Börner's Research Featured in Research and Creative Activity

The Spring 2009 issue of the Research and Creative Activity publication from the Indiana University Office of the Vice Provost for Research featured an article Mapping the Future of Knowledge by Steve Kaelble. The article focused on research by SLIS faculty member Katy Börner and her colleagues. Excerpts from the article are included here:

"If knowledge is power, the human race must be on the verge of blowing a fuse. Every day, thousands upon thousands of pages of research are thrown into the hopper of collective knowledge. Immeasurable stores of medical data are created, and air traffic data and phone call data and financial data and countless other types of information. Sure, the vastness of what we don't know is astonishing—but so is the immensity of what we do know.

How can we possibly make sense of all this knowledge?

These are the kinds of questions that fuel the work of Katy Börner, the Victor H. Yngve associate professor of information science at Indiana University Bloomington. Börner and her research team are involved in a wide array of pursuits related to networks of knowledge and information — in essence, using science to learn more about science itself. Börner is founding director of IU's Cyberinfrastructure for Network Science Center, and she directs the Information Visualization Laboratory at the IU School of Library and Information Science. She's also adjunct associate professor in informatics, a faculty member in cognitive science, and a research affiliate with IU's Biocomplexity Institute and Complex Systems Group.

Network science — the core of Börner's work — is about gaining an understanding of both human and natural networks. These are networks in the very broadest sense of the word, from computer networks to social networks to ecological networks. Network science is about developing algorithms and exploring common principles that dictate how such networks function and how function affects the structure of these networks.

By definition, it's a highly interdisciplinary pursuit, which is one reason Börner loves working on the IU Bloomington campus. "I'm very impressed by the diversity and quality of the network science researchers at IUB. We have more than 25 faculty members in more than 10 departments who are engaged in network science research and education," she says. "This makes Indiana University a unique place." The field attracts the interest of physicists, psychologists, medical researchers, economists, library science experts, bioinformatics specialists, and computer scientists of all stripes, to name a few..."

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