



From the Editor's Desk

by **Barry Drees**

Greetings fellow members,

Well, another great conference has come and gone and, as usual, there were lots of great workshops, presentations and social events. I know that what I'm about to say is really going to sound like one of those tired clichés of corporate-speak, but EMWA truly has entered a new era. With the establishment of the EMWA Professional Development Programme (EPDP), EMWA really has grown up and achieved maturity. On a personal note, I have to add that it is extremely gratifying to see something which was only a dream when I was President come to fruition so quickly.

Partially to celebrate this new era, but also to give a more individual look to each issue, I've decided (with a little prodding from the new president, Keith Veitch) to put pictures on the cover to give each issue of TWS a distinctive look. Apparently, people complained that when they looked for a specific article they could never tell one issue from the next (and I just know how often many of you are frantically searching your TWS stacks in search of specific articles). As I always state in my Advanced Data Presentation workshop, we are visual animals and we respond best to visual images, so I agreed that it was time to give our baby a new suit.

One of my primary goals in Dublin was to recruit (impress?) some new people onto the editorial board of TWS. Ever since the new format, I have been thinking about creating the role of Deputy Editor, as someone who could help me with editorial decisions and take over the preparation of one issue every year. Not only would this take some of the load off of my shoulders (desirable enough on its own), it would also make the role of Editor-in-Chief a lot less onerous, and thus more attractive to my eventual successor. Of course it would also serve to get someone else involved and familiar with the whole process of putting out TWS should anything happen to the Editor-in-Chief and would be the natural place to prepare someone to take over the function. Thus I am very excited to be able to announce that we have a new deputy editor here at TWS, Judi Proctor. I've worked with Judi here at TWS both in her roles as contributor and Copy Editor and I think she'll do a great job putting together the Winter 2001 issue (and now she can't back out!). I'm sure we're all looking forward to see the first TWS from another perspective.

In addition, inspired and impressed by their spontaneous performance at the banquet, I was able to recruit both Susan Quinn and Beccy Seward onto the TWS team in the roles of Artistic Director (vacated by Julia Forjanic Klapproth who is the new Vice-president) and Copy Editor (vacated by Judi Proctor), respectively. If they show the same initiative and creativity that they displayed at the banquet, TWS will be in very competent and innovative hands.

The Write Stuff

From the Editor's Desk

During the conference, I was asked two questions which seemed initially unrelated, but eventually I came to think that they are just different aspects of the same issue. The first question was to what did I attribute the fact that EMWA meetings tend to be so worthwhile and enjoyable. Aside from the obvious things like good workshops, fun social events, etc., I think what really makes the annual conferences so good, is that EMWA is a very open organisation that works hard to involve as many members as possible. I know from personal experience that although many people will not volunteer to participate on their own, with a little encouragement they will often surprise everyone, including themselves, and make valuable contributions. Many of the current members of the Executive Committee had to be “pushed” a bit to get involved, but I’m sure that they, and EMWA, are really glad they did.

I was asked by another member about why TWS uses only a single column of text when two parallel columns are supposedly easier to read. There’s certainly no denying that most publications use more than one column. However, as any of you who have ever wrestled with desktop publishing will know, the time and effort involved in putting an issue together increase exponentially with the complexity of the layout. This may be no problem for publications with sizeable budgets who can afford to pay people to do it for them, but at the all-volunteer TWS, it would make the already difficult task of editing so distasteful that I doubt we would find people willing to do it for free.

The guiding principle of EMWA could be considered the active promotion of member involvement and participation.

So, how are these two ideas related, you ask?

What connects these two ideas is a concept, which, if I may be so bold, could well be considered the guiding principle of EMWA - member involvement and participation. As I mentioned before, this does not happen by accident. It has to be planned and actively promoted. Like liberty, it requires constant vigilance. By actively encouraging members (new and old) to participate in the organisation, and by keeping organisational processes simple and pragmatic, EMWA stays proactive and dynamic. This is the primary factor making an organisation vibrant, exciting, and worthwhile; rather than the fossilized, clique-ridden club that many become. This is what I strive for both in the design of TWS (keeping it simple with defined processes for each step) and with the editorial board (providing training as well as fresh input). It is also what EMWA as an organisation does with the ever-changing Executive Committee.

Thus the reason EMWA is an organisation that is not only worth the money we pay each year to help run it, but actually is so much fun at the meetings, is that EMWA really **is** made up of its members. EMWA is an organisation we can all be proud of because we are what makes it worthwhile. So whether it is teaching a workshop in your area of expertise, working on the Executive or Professional Development Committees, or sending a contribution to TWS or the EMWA website, find a way to be a part of it!

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