



“Correct Me If I’m Wrong”

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Community of Mission Information Workers

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Three Things Every Mission Information Worker Should Pray About

Chris Maynard

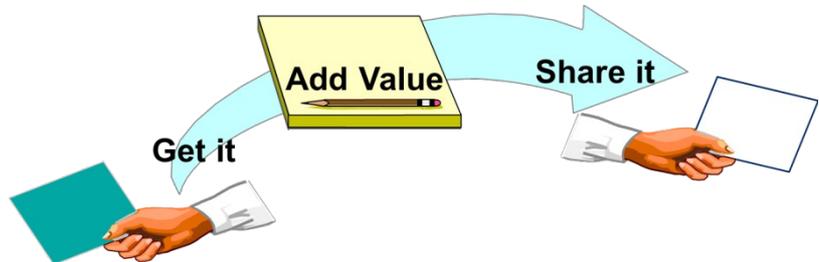
No matter what you do in information, there are always three key elements to your work. I have seen good information workers ignore one of these and become completely unproductive in their work.

“The Community of Mission Information Workers exists to ... welcome all who gather, analyse, transform and/or publish

mission information.” Gather, transform and publish. Let us make it simpler. When you are working with information you have to **get it, add value to it, and share it.**

Get it

All of us get input. For example the mission journalist gathers news. She must make contact with key people, get phone numbers, scan wire services, interview people. The mission database manager finds reasonable sources of data about people groups and loads it into his database. The language researcher goes to hear the words of mother-tongue speakers for himself.



Add Value

None of us leaves the information unchanged. The journalist creates an interesting story. The database manager puts it alongside other data, standardizes it and adds up figures to create new information. The linguist evaluates the similarity of one language to another and makes a judgment about Bible translation needs. We add value to it.

Share it

None of us keeps the information to ourselves. The journalist gives it to their magazine editor. The database manager creates reports and makes them available online. The linguist gives their report to people who make decisions about translation.

I have seen people use excellent methods as they processed and developed their data, but the input data itself was not good enough. So their work went to waste. I have seen a good information team in a multinational company focus on getting and adding value to their information, yet no-one in the company was using it productively. Nine months later the team was gone.

So pray about each of these in your own work. If only one of these fails, you may be labouring in vain. You may think that one of them is “not your responsibility”. Maybe not, but the success of your role as a mission information worker – and your contribution to the work of the Kingdom – requires that all three go well. So if we do nothing else, let us *pray* for the Spirit of God to guide us in each of these parts of our work. I pray that for you.

Our fb Experiment

Stephanie Kraft



We started an experiment back in August 2012 to see if facebook might help us build our community. A full eight months into the experiment, we have some surprising results to share:

- We don't seem to be a natural facebook crowd. Of the 400+ folks who receive these quarterly bulletins, only 50 have indicated they "like" our page. It took us a full two months to get our first 30 "likes" (the threshold to begin receiving substantive stats about the page). In the subsequent five months, we added only 20 more visitors to the page.

- However, even though our participation has been somewhat lean, it has also been revealing. By teasing out and summing up those posts that had twenty or more reads each, we notice that:

- We like good graphics. Color, sound, movement—posts that contained these elements caught our attention (see Florence Nightingale in **The Joy of Stats- The Lady with a Data Visualisation** posted on December 10, and **The Global Geography of HIV** posted on December 6).
- We enjoy data that appears to debunk myths (see **The Extent of USA Wealth Inequality** posted on March 6, and **Africa: Bulging in the Middle** posted on October 23).
- We appreciate getting tools and tips that make our jobs easier or clearer (see **Chartsbin.com Visualize your Data** posted on February 25 and **Eight Brilliant Minds on the Future of Online Education** posted on January 29).
- We think about the church in global terms (see **Why Pope Francis Excites Evangelical Leaders** posted on March 17, the **Pew Forum Report on Global Christianity** posted on March 1, and **Global Missiology** posted on January 19).
- We read each other's reports (see the **Turkish Cluster Forecast** posted on January 25, and **The Annual Statistical Review by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity** posted on January 18).
- We are serious about the spirituality of Missions Information Work (see **Facts or Spirit** posted on March 21, and **Helping Others Make Spirit-Led Decisions** posted on February 28).
- We like to get together from time to time (see ads for **ICCM AU 2013** posted on February 14, the **2014 International Lausanne Researcher's Conference** posted February 8, and the **ICCM EU** posted February 3).

We don't intend to end our experiment just yet, so if you'd like to join our gradually growing group of fb followers, you are still very welcome at www.facebook.com/GlobalCMIW. Now that you know us a little bit better, you may find it easier to "like", share, and comment on our posts.

Who's Who in Missions Information

Special Profile: Peter Brierley

1. [CMIW] **Please tell us about yourself and your family.** [PB] I am a professional statistician who has had the privilege of working both in central government (for 12 years) and in Christian charity research work (for 30 years). I have handled literally hundreds of research projects in that time. My wife, Cherry, is a geographer although she spent many years teaching English, and we have four children, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild at the moment. Our eldest son is the Head Teacher of a large Church of England secondary school; our middle son is an assistant Manager at Sainsbury's* and our youngest is an Anglican vicar. Our daughter is married to the UK Director of one of our mission agencies.

2. [CMIW] **What is your current ministry?** [PB] My current ministry involves running Brierley Consultancy which helps strengthen church leadership primarily by providing up-to-date and salient facts about the Christian and social scene both in this country and worldwide. I also serve as a Trustee on a number of British mission agencies. We produce a bi-monthly bulletin called FutureFirst, providing facts for forward thinking, now in its fifth year, and, in 2011, a substantial volume called UK Church Statistics. Currently I am very busy analysing the results of a London Church Census carried out last year – some 700 new churches in London over the last 7 years! More of what I do can be found on my website: www.brierleyconsultancy.com.

3. [CMIW] **What are the contributions you have made to world missions that have brought you the greatest satisfaction?** [PB] I have had the privilege of being a Lausanne Associate/Senior Associate for almost 30 years. I have attended many Lausanne gatherings, serving on the Administrative Committee 1998 to 2004. This proved to be an important time as Lausanne was feeling its way forward after eventually clearing a huge debt arising from the Second Congress held in Manila in 1989. We proposed holding a further major Forum to think through from an evangelical viewpoint the most important issues of the day – these having considerably changed since the first Forum in 1980. This went forward and I had the privilege of researching Christian leadership worldwide on what they thought these issues should be. Just getting the addresses of 4,000 leaders worldwide was quite a challenge! We also were responsible for the first Lausanne Consultation on Nominalism, which was helpful for many.

4. [CMIW] **What dreams do you have for your next ten years of ministry?** [PB] Over the next ten years, I need to have sufficient strength, vigour, energy and creativity to continue the ministry already being undertaken! I would hope to produce more volumes like UK Church Statistics, and would love to co-operate in like publications for other countries (as we did once before). The UK has a difficult time ahead as numbers of Christians reduce (many are dying as a third of churchgoers are 65 and over!), so how best can existing churches be supported? New churches, and new types of churches, are springing up, larger churches are becoming ever more important, but Christian research departments are closing for lack of funds! I would like to be able to discern the wisdom from around the world, and general trends, to know how best mission can be encouraged and taken forward. Essentially that means more research, and finding effective ways of communicating the results.



5. [CMIW] **Is there some way you'd be willing to help the CMIW community?** [PB] I'd be happy to help the CMIW community in any way that I can. I am often asked questions about research that has been undertaken, and often asked where to go to get various types of information. Anyone reading this is welcome to email me on peter@brierleyres.com. Often requests come for talks or papers on research that has been undertaken.

* Editor's Note: Sainsbury's is a large supermarket chain in the UK

Information from the Word

"I don't speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it." John 12:49 (NLT). For the Father (and the Son) it was not enough to know what to say. "How to say it" was important enough for the Father to give a separate command. When we have completed our research and know what to say, do we also ask the Father to show us how to say it?

Final Details:

- This bulletin is produced by the Community of Mission Information Workers Task Force comprised of Larry Kraft, Stephanie Kraft and Chris Maynard. Please send any suggestions of issues to discuss or any other ideas to "cmiw@worksmail.net".
- Editorial team: Stephanie and Chris; layout and distribution: Larry.