

Creating and Supporting Member Connections

Save to myBoK

by Barbara P. Fuller, JD, RHIA

Distance is dead," declares Tom Peters in his 1997 book, *The Circle of Innovation*.¹ He is referring to the effect of technological advances enabling real-time communication, information transmission, business transaction, movement of money, and endless other activities. Peters continues with a quote from *The Economist*: "The death of distance will mean that any activity that relies on a screen or a telephone can be carried out anywhere in the world."

Embracing Technology at Work and Home

Think about the ease with which we have adopted technology in our homes and workplaces. We order goods and services with our Internet-equipped computer. We scan the Web not only for today's news items, but we gather all kinds of information for ourselves and our families. We map our vacation routes and purchase our airline tickets, search for profitable investment opportunities, and move our funds. And we can accomplish all this with a computer and an Internet connection. The forecasts for the new century have become today's reality.

Around the time *The Circle of Innovation* was published, AHIMA initiated its Organizational Structure Task Force, a group created to examine the structure and organization of our association to determine its usefulness for the new century and beyond. While affirming AHIMA's good health, the committee also planned changes. Now, Communities of Practice, expeditions, and virtual experiences have become part of our consciousness. We are growing comfortable with accessing AHIMA's Web site to review the latest news on the privacy regulations, coding changes, and a host of other subjects. E-mail has accelerated dialogue with our associates across town, across the state, and across the country.

Connecting at the State Level

But a note of caution should be sounded and a new challenge identified. Membership surveys indicate that the vast majority of members have access to the hardware and software required to use AHIMA's current and planned resources. Experience tells us, however, that there are still members who need additional encouragement, knowledge, and skills to thrive in today's technology-driven environment. Our state associations have an important role to play in contributing to the success of all our members. The leadership of state associations must take an active part in helping fulfill the vision made possible by the today's technology.

If you're a member or an officer of one of our component state associations, here are two ways you can contribute to the success of our profession and our members:

- Encourage the use of the World Wide Web and e-mail for up-to-the-minute communication at the state and national level. Doubt and apprehension about the technology will diminish with frequent and continued use
- Recognize that the change we are experiencing in our work and in our lives can raise anxiety levels. State associations can provide insight into what is possible plus reassurance that the uncertainties of our healthcare environment can invigorate and challenge even though they may also scare us

Finally, if you're one of those members who hasn't yet sent AHIMA your e-mail address, why not do so today? It's an easy way to be notified of relevant and fast-breaking news-and to stay in touch. E-mail your address to info@ahima.org.

AHIMA's members will enjoy unprecedented opportunities in 2001 to connect with peers and develop their skills. Join me as we meet these opportunities with energy, urgency, and excitement.

Note

1. Peters, Tom. *The Circle of Innovation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

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Article citation:

Fuller, Barbara P. "Creating and Supporting Member Connections." *Journal of AHIMA* 72, no.4 (2001): 8.

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