available:
ASIS Handbook & directory [Title varied.] 1960s on.
NEED: Biographical index significant figures in IS and resources for them.

Portraits

ASIST has a large collection of photos. Not currently accessible.
Patterns of research, development and publication

- **R&D analysis**
  West, Martha W. *What where we've been says about where we are: Research and Information Science*. Paper prepared for the System Development Foundation. Information West, May 1982.

- **Citation analyses, bibliometrics**

**Videos and films**

[Bob Williams Termatrex.]
[? ASIST IS theater?] [Youtube?]
NEED: IS history videography.

**Oral histories**

The traditional format is a typed and edited transcription. Sometimes audio and video recordings are available. The value of oral histories varies greatly. For good guidance see the Oral History Association website [https://www.oralhistory.org/resources/](https://www.oralhistory.org/resources/). Good examples at [https://www.sciencehistory.org/oral-history-projects](https://www.sciencehistory.org/oral-history-projects)

ASIST’s oral history program transcripts are temporarily unavailable.

Oral histories are commonly found at the subject’s institution, e.g. Patrick Wilson at University of California, Berkeley Bancroft Library.

An international checklist of oral histories relevant to IS history is in preparation.

**Institutions**

Institutions are ordinarily included in the indexes of scholarly reference works, including *ARIST*.

- **Associations and communities**

  Handbooks, membership lists, and websites often include historical notes, e.g., ASIS. *Handbook and directory 1968-69* lists past presidents.

  Associations sometimes provide lists of past publications and/or historical resources:


  ACM SIGIR List of SIGIR Locations and History [https://sigir.org/general-information/history/](https://sigir.org/general-information/history/) includes Cranfield project reports and other classic early material.

  Organizations occasionally have a designated archivist, curator, or historian and an institutional history, e.g.,


Funding agencies typically have rich documentation on recipients of grants, e.g. Council on Library and Information Resources; Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY.

Note the work of groups interested in IS history, e.g., ASIST SIG HFIS and the Document Academy.

**-Firms**


https://guides.loc.gov/company-research


NEED: A directory of firms noteworthy of IS history and sources for them.

**-Government agencies**


[ADD Guidance on FOIA requests?]

**-Schools**

Self-study reports for accreditation or internal purposes provide a convenient resource. For Canada and US some are available at the ALA Office for Accreditation

http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/accreditedprograms/resourcesforprogramadministrators/onlinepp

Institutions are ordinarily included in the indexes of scholarly reference works, including ARIST.

NEED: Encourage access to self-studies. [Example of an IS school history?]

**Information Science Technology**


Council of National Library Associations.

Patent search: https://patents.google.com/


**Access to literature**

The move to open access has greatly extended what is accessible beyond libraries:

HathiTrust https://www.hathitrust.org/ provides access to most of ASIST’s past publications.

Internet Archive Open Library https://scholar.archive.org/

Google Scholar https://scholar.google.com/
Archival resources
http://quod.lib.umich.edu/s/sclead/umich-scl-asis?subview=standard;view=reslist
To find collections use Social Networks and Archival Context https://snaccooperative.org/
Notable collections of personal papers included Charles P. Bourne (Computer History Museum, Mountain View, CA), Watson Davis (Smithsonian), Paul Otlet (Mundaneum, Mons, Belgium) and Vernon D. Tate (U. of Michigan).
NARA https://www.archives.gov/research
NARA Records Schedule https://www.archives.gov/about/records-schedule
1963.
What to do to preserve collections …
NEED: Guidance on ensuring preservation of archival papers and use of archival collections.
A checklist of archival resources relating to IS.

Museum
https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/in-circulation/2020/molisci?

Conference proceedings

Regional Geographical
It is generally impractical to separate US and Canadian IS from the general literature, but studies of other countries can be found. e.g.
France:
Documentaliste [special issue. Vol & date?].
UK:
Other European countries:
Occasional articles in *Education for Information*.

NEED: Identification, creation, updating of studies and bibliographies for all countries and regions.

**Internet Sources**

Ancestry.com