

# VIP Special Report

## Insights, Observations and Surprises: Commentary from SLA's 2008 Annual Conference

abram sla **alignment initiative** annual conference annual membership arrived till awards process benefit big highlight breakdown costs business owner career awards centennial year cert begins charlie rose chock closing reception conduct primary conference began conference planner conference sla core messages core corporate information corporate learning current content daily workflow deemed essential deserved award dhesi sandy direction sla **disinformation jackson** division corporate division initiative division insurance division sessions downtime built dr cert early career easily felt easily implementable ebSCO publishing effective elevator speech ellen bates emma dhesi employee benefits energy resources essential based evening social **finance division** fleishman-hillard pointed flux connections founding father front-line teams full advertisement full-page ads future plans global market golden opportunity good idea good ideas great group great time growing businesses growing mobile hanna lewin hired fleishman-hillard implementable ideas important incredible job **independent info info pro** info professional **info pros** information centers information **information professionals** information provider information services initiative interesting things international marketing internet age internet founding kate arnold lab rats large leadership summit learning management learning space level students library group long conference longer main focus makes purchasing makes sense management systems market moving market research market marketing communications marketing materials mary ellen masters level masters students membership messaging partnering mobile access mobile internet **mobile web national regulation** networking new current new division **new information** new move new zealand newspaper industry north america organizations find organizing sessions parties revenue peterson sarah planning early planning tool popular pr firms pretty tough previous years primary research process substantially products fit **professional as** professional presentations program offerings pros report prototype award provided wonderful ps- congrats purchasing decisions rats project real splash report growing resources division resources ps- rose keynote sarah hammond science technology seattle washington **seth godin** sig file sla aficionados sla attendees sla business **sla conference** sla europe sla explore sla members sla terms slow economy small business **space shuttle** starting folks stephen abram street journal teach explain teams independent technology text contribution thing standing time sla top notch trends workshop unusual feature users make varying vendor exhibitions vint cert vital sla volunteer organization wall street web naturally wider scale wonderful work enthusiastic world teaming years experience zealand chapter

Why We Came; What We Experienced

Tips and Takeaways

Visions of the Future of the Field

Suggestions for Future Events

Vendor Relations

Additional Resources

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VIP Magazine (<http://www.vivavip.com/>) is a monthly publication of in-depth, unbiased product reviews and news analysis for the business information industry. Subscribers use the publication to make and support purchase decisions; identify new products and resources; support competitive and market intelligence; and stay informed about changes in the content industry.

VIP is under the editorship of Pamela Clark, an industry veteran who has played many different roles in the information sector throughout her career. She has worked in local government, accountancy, management consulting and investment banking in the UK, Continental Europe and the US, most recently as Director, Corporate Research & Development, AIG, in New York.

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## Publisher's Note

To improve the usability of *VIP*, we have shortened many long URLs with DigBig, a free utility that creates persistent links (<http://www.digbig.com>). When you click a DigBig URL, or paste it into your browser, you will be directed to the original URL.



# introduction



The 2008 SLA Annual Conference in Seattle brought together more than 5,000 participants, exhibitors and speakers. Over the course of four busy days, we had a chance to meet and greet; encounter new ideas and try new tools; sign agreements and start relationships. Despite the challenges raised by taking several days away from our desks – not to mention the cost of travel – it was well worth it.

SLA launched a forward-looking initiative, with increased emphasis on using new tools like Twitter to comment on the event as it was happening and enhance the experience. We too decided that this was a year to experiment. Rather than take our usual path of having our editors, readers and supporters write summaries of conference sessions and overall reviews of the event, we decided to break apart the mould of conference reporting. We asked everyone we met at the event – old friends as well as complete strangers – to contribute to this report.

We asked for:

- Brief commentary about their experience – those ‘aha’ moments that are often lost in the lengthy days
- The most surprising new ideas they encountered, or something they wanted to go home and try, or the most inspiring conversation
- Anything but a recap of session points and description of presentation slides!

We received dozens of contributions, which we have organised and edited, with the authors’ approval, to create this report. VIP Magazine subscribers and all contributors receive a free copy, and we are making it freely available to every SLA member who wants one as well. This report gives those who attended the event a way of reflecting back, not only on their own experience, but to garner further insight from their peers. And those who could not attend have a chance to peek into the event, going beyond the session summaries to understand a bit more of the Zeitgeist... and the value of attending.

SLA 2008 was an inspirational conference, and an exciting warm-up to next June’s Centennial celebration for the organisation in Washington, DC. We are already making our own plans for attending, and we hope to see even more VIP subscribers, FreePint members, old friends and new in Washington next spring.

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## *SLA 2008 by the numbers:*

Total Registrants: 5011  
First Time Attendees: 845  
Exhibitor Registrants: 1681

## *Info Expo*

464 Booths  
283 Companies  
50 New Exhibitors



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10	<b>Section 2</b> Visions of the Future of the Field <i>"I see the new information professionals as absolutely key to our future, especially given the demographic of the profession that will result in 58 percent of the members of SLA reaching 65 by 2019."</i>
15	<b>Section 3</b> Vendor Relations <i>"As an information provider, it is always interesting to understand the ways in which corporations are looking for information as well as which content is deemed essential based on industry and market."</i>
17	<b>Section 4</b> Tips and Takeaways <i>"My favourite takeaway from this session was, 'Don't be a hospital; be a Starbucks.'"</i>
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