Protecting the past in a digital world

You can't automate the whole process,” says Preece. “You well with the federal government’s data needs,” working with federal entities to confront the convenience of getting information Google-fast. But protecting the past in a digital world will always need a combination of good tools and people and ditching paper files might seem like a no-brainer in a world committed to reducing waste and addicted to the convenience of getting information Google-fast. Going digital on developing training initiatives for federal employees. The next generation of professionals who can tackle these issues. The federal government is streamlining the declassification process for the National Archives, which has a backlog of more than 262,000 cubic feet of paper documents that must be released to the public, plus millions of electronic records that need to be declassified over the next 25 years.

University researchers are developing software to flag documents that could be declassified and highlight text that might need to be redacted. The iSchool is also working on developing training initiatives for federal employees. “You can’t automate the whole process,” says Preece. “You will always need a combination of good tools and people who understand the policy.”

Other federal agencies needing information management solutions include the Smithsonian Institution, which is making a digital record of its entire 137 million-artifact collection. And the Library of Congress is coordinating a national strategy to collect, archive and preserve the burgeoning amounts of digital content—especially materials created only in digital formats.

Research by Joseph JaJa, a professor of electrical and computer engineering, will help ensure that any digital records made today are not trapped in obsolete or corrupted formats. JaJa’s research group has developed a suite of tools, already tested at the National Archives in College Park, which allows users to enter data on a “loading deck” and automatically verify that the information is accurate and has not been altered. The goal, says JaJa—who is actively involved with the Library of Congress initiative—is to enable researchers 50 or 100 years from now to find and retrieve electronic records using the best technology available to them, regardless of what hardware or software was used to create them.

UPDATE FROM THE OFFICE OF FEDERAL RELATIONS

Science Funding Outlook Improves

The projected outlook for science in President Obama’s FY10 budget should give the Maryland research community a cautious sense of optimism. The outline includes funding increases for areas of research that university faculty are actively involved with. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency is expected to receive a $3 billion increase to focus on climate change research and programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) would receive $18.7 billion to focus on research related to space-based climate research, research and development of human and robotic space exploration and aeronautics research. Substantial increases for the National Science Foundation’s Graduate Research Fellowship and Faculty Early Career Development programs are also proposed.

The president’s outline for the Department of Energy includes substantial increases for the Office of Science and an impetus for research and development on biofuels, renewable energy and energy efficiency. We will be carefully watching the FY10 numbers; indications are that the increased support for the nation’s research agenda will continue under the Obama administration.

REMEMBER:

Second Annual Celebration of Scholarship and Research

DATE: Tuesday, April 28
TIME: 4 to 6 p.m.
LOCATION: Reckord Armory

Sponsored by the Provost’s Office and the Office of the Vice President for Research, this annual event is a celebration of the scholarly and research accomplishments of the Maryland research community.

For more information: gernoimo@umd.edu

Join us for an informal event that highlights Maryland’s outstanding scholars and researchers, particularly those recognized by their peers for their achievements during the past year.
Chinese Americans consistently make less than their white peers, despite their level of education, according to a groundbreaking study led by Larry Shinagawa, associate professor and director of the university’s Asian American Studies Program.

The two-year study, “A Portrait of Chinese Americans,” was conducted with assistance from the Organization of Chinese Americans, a national group that advocates for the well-being of all Asian Pacific Americans.

On average, the earnings of Chinese American professionals in the legal and medical fields lag behind their white counterparts by as much as 44 percent, according to the report. “Time and hard work simply haven’t been enough for Chinese Americans to fully enter into mainstream social and professional circles,” says Shinagawa.

Language barriers, cultural differences and the public’s perception of Chinese Americans all might play a role in the pay disparity, Shinagawa thinks that increased mentoring and leadership opportunities can help. “You need a pipeline, a network to help young professionals rise to their potential, and increase Chinese American participation in top positions,” he says.

Based on extensive census data and personal interviews, the report also challenges stereotypes that Chinese Americans are the so-called “model minority”—a monolithic population of American professionals rise to top positions, he says.

Larry Shinagawa

Mel Bernstein, vice president for research, was recently named to the Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) board of directors. The board provides policy and fiduciary oversight of ORAU operations for its membership, a consortium of 100 major research institutions that advances science and education by partnering with national laboratories, government agencies and private industry.

Jeong Kim, professor of the practice in the Clark School of Engineering, received the 2009 Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award from the Chinese Institute of Engineers. The award recognizes Asian-American engineering professionals with a record of significant personal achievements and contributions to academia, public service and industry. Kim is president of Alcatel-Lucent Bell Labs, a source of groundbreaking solutions that shape the communications industry.

Sandra Gordon-Salant, director of the doctoral program in clinical audiology, received the 2009 Jerger Career Award for Research in Audiology from the American Academy of Audiology. This award is given to an academy member who has done at least 25 years of research and has made significant contributions to the practice or teaching of audiology.

Neil Gehrels, an adjunct professor of astronomy, will receive the 2009 Henry Draper Medal and a $15,000 prize from the National Academy of Sciences for his pioneering contributions to gamma ray astronomy. The academy recognized his work with NASA’s Swift Mission, which led to insights into the extreme physics of active galactic nuclei and power stellar explosions known as gamma ray bursts.

Research Maryland

Connecting the University of Maryland Research Community

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The Division of Research publishes Research/Maryland several times per semester. Its goal is to be a better informed and connected the research community at the University of Maryland. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Please e-mail them to Anne Geronimo, Division of Research, at geronimo@umd.edu.

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