The iSchool Review

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The School of Information at UC Berkeley
MIMS Final Project Report
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Executive Summary

The iSchool Review (www.ischoolreview.com) is a new, digital publication designed specifically to showcase work from master's students in professional degree programs at schools of information (iSchools) throughout the world. The publication seeks submissions related to information management, information design and information policy. From traditional essays or policy papers to interactive information visualizations or UI/UX projects, the aim is to publish cutting-edge work that furthers the interdisciplinary trajectory of 21st-century iSchools.

In addition to completing the material deliverables for our MIMS Final Project (e.g. the inaugural issue, this report, etc.), we have worked to establish an infrastructure that will enable *The iSchool Review* to live on beyond the vacuum of the MIMS 2016 project showcase. Our plan is to publish the second issue in December 2016, and then on a bi-annual schedule in May and December thereafter. Doing so will take personal investment from each us, to which we are already committed. We also hope to enlist the support of the administration (e.g. Dean Saxenian), as well as deans at other iSchools and possibly the iCaucus, which could serve as a neutral distribution center of sorts. But, that is all the future. And while it is important to consider the sustainability of the publication, it is also important to explain how we got where we are.

Due to their relative newness in the landscape of academia, iSchools are still a bit of a mystery. People have not yet developed mental models for iSchools, as they have with business schools or law schools, for example. Consequently, as iSchool students, we are often asked to answer the question, "What is a school of information?" To help answer the question we can direct people to www.ischools.org, but that website does little more than list the members of the iCaucus[1] and provide information about the annual iConference.[2] Furthermore, while there are numerous academic journals that publish content related to the various topics taught at iSchools, given the interdisciplinary nature of the curricula, we could not find a singular publication that contained both depth of expertise and breadth of subject matter. In general terms, for example, we could not find a publication that simultaneously had a satisfactory paper about natural language processing and a satisfactory paper on information visualization. Thus, we set out to create an all-inclusive publication that reflects the robust interdisciplinary work that takes place inside iSchool classrooms every day.

What follows in this report is a detailed recap of the project. We start by introducing "the big idea", and then shift to explaining many of the functional decisions. Next, we describe the technical infrastructure and design, followed by descriptions of our marketing and distribution channels. We conclude by detailing the steps we have taken to ensure that the publication will survive beyond a single issue, which includes our future vision.

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[1] For more information visit http://ischools.org/members/icaucus-members/ (accessed on 1 May 2016).
[2] For more information visit http://ischools.org/the-iconference/ (accessed on 1 May 2016).

The Big Idea

The interdisciplinary nature of iSchool curricula makes it difficult to answer succinctly the question, "What is a school of information?" For some, the answer focuses on library science; for others it revolves around data science; and for others, an iSchool is place to explore technology law and policy. Importantly, all of these answers -- as well as others not mentioned -- are correct. iSchools are intentionally designed to bring together students and faculty from a variety of different backgrounds. At the School of Information at UC Berkeley, for example, students' backgrounds range from art and literature to bioengineering and computer science, with a multitude of other disciplines in between. The diversity of backgrounds constantly encourages a healthy exchange of ideas, which often leads to people changing their pre-existing convictions. Thus, how one defines an iSchool at the beginning of his/her graduate studies can change drastically upon earning his/her master's degree.

Consequently, in addition to showcasing thought-provoking content that would otherwise be confined to the classroom, we founded *The iSchool Review* to empower people to formulate their own answers to the aforementioned question. Importantly, though, no single submission addresses the question directly. Instead, each article focuses on a subject of particular relevance to the author(s)'s iSchool experience. Moreover, as individual puzzle pieces that collectively form the inaugural issue, each article occupies its own spaces while simultaneously conversing with the other articles. Our goal is that the same will be true of the publication at large -- each issue will stand alone while reflexively connecting to previous (and future) issues.

To accomplish this goal, we subjected each submission to a rigorous selection process, which was overseen by the student editorial board and the faculty advisory committee. Upon being selected, each work went through several rounds of back-and-forth edits (see *Figure 1*). Then, each author, or group of authors, had to secure an endorsement from a faculty member at their affiliated academic institution. Given the nascent stage of this publication, we think it is crucial that each work is validated by an authority beyond the editorial board. Moreover, requiring the authors to secure a faculty endorsement signifies to our readers that each paper has been vetted by an expert. This, we think, is essential to having people take seriously our student-run publication.

Figure 1 -- Each piece selected went through at least two rounds of hand-written edits.

Beyond focusing on the content itself, we also dedicated a lot of thought and time to the online reading experience. As such, we not only designed for the enjoyment of our readers, but also for mobile compatibility and accessibility. But, like iSchools themselves, *The iSchool Review* will continue to evolve as new technologies and new problems enter our world. This is why we took several steps to ensure that the publication can survive beyond the inaugural issue. (For details about our sustainment plan, see *Sustainment Plan & Future Vision* below). But before we focus too much on tomorrow, it is first appropriate to outline the various decisions and perspectives that got us to where we are today.

Behind the Scenes

Project Management (JIRA)

For a project like ours, which had many external-facing stakeholders (i.e. authors and faculty members from other iSchools), organization and accountability were of the utmost importance. So too was the ability to move a given requirement through a customized workflow and, based on where it (the requirement) was in the workflow, to have the flexibility to assign it to one another. As such, we made the decision to use JIRA[3] as our project management tool. In addition to other project management activities, JIRA enabled us to create a sprint board (see *Figure 2*) and a dashboard (see *Figure 3*), and, as mentioned above, to

[3] For more information visit https://www.atlassian.com/software/jira (accessed on 5 May 2016).

assign issues to one another (see *Figure 4*) and move issues through our customized workflow (see *Figure 5*).

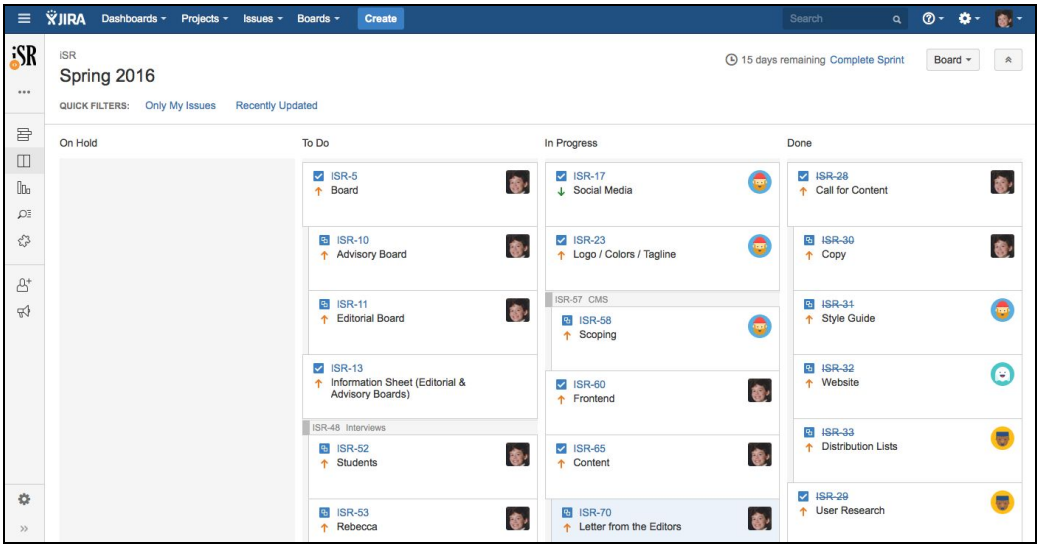

Figure 2 -- Our Spring 2016 *sprint board kept us organized and on track (screenshot taken on 24 April 2016).*

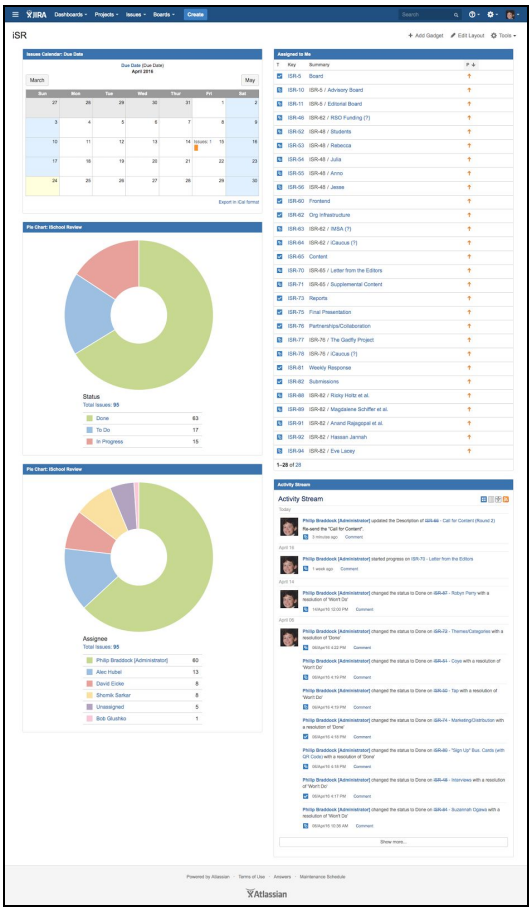

Figure 3 -- The dashboard we built helped us visualize our progress (screenshot taken on 24 April 2016).

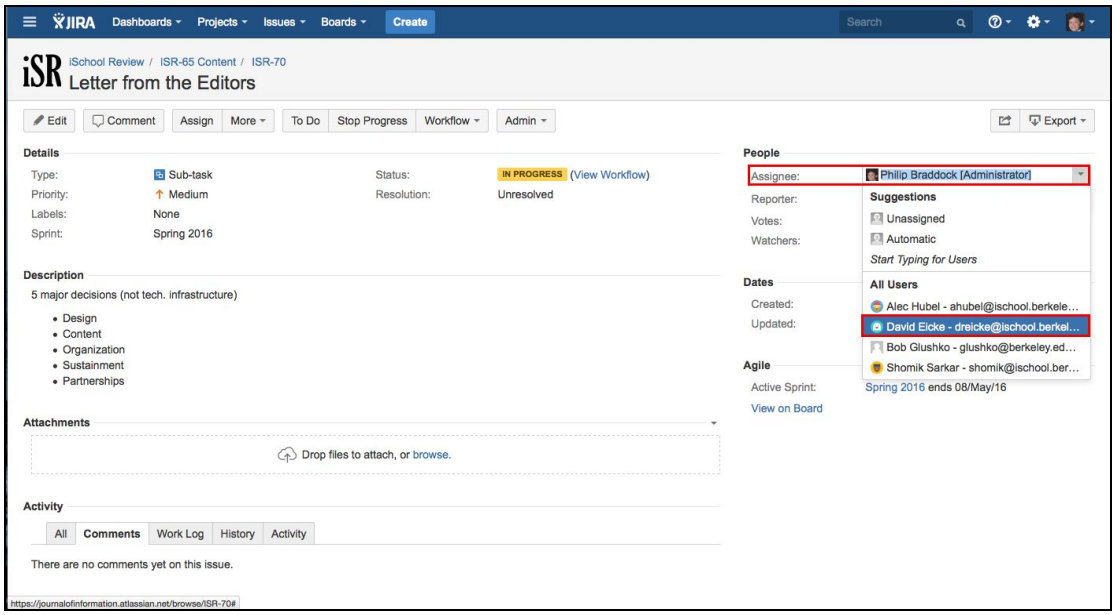

Figure 4 -- Each requirement (i.e. task) was assigned a unique issue ID, and we could assigned issues back-and-forth between each other (screenshot taken on 24 April 2016) .

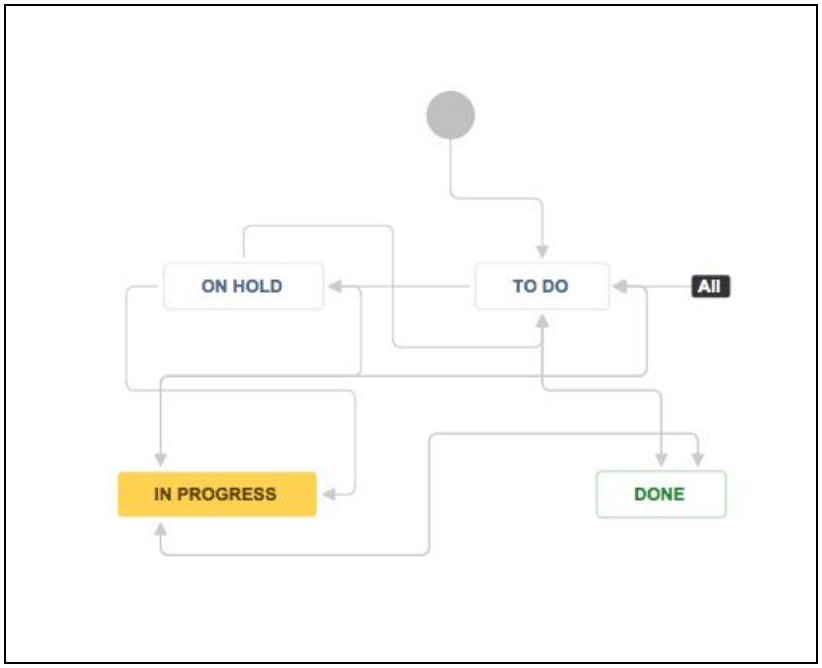

Figure 5 -- We created a simple workflow that enabled us to progress each requirement forward, or send it backward for additional work (screenshot taken on 24 April 2016).

Roles & Responsibilities

With the project management tool in place, it was then necessary to figure out who was going to do what. Since the four of us have different skills/academic foci, the division of labor was fairly straightforward. Following is a high-level breakdown of the roles and responsibilities:

- Shom: Backend integration and formatting for published works;
- Alec: Backend integration and formatting for published works;
- David: Frontend development and design; and
- Philip: Editing and general communication with submitters.

And while it was important that each of us managed our respective silos, we were constantly collaborating throughout the entire project.

The Name

When this project was first conceived in October 2014, the original name of the publication was *The Journal of Information*. We operated under that moniker for about one year; but, it should be noted that there was very little activity until September 2015, when we really got down to work. After conducting a round of interviews with ladder faculty -- Steve Weber, Deirdre Mulligan and John Chuang, for example -- we realized that the word "journal" is a loaded term, especially in academia; it carries connotations of top-down authority, original research and peer review.

Since we were trying to approach things a bit more organically, we decided to move away from using the word "journal". To do so, we tried to find examples of bottom-up (i.e. student-run) publications that carry respect in their relevant arena. One of the best examples we found is the *California Law Review*. And given that its operational infrastructure is similar to ours (i.e. it is run entirely by students),[4] we decided that *The iSchool Review* is a more appropriate name for our publication. That said, we differ from the *California Law Review* because we are a student-run publication that publishes work from students (as opposed to students and faculty). As mentioned above, this is why we require each submitted paper to have a faculty endorsement. Thus, although the final name of the publication does not connotate as much formality as did the original, we think that the inclusion of the faculty endorsement adds a necessary degree of authoritative expertise while still enabling us to be creative and iterative.

[4] According to its website, "[t]he *California Law Review* is... edited and published entirely by students at [UC] Berkeley Law [School]" (http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/californialawreview/ - accessed on 24 April 2016).

Website & Email Address

After finalizing the name, we immediately sought to purchase the web domain. Luckily, we had several extensions to choose from (e.g. .com, .org, etc.) so we went with the default of .com: www.ischoolreview.com.

With the domain secured, we wanted to make sure that our communications (i.e. emails) were as official as possible. To do so, we requested the creation of iSchoolReview@ischool.berkeley.edu, and that it forward to our respective @ischool.berkeley.edu email addresses. Approval was granted almost instantly, and it has been our primary email address since late-September 2015. This has been very helpful when communicating with authors, faculty and the iConference (see *The iConference* below for details about the latter).

Logo

After buying the domain we set out to design a logo. The original design featured a set of axes that separated the logo into four quadrants, with the title appearing in the upper-left and lower-right portions (see *Figure 6*).

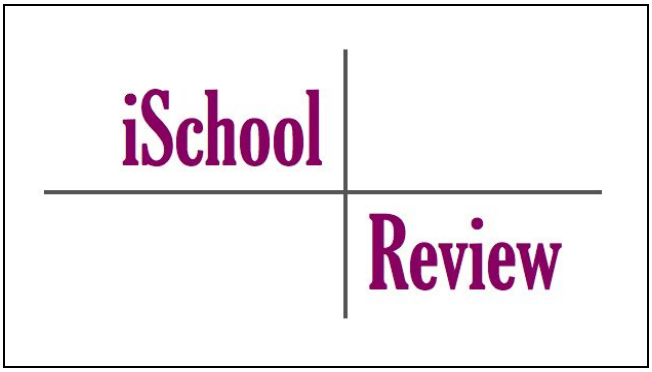

Figure 6 -- The first version of the logo.

However, after implementing this version of the logo in a few wireframes, we realized that the empty quadrants tended to create awkward trapped white space, and the name seemed to disappear. The logo was rigid and bland. It did not demand any sort of response or recognition from the user. So, we scrapped the original version.

We believe the current design is stronger. The thought behind the current logo was to have a marriage of tradition and technology, which is why we went with an old-fashioned font face combined with curly braces, the latter of which is a common element in coding languages. The new logo also provides us flexibility in several ways that the original did not. First, one of the affordances of this design is that we have a full-length version (see *Figure 7*) and an abbreviated, compact version (*Figure 8*).

Figure 7 -- The full-length version of the logo.

Secondly, we are not bound to a particular color scheme. While the homepage (www.ischoolreview.com) does feature a shade of deep-purple (see *Figure 8*), if we ever decide to modify the palette, we can easily change the color of the logo.

Figure 8 -- The abbreviated, deep-purple logo on the homepage.

Social Media

To round off our behind the scenes work we created social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter. While we have not been all that active on the platforms, we think there is tremendous value in securing the page and handle, respectively. This will prove especially true if (and hopefully when) the publication gains readership and respect in the future.

Content

Solicitation

With the functional foundation laid, we immediately turned our attention to the content, the lifeblood of the publication. As mentioned in the first line of the *Executive Summary* (above), our goal throughout this project has been to publish work from iSchool students around the world. Therefore, we devised a strategy that would enable us to reach students at UC Berkeley as well as other iSchools -- University of Michigan, University of Toronto and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, for example.

Our primary vehicle to solicit submissions was our *Call for Content* (see *Appendix 1*), which we sent electronically to the entire School of Information at UC Berkeley, meaning MIMS, MIDS, Ph.D students, alumnae/i, etc. (We also posted it around South Hall, but that did not seem to

have much an impact.) But, given our goal of publishing international submissions, we needed help to reach the other iSchools. So, we reached out to Dean Saxenian.

Immediately receptive to the project, Dean Saxenian willingly and generously agreed to send our *Call for Content* to the listserv for every dean in the iCaucus.[5] With Anno's help, we certainly had a global audience. Unfortunately, however, we did not necessarily go viral. In other words, our first solicitation, sent on 16 November 2015, did not exactly leave us with a surplus of submissions. But, this was not unexpected. To mitigate this risk, we sent the *Call for Content* two more times, on 29 January 2016 and 5 March 2016, respectively. Fortunately, Dean Saxenian did as well.

Selection

Once submissions started coming in we had to plan for the worst case scenario. Put differently, if we received an overwhelming number of submissions, we knew that it would not be feasible to read closely and edit carefully every single paper. And while we did not establish a specific threshold for how many submissions qualified as "too many", our intuition told us that we could handle up to 25 papers. Fortunately, we did not encounter that problem. If we had, our first step in the selection process would have been to read only the abstract, which is the main reason that we required authors to submit an abstract. Then, based on the abstracts, we would have created *Keep* and *Reject* piles, and would have worked through reading all of the papers in the *Keep* pile.

Because we received a manageable number of submissions, we were able to read every single submission carefully. While, to some degree, the submissions we were inclined to publish had self-organizing categories, we thought it would be best to develop our own content organizing system. Thus, we devised a heuristic so that we could implement a taxonomy to help us navigate the *Keep* pile. In general terms, our organizing system is a taxonomy of iSchools. Importantly, though, we do not claim that these top-level categories are unbiased, or universally reflective of every iSchool. For the sake of the project, however, and because of time constraints, we had to avoid succumbing to "paralysis by analysis". To guide us through the selection process, therefore, we sought to include (at least) one paper from each of the following top-level domains:

- Library Science/Information Organization;
- Human Computer Interaction/Design;
- Information and Communication Technologies and Development
- Law and Policy;
- Information Economics;
- Management/Entrepreneurship; and
- Data Science/Information Visualization.

[5] See Footnote 1.

For the papers that we accepted, the next step was editing (see *Editorial Process* below). However, for the submissions we rejected, the next step was to inform the author(s). We did so by sending a personalized email (see *Appendix 2*). Generally, people appreciated that they received feedback from us, even though they were rejected. For example, one author even asked for more feedback, which we provided in general terms.

In addition to student-submitted work, we also had the idea to publish supplemental content. We envisioned these pieces as shorter and less formal (i.e. minimal citations or references). So, after a few days of brainstorming, we came up with two ideas: the first was information organization (i.e. *INFO 202*) case studies, and the second was a career advice piece written by Rebecca Andersen, the Director of Career Services at the School of Information at UC Berkeley. For the former, we asked for, and received, recommendations from the *INFO 202* GSIs (i.e. TAs) from the Fall 2015 semester. For the latter, we approached Rebecca directly, who generously agreed.

Editorial Process

As mentioned in *The Big Idea* (above), each featured paper and supplemental piece selected for publication went through at least two rounds of back-and-forth edits, which we approached seriously and professionally. For each round of edits we printed every paper and marked them up with hand-written suggestions, comments and questions (see *Figure 1* above). We then applied the edits via the Track Changes feature in Microsoft Word (which is why we required that every submission be sent as a Word document). While this did cause a bit of duplicate effort (as opposed to reading and making the edits directly on an on-screen version), we were/are committed to detail. And because of the affordances provided by pen and paper, it has been our collective experience that it is more productive to do close readings, or editorial work, with a printed copy.

In nearly every exchange with each author (or set of authors), we were thanked for our editorial attention to detail. This was rewarding because it left the impression that people took our feedback seriously and constructively, not personally. It also helped us establish more professional relationships and establish ourselves as serious publishers, both of which were/are important goals.

Technical Infrastructure (Grav)

There is no shortage of quality CMS freeware out there. Do we use one of them or build our own? And if we do choose to use a pre-existing CMS, which one would be best? These were questions that required extensive research.

We couldn't get a feel for how easy it would be to create our own CMS, so we decided to just try it. Because of our familiarity with Python, we were drawn to the Flask system, which

makes use of Jinja templates.[6] We succeeded in building a basic microblog using the Jinja framework, but we were able to see, in that process, how tricky it might be to build the whole thing ourselves in the time we had left (i.e. January - May 2016). Drawing from some key concepts we have learned in the MIMS program, we came to the conclusion that the point of our project was not to build a customized CMS. Thus, we decided not to reinvent the wheel, and to use a pre-packaged CMS. This decision has the added benefit of making it easier for the (eventual) next generation of editors to inherit the infrastructure.

Next, we had to choose from the many available pre-built options. Wordpress is the most well-known of the free CMS options. It has plenty of high-profile clients, and a solid developer community built around it. However, between the four us, the Wordpress sites we had run before have tended to be fairly slow, and customizing them is something we had always found difficult.

Thus, we decided to examine alternatives. Over the last few years, there have been several Flat-File CMS options popping up. Unlike a traditional database, a Flat File CMS stores data in files and folders. This can lead to a website that is more lightweight, faster, and more extensible than those built on traditional CMS platforms. Given the nature of what we are intending to publish, a file-tree organization made more sense. Finally we landed on Grav (https://getgrav.org/).

The biggest advantages of Grav are that it is fully customizable, is built on a flat-file structure, and is very well documented with full support via the forums and direct *Help* contact emails. Its many plugins support all sorts of functionality, from JS Comments to Search to Shopping Carts. This was really important to us because one of our goals for the content was to embed interactivity into as many papers as possible. Although we did not reach this goal universally (i.e. for every single paper published), we did accomplish it across more than half of inaugural issue.

Grav certainly had a learning curve, but a lot of great things do. Now that we have met most of CMS-related goals, we can happily say that it was worth the challenge.

UI/UX

Wireframes

When we started thinking seriously about how to present our content, the temptation was to use a website we like that publishes similar content, and use that as a model. A while back, in early-February, we spent a few hours drawing wireframes of already-existing websites (TIME, The Atlantic, Grantland, The Believer, etc.) to get an idea of the options.

[6] For more information visit http://jinja.pocoo.org/ (accessed on 28 April 2016).

After reading this article in Smashing Magazine, however, we began to question that approach. The article considers the process print magazines used to go through when making their own presentation decisions. The content editors would work closely with the designers to produce a design that *reflected* and *accommodated* the content. What happens in most of today's websites, according to the aforementioned article, is that they're built with dummy content, and then the real content is crammed into the frame. While we understand the motivations for this (scalability for instance), we were moved to consider the content we have a little more.

Although our inaugural issue has a limited amount of content, we planned our layout with scalability in mind. In the future, we anticipate housing multiple issues with 5-10 articles/papers per issue. Therefore, a model like *The Atlantic*, with its bounty of content items, does not work very well for a publication featuring around ten pieces.

In wireframing, we turned to print publications for examples. We asked ourselves several questions:

- What does a publication with less than 10 "things" in it look like?
- How would that be optimized for mobile consumption?
- What level of organization is necessary?
- How much organization is "worth it"?
- Would filters be necessary with so few pieces?

All of these were important considerations as we formatted the content and designed the best home for the first issue of *The iSchool Review*.

Design

We quickly realized that publications like *The Atlantic* and *TIME* were not going to work as models for *The iSchool Review* because the nature and the amount of content was vastly different. Therefore, we started looking for literature reviews, which tend to publish as issues and include only a few pieces. Following are several examples that we circulated amongst ourselves to gauge our respective and collective preferences:

- http://www.bodegamag.com/issues/24;
- http://www.muzzlemagazine.com/winter-2016.html;
- http://contrarymagazine.com/;
- http://apublicspace.org/magazine/issue_22;
- http://orionmagazine.org/;
- http://harvardreview.fas.harvard.edu/; and
- http://granta.com.

We preferred the structure of Harvard's *Review*, which features a top-level navigation consisting of essential information and actions to take such as *Submit* or *Subscribe* or *Shop*, and has its content below, which is chunked into categories (fiction/nonfiction/poetry).

Even with the taxonomy we established (details above), we had not yet considered whether we would formally classify our articles similarly, especially because our submissions tend to blur the lines between categories. On the positive side, though, having already established the top-level categories, we could at least give our readers a preview of what is in each issue of the publication. This organization also allows readers to jump to articles in which they are most interested.

Therefore, instead of creating concrete category labels and cramming what we have into them, we tried a clustering strategy in the style of affinity diagramming, and then labeling the natural clusters. Because of our low number of total accepted submissions, we were in danger of having categories housing only one item, but that seemed like an acceptable risk. With this flexibility built in, we can accommodate our next issue's content, even if it's vastly different.

Reach & Accessibility

Many of our considerations regarding the design of the website (i.e. publication) focused on making it accessible to a wide audience. This meant responsive design for many screen sizes and devices (see *Figure 9*), and it also meant making the website accessible for screen readers and for people with low vision.

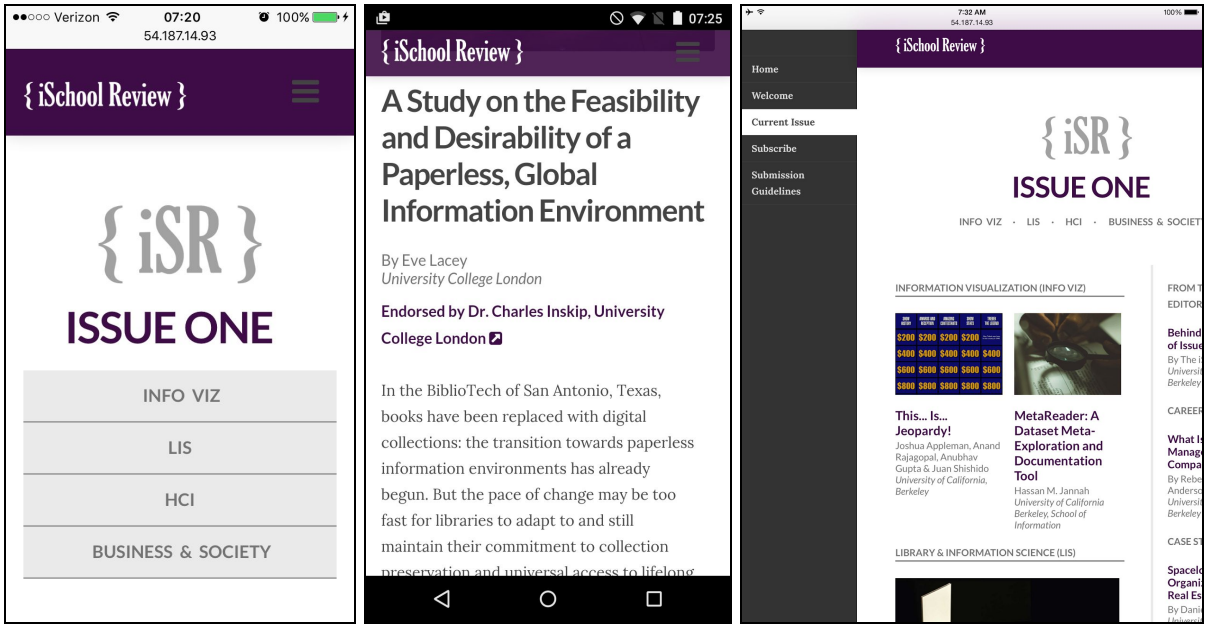

Figure 9 -- From left to right, views from an iPhone, Android and iPad (screenshots taken on 4 May 2016).

We employed several approaches in order to accomplish our goals of distribution and accessibility:

Color Contrast Checking: For every bit of text on the site, we've been checking the contrast with its background using this web resource: http://snook.ca/technical/colour_contrast/colour.html#fg=33FF33,bg=333333.

Standard Markup: Most screen readers are able to handle modern, logical, semantic markup of a website. We are concentrating on providing that for our screen-reader audience, and we have plans to ask a blind person to check it for navigational issues. For popups, we used code straight from *http://a11yproject.com/*, which returns users to where they were upon closing the popup.

Avoiding Hover Effects: While we do use some hover effects for aesthetic purposes on our desktop site, there are no hover triggers for important or informational events. This is because current mobile devices -- tablets and smartphones, for example -- do not support hover, or mouseover, effects. Thus, if a user reads the publication on a mobile device, he/she will not miss out on any important content.

User Research

Once we had a stable QA site with finalized content, it was important that we conducted user research. While we wanted to make sure that the design was intuitive, not to mention operational, we also wanted to make sure that we had built a genuinely enjoyable online reading experience.

To conduct our user research we scheduled more than fifteen one-on-one sessions with our classmates. Below are some of the key takeaways.

Homepage

In our QA site, the homepage featured the *Welcome* letter written by Hal Varian (see *Figure 10*). Across the board, our interviewees reported that they were expecting a more traditional landing page, meaning one with images and a high-level description of the publication. We took the feedback to heart and re-designed the homepage to align more closely with the expectations of our users (see *Figure 11*).

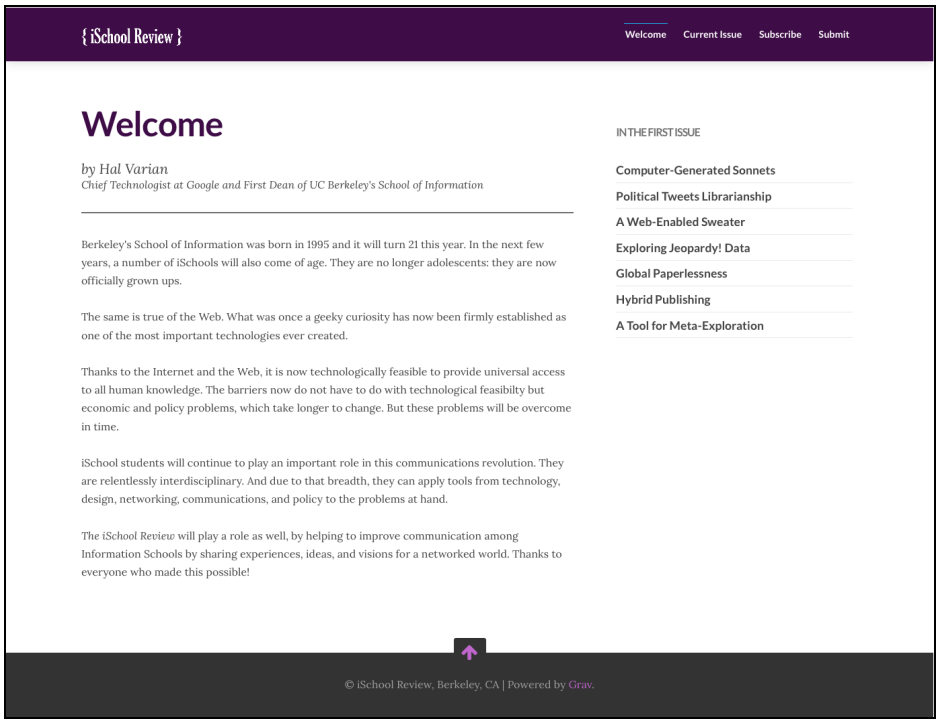

Figure 10 -- The homepage from our QA site (screenshot taken on 28 April 2016).

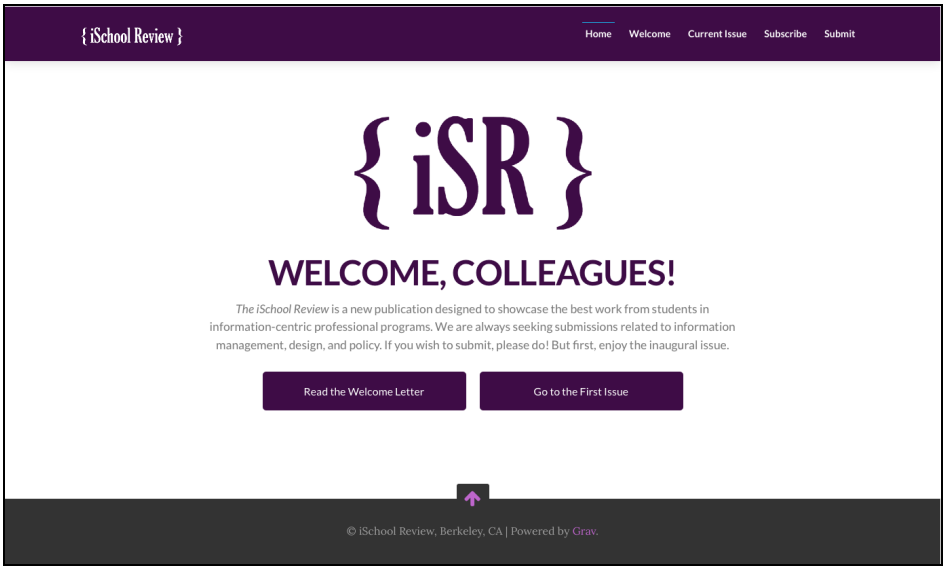

Figure 11 -- The redesigned homepage (screenshot taken on 1 May 2016).

Citations

Another key takeaway focussed on our citation feature. Inspired by sites such as FiveThirtyEight[7] and Grantland,[8] when our readers click on a given citation, they are

[7] For more information visit http://fivethirtyeight.com/ (accessed on 28 April 2016).
[8] For more information visit http://grantland.com/ (accessed on 28 April 2016).

automatically taken the bottom of the screen so that they can read the corresponding footnote or endnote; they can then click an arrow that "jumps" them back to where they were in the article (see *Figure 12*). Generally, our testers really liked this feature, as it allowed them to inspect a footnote without losing their place in the main text. But, they found it hard to see the "jump" arrow. So, we modified the design in order to make it more readily visible. We also added a highlight feature so that it is easier for users to see exactly which citation they clicked on (see *Figure 13*).

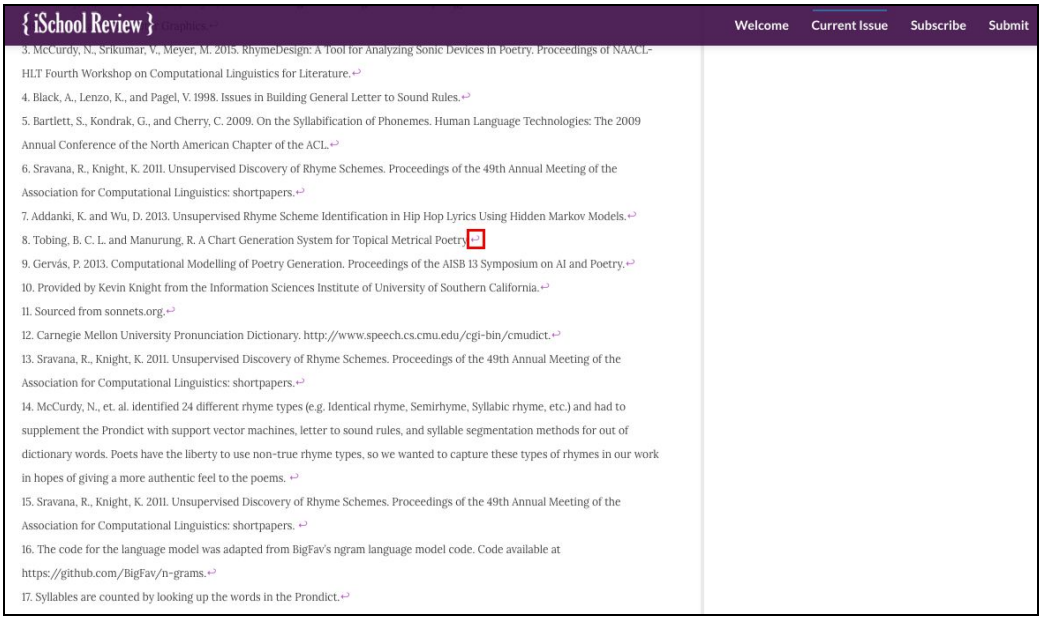

Figure 12 -- The red callout shows the original design of the "jump" arrow (screenshot taken on 28 April 2016).

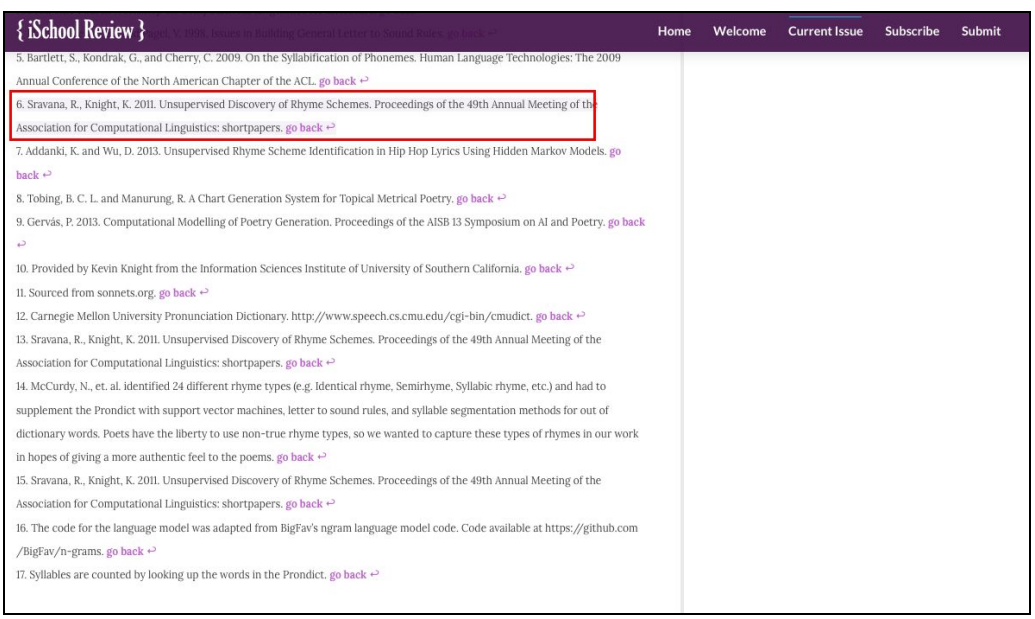

Figure 13 -- The redesigned "jump" arrow also has the text "go back", which makes it easier to distinguish; the highlight feature helps readers remember the citation they clicked (screenshot taken on 1 May 2016).

Faculty Endorsement Button

When we asked our testers to engage with the faculty endorsement (FE) they were all able to find it quite easily (see *Figure 14* and *Figure 15*). But, several people mentioned that the label was not engaging enough. Consequently, we decided to re-label the button to show the name of the endorser and his/her affiliated academic institution (see *Figure 16*). We are confident that this change will encourage more readers to open (i.e. click on) the faculty endorsement.

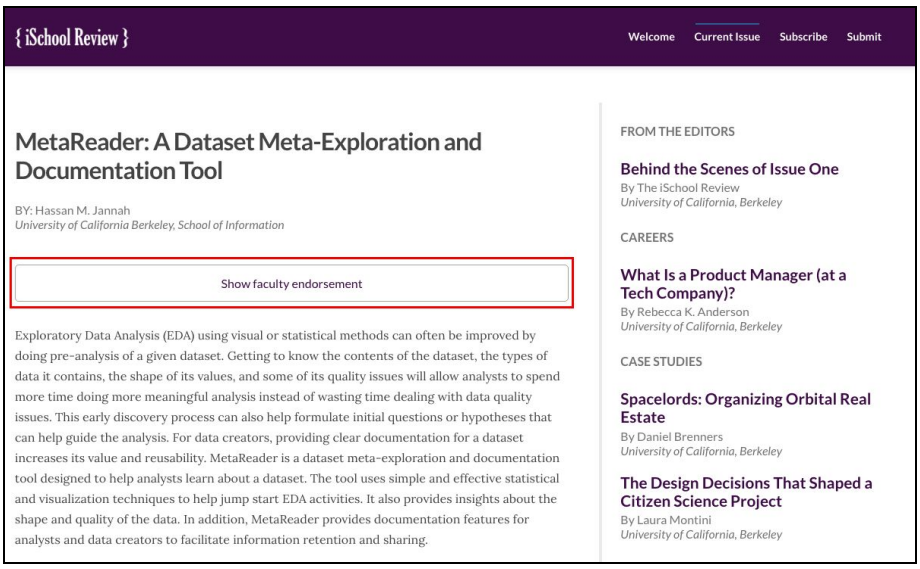

Figure 14 -- None of our testers had trouble finding the FE button (screenshot taken on 28 April 2016).

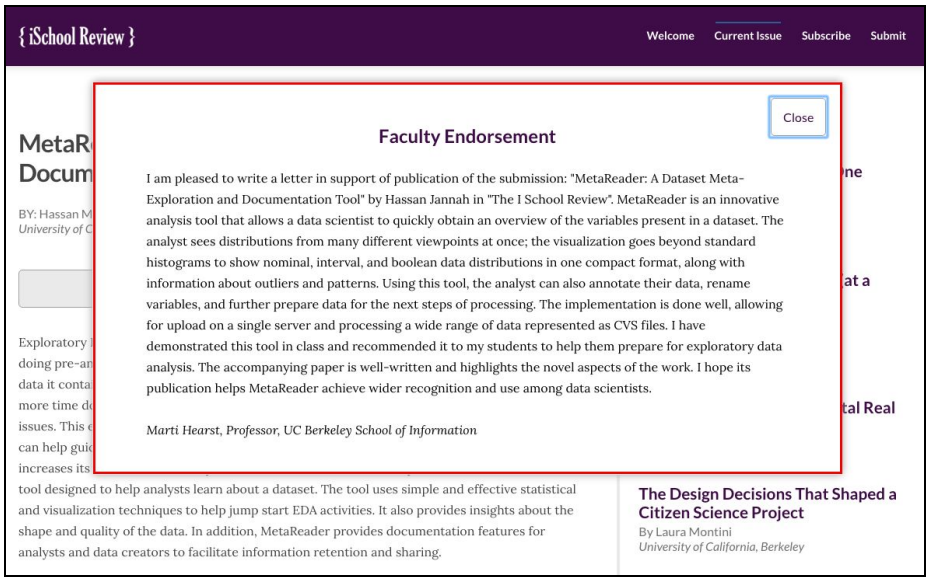

Figure 15 -- The FE pop-ups when a user clicks the button (screenshot taken on 28 April 2016).

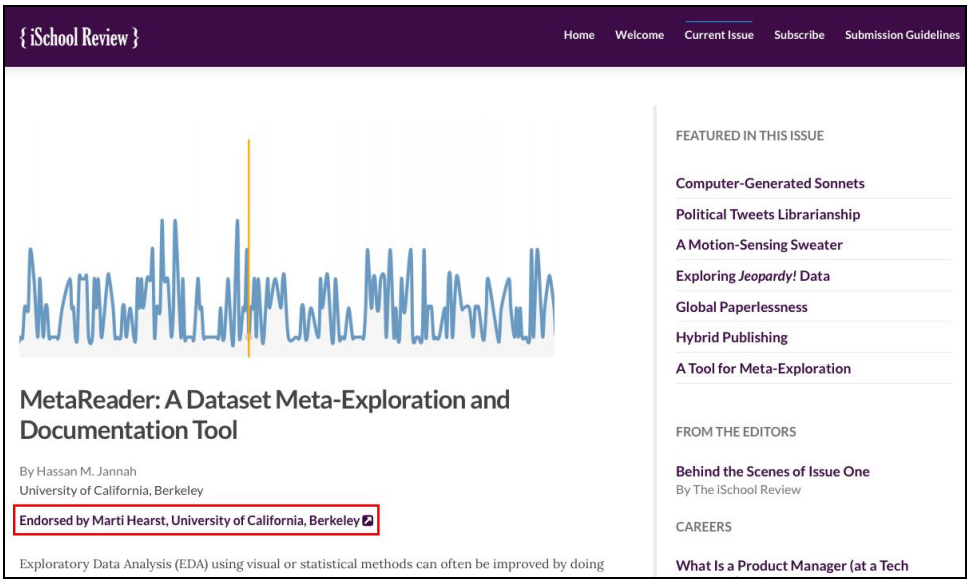

Figure 16 -- The re-labeled FE provides more information to the reader (screenshot taken on 5 May 2016).

One-Liner

In the QA design of the *Issue* page, we showed the name(s) of the author(s) and his/her/their affiliated academic institution (see *Figure 17*). But, as our testers pointed out, the *Issue* page did not feature any descriptions about the individual articles. We thought this was valuable feedback, so we modified the design. In the new, final version, we removed the author(s)'s affiliated academic institution and replaced it with a pithy one-liner about the paper (see *Figure 18*). We think this new feature will not only give readers insight about the subject of each paper, but also will encourage them to click on and read those that peak their interest.

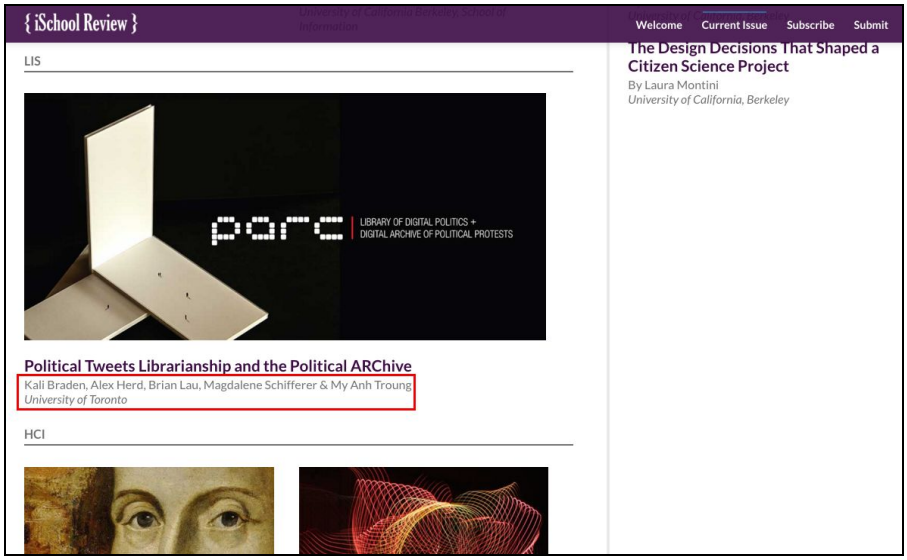

Figure 17 -- The original design of the byline showed the name(s) of the author(s) and his/her/their affiliated academic institution (screenshot taken on 28 April 2016).

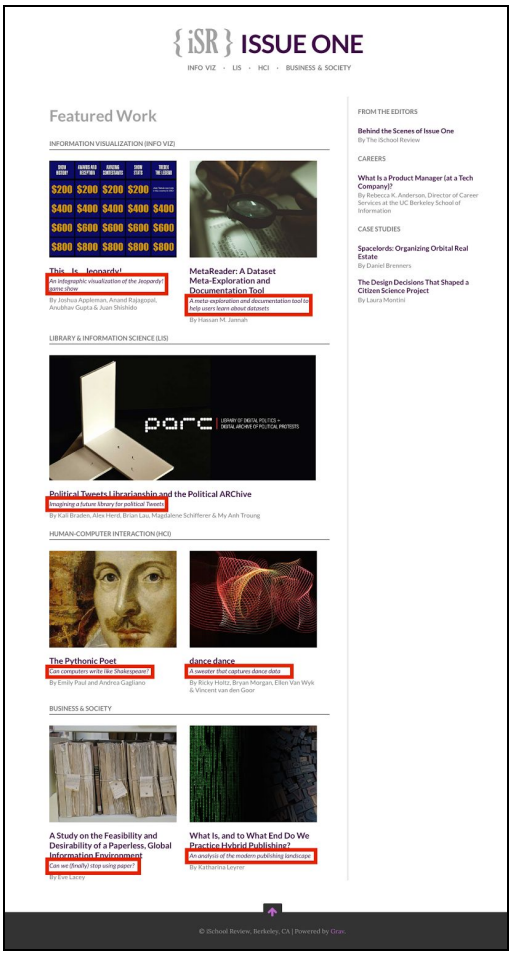

Figure 18 -- The one-liners provide readers with more information about the topic of each paper (screenshot taken on 4 May 2016).

Marketing

Internal

Within the School of Information at UC Berkeley, we have relied on several email campaigns as well as one in-person event. The latter took place on 7 April 2016, when we hosted "I Tea", the weekly gathering for tea and cookies. During the event we asked students, staff and faculty to subscribe to *The iSchool Review* via http://ischoolreview.com/sub. We received dozens of subscribers that day, and encouraged each of them to help us promote the inaugural issue by sharing it with their networks.

The iConference

From the outset, we knew that we had to extend our readership beyond South Hall. To achieve that goal, we decided to apply to present a Session for Interaction and Engagement (SIE)[9] at the 2016 iConference.[10] We submitted our application on 1 October 2015 and were accepted on 30 November 2015.

While we all planned the SIE, given the cost for all of us to travel to Philadelphia, we decided that it made the most sense for Philip and Shom to attend. They spent 21 March 2016 at the iConference. Prior to presenting the SIE (details below), they executed our "guerilla" marketing campaign by placing business cards and one-pagers throughout the main gathering space (see *Figure 19*). While we do not have specific data that directly correlates the marketing to an increase in subscribers, we noticed that about 100 cards were pocketed, so we considered the effort a success.

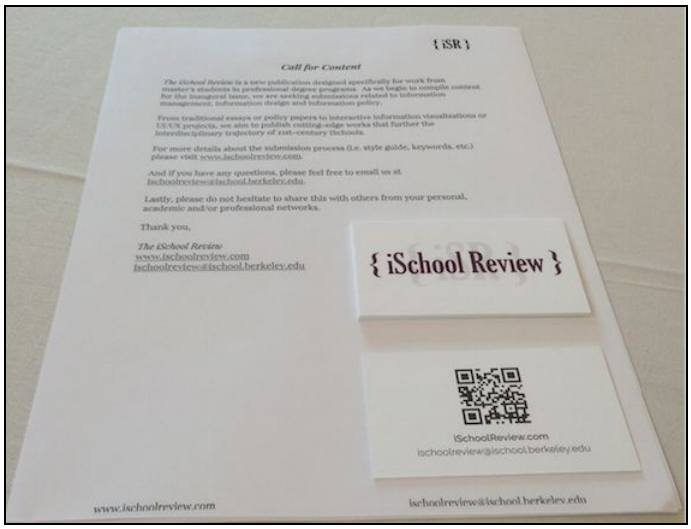

Figure 19 -- A stack of one-pagers and business cards (front and back); the QR code takes users directly to the Subscribe *page (http://ischoolreview.com/sub).*

Even though we only had five participants at our SIE, it was actually an engaging and informative hour. The biggest takeaway was that the LIS community is a bit unsure of how their future fits into the broader trajectory of 21st-century iSchools. We assured these particular participants that we not only encouraged, but also invited, their participation.

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[9] For more information visit http://ischools.org/the-iconference/program/sessions-for-interaction-and-engagement/ (accessed on 24 April 2016).

[10] For more information visit http://ischools.org/the-iconference/about-the-iconference/ (accessed on 24 April 2016).

More generally, the session was broken into three exercises: 1) a top-level domain (i.e. taxonomy) brainstorm; 2) user research about online reading experiences; and 3) feedback to the idea of rotating ownership (see *Rotating Ownership* below). In addition to having an active conversation throughout the SIE, the participants responded positively to the project at large. They all said they would help spread the word, which we viewed (and still view) as a win.

The iCaucus & Other Universities

Beyond the session itself, our participation at the iConference was beneficial because the iCaucus[11] helped us increase the visibility of the publication. Our *Call for Content* (see *Appendix 1*) was (and to date still is) featured on their website;[12] it was also featured on a University of Maryland website[13] (see *Figure 20*). In addition, the iSchool at Pitt tweeted[14] about the *Call for Content* (see *Figure 21*).

Figure 20 -- The Call for Content *on a University of Maryland website (screenshot taken on 24 April 2016).*

[11] See *Footnote 2*.
[12] For details visit http://ischools.org/news/publish-your-work-in-the-ischool-review/ (accessed on 24 April 2016).
[13] For details visit http://mls.umd.edu/2015/12/the-ischool-review-call-for-content/ (accessed on 24 April 2016).
[14] For details visit https://twitter.com/ischool_pitt/status/669169662232498177 (accessed on 24 April 2016).

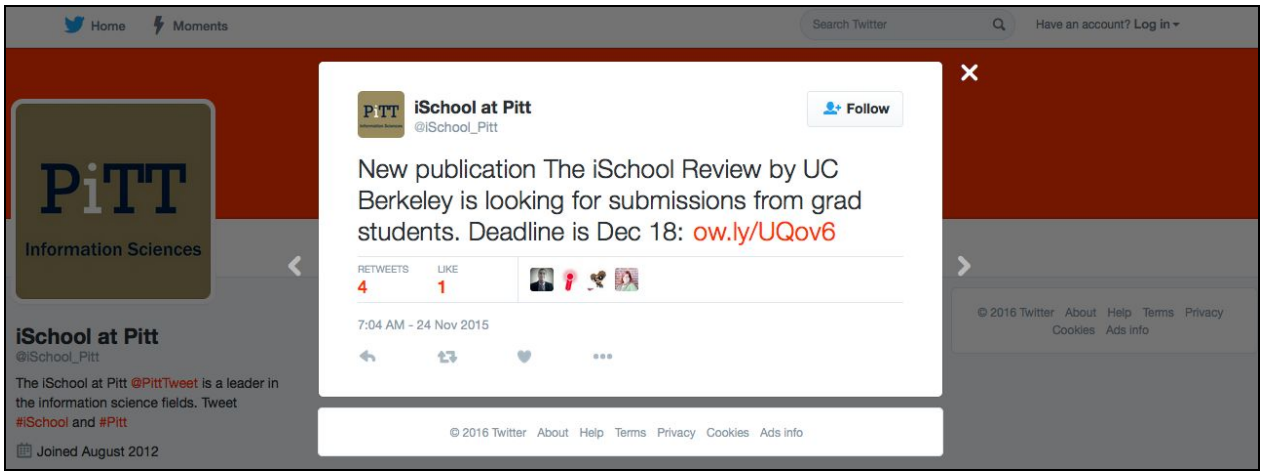

Figure 21 -- The iSchool at Pitt tweeted about the Call for Content *(screenshot taken on 24 April 2016).*

Distribution

Our marketing efforts have yielded us over 100 subscribers, which we consider a great success. Those that are subscribed will all receive an auto-generated, personalized email when we publish the first issue. Following is the template of the email:

> Hi [Name],
>
> Thank you for subscribing to *The iSchool Review*. The inaugural issue is ready! [Link]
>
> Enjoy,
>
> *The iSchool Review*

Once that initial communication has gone out we will also share it with our networks, and then hope that they too do the same.

A particular audience with whom we hope to gain traction is professional recruiters. We view these potential readers as important because it is often in a job interview when a recruiter asks an iSchool student to answer this project's fundamental problem statement: What is a school of information? Therefore, if we can convert recruiters into readers, we think that they will have a better understanding of iSchools and the type of work their students produce. We hope that this will result in an increase in recruitment efforts directed at iSchool students.

Sustainment Plan & Future Vision

Personal Investment

To ensure that *The iSchool Review* is not a "one-hit wonder", we are personally committed to managing the content process for the Winter 2016 issue. From a technical perspective, we built the Grav site in a manner that will allow easy integration of future content. In terms of organization and processes, we plan to use most, if not at all, of the same methods that we did for the inaugural issue (see *Solicitation* above).

However, we will also consider additional factors as we put into practice the lessons we learned from this experience. In particular, we plan to focus on the following areas:

Community Buy-In: Much of our work is centered around convincing others that *The iSchool Review* is a necessary publication for the iSchool community. If we can successfully make this argument, then we can eventually gain access to resources that will help sustain this publication's mission. Examples include: marketing support from other iSchools and the iCaucus (both for gaining readership and soliciting articles), faculty support (to help source high quality work and encourage students to submit), and operational support (to gain commitment from other students and administrations to help with the future operation of the publication).

Operational Framework: Since we aim to continue publishing beyond the inaugural issue, we need to establish a robust operational framework. This way, future publishers will not have to build new websites, style guides, criteria for publication, logos, etc. We seek to make the framework as much of a plug-and-play model as possible. We've also built in features like the publication's ability to programmatically slot articles under the proper headline based on their tags, which are easily applied in the admin interface of Grav.

Prestige: Having an article published in *The iSchool Review* should be viewed as an accolade for potential authors. This will help generate a fortuitous cycle of a highly competitive application process, leading to engrossing material being published and strong readership, which will further boost the prestige of the publication.

Registered Student Organization

Because our tenure as graduate students is limited, and our long-term goal is to pass down the publication a new team of editors (see *Successors* below), we took the initiative to apply to

become an Registered Student Organization (RSO).[15] We were formally approved on 14 April 2016, which means: 1) any student -- graduate and undergraduate alike -- can join the RSO; 2) we are subject to rules and regulations; 3) we have our own RSO page;[16] and, most importantly, 4) should we choose to do so, we can apply for funding from the University (as opposed to the School of Information).

Successors

Additionally, should our successors come from within the University of California, Berkeley, it will make the transition a lot easier. To that point, we have flirted with the idea of proposing that IMSA[17] create a new position dedicated to *The iSchool Review*. Our vision is that this person, call him/her the iSR Chair, would act the liaison between the School of Information at UC Berkeley and the editorial board of the publication. The iSR Chair could help us accomplish our goal of remaining abreast of the ongoings inside iSchool classrooms while at the same time maintaining our autonomous sustainability. As of yet, however, there is no formal position. However, we are in talks with the current co-presidents of IMSA about making this a reality for the 2017 student elections.

Personnel aside, one challenge we've faced from a design perspective is making the publication easy to format and populate for future issues. Eventually, we'd like to pass on editorial responsibilities, so we'd like to automate as many of the publishing processes as possible. That said, it's very tempting to hardcode our features. Making things look pretty is easier when you're working with static content.

One place we're running into this trade-off is on what we could call the *Issue* page, which houses the articles' titles, authors, and accompanying images. At some point, we may want to include a summary as well. This would be very easy to do as a static web page -- basic HTML and CSS. But if we could get it to the point where a person could paste new pieces into the CMS through the admin panel, and the *Issue* page would self populate with the new marked-up content, that would be ideal. With the Grav CMS, this appears to be possible.

Rotating Ownership

Even more important than the technical infrastructure, though, is the buy-in of students, staff and faculty. This is why our long-term goal is to establish a rotation of ownership between self-selecting iSchools. We are not naïve enough to think this will happen right away. Instead, we predict that *The iSchool Review* will continue to be published at the School of Information at UC Berkeley for a few more years.

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[15] For general information about RSOs at UC Berkeley visit http://lead.berkeley.edu/manage-your-organization/register-your-org/ (accessed on 24 April 2016).
[16] For details visit https://callink.berkeley.edu/organization/ischoolreview (accessed on 24 April 2016).
[17] IMSA is the Information Management Student Association, the student government at the School of Information at UC Berkeley.

But, if it is gaining readership and respect after each subsequent issue, we do think it might be possible to convince a handful of other iSchools to serve as "publisher in residence" on a year-by-year basis, based on the academic calendar (i.e. August - May). With this structure, the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 issues could be published by the Information School at the University of Washington, and the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 issues by the School of Information Systems at Singapore Management University, for example.

There are several obstacles that will need to be overcome before this vision can be realized. One is that various usernames and passwords would have to be passed down, which would create obvious security concerns. A second is that this situation would present the challenge of *reflection*. Put differently, this scenario invites readers to question whether the aforementioned hypothetical 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 issues would be *reflections* of the University of Washington and Singapore Management University, respectively. (Certainly we acknowledge that the same is true of the inaugural issue, and subsequent issues, that come from UC Berkeley.) Regardless, it is worth noting Dean Saxenian endorses the idea, as did several people that Shom and Philip spoke with at the iConference (see *The iConference* above). For now, though, we will take it one issue at a time.

FAQs

As mentioned above, we are committed to publish works from iSchool students around the world. One idea to help those who might be hesitant to submit is to develop a set of FAQs. The FAQs here would have less to do with content and the submission process (that is all covered in the *Call for Content*) and more to do with commonly occurring situations.

During this publication cycle, for example, one of our potential authors was unable to secure a faculty endorsement. Since we realize that future authors might also encounter this problem, we could develop FAQs specific to this situation. We could come up with 5-7 common objections and a few suggestions, or recommendations, as to how to overcome those objections. Following is one such example:

Objection:

- The professor I asked to write the faculty endorsement is not an expert in this field and, as such, is not comfortable endorsing my paper.

Suggestion(s) to Overcome Objection:

- Do an hour or two of research and synthesize the results for your professor.
- If you know an expert, schedule a call or meeting (or even email exchange) between your professor and the expert.
- Ask another professor.

Conclusion

In broad terms, our goal over the next few publication cycles -- Winter 2016, Spring 2017, Winter 2017, etc. -- is to alleviate proactively the pain points future authors might have so that they continue to submit content. For content is our lifeblood, and without it we vanish. But that won't happen. In the words of the great American poet Christopher Wallace, AKA The Notorious B.I.G., "[we've] got big plans… big plans".[18]

Here's to becoming the *Harvard Business Review* of tomorrow's iSchools!

[18] The Notorious B.I.G. "Intro". *Ready to Die*. Bad Boy Records, 1994. CD.

Appendix 1

Below is the formatted *Call for Content* that we used to solicit submissions. It should be noted that the dates listed for the 2016 deadlines were specific to the inaugural issue; these dates will change for future issues.

Call for Content

The iSchool Review is a new publication designed specifically for work from master's students in professional degree programs. As we begin to compile content for the inaugural issue, we are seeking submissions related to information management, information design and information policy.

From traditional essays or policy papers to interactive information visualizations or UI/UX projects, we aim to publish cutting-edge works that further the interdisciplinary trajectory of 21st-century iSchools.

We will review submissions in several rounds, with a degree of preference given to early submitters. Following are the 2016 deadlines:

- **Round 1: Friday, 12 February 2016; and**
- **Round 2: Friday, 18 March 2016.**

For more details about the submission process (i.e. style guide, keywords, etc.) please see below.

And if you have any questions, please feel free to email us at ischoolreview@ischool.berkeley.edu.

Lastly, please do not hesitate to share this with others from your personal, academic and/or professional networks.

Thank you,

The iSchool Review
www.ischoolreview.com
ischoolreview@ischool.berkeley.edu

Abstract
Each submission should include an abstract that contains the following:

1) Title of Paper
2) Name(s) of Author(s)
3) Contact e-mail(s) for the author(s)
4) Affiliated academic institution(s)
5) A brief summary that provides a high-level overview of the work and explains its significance to the relevant field(s).
    a) This summary should be no longer than 250 words.
6) Acknowledgements (optional).
7) 3 to 5 keywords that categorize the work.

Faculty Endorsement
Each work that is selected for publication will require an endorsement from a faculty member at the author(s)'s affiliated academic institution(s). The faculty endorsement should be about 250 words and should address the following: describe why the work submitted is important, how it advances the relevant field(s) and/or any noteworthy technical achievements.

> *NOTE:* We do *not* require the faculty endorsement at the time of submission. However, if your submission is selected for publication you will be responsible for securing and submitting the faculty endorsement. Any/all authors whose work is selected for publication but fail to secure and submit a faculty endorsement will not actually be published in *The iSchool Review*.

Interactive Component(s)
As a digital-only publication, we seek to take of advantage of interactivity in each issue of *The iSchool Review*. To that point, we encourage submitters to include interactive components and visualizations when relevant. These interactive components as well as the text of the submissions will be considered when making the final selections for the publication.

If a submission's interactive component is posted online, please include a link to the appropriate website(s). If the interactive component is not posted online, please include relevant screenshots.

Formatting
Submissions should use Times New Roman font. The font size should be 12 pt. The text of the submission should be double-spaced. All pages should be numbered in the upper right hand corner.

Citations

Each submission should have a separate Works Cited page. Entries should be written according to APA style and listed alphabetically by author's last name.

Submission Process
All submissions should be sent via email to ischoolreview@ischool.berkeley.edu and should be either in .doc or .docx format. Please submit by the appropriate deadline.

Please do not submit PDFs.

Any/all interactive component(s) should be included via screenshots and/or with a link to an external website.

Selection Process
The Editorial Board will hold a vote after each submission deadline.

Response Time
You can expect to receive a notification within four weeks after the relevant deadline for your submission.

Appendix 2

Following is the template for the email that we sent to the authors whose papers we did not publish:

> Dear [NAME],
>
> Thank you for submitting to *The iSchool Review*.
>
> Even though this is the inaugural issue, we received an overwhelming number of submissions from students all over the world. We read each paper thoroughly and have only recently completed our selection process.
>
> While we genuinely appreciate that you took the time to submit, unfortunately, we will not be publishing your paper in the Spring 2016 issue. We do, however, hope that we might be able to work together on future issues of the publication.
>
> Appreciatively,
>
> *The iSchool Review*