**Brief Bio and (PR)**²: Problems & Pitches – Raves & Rants by *Ron Day*

In preparation for the Modeling Science Workshop on May 21st, 2006 at Indiana University, Bloomington, we ask you to provide a brief bio and short answers to the questions below.

We plan to make your input available at [http://vw.indiana.edu/places&spaces/meeting_060521.php](http://vw.indiana.edu/places&spaces/meeting_060521.php) before the meeting to help introduce the participants to each other and to more effectively structure the workshop.

Thank you for your time.

**Biography (about 250 words)**

*(Please provide a photo of yourself and a link to your home page and relevant sites. Please list relevant publications.)*

Ron Day is a visiting assistant professor at the School of Library and Information Science at Indiana University. His area of specialization is in the history, culture, and political economy of information, documentation, communication, and knowledge in the 20th and into the 21st centuries.

**General Questions**

What is your main interest in attending the workshop?

--I am interested in the evolution of the sciences and of “science,” according to various series: practices, rhetorical composition, historiographical narratives, etc.

What is your main interest in ‘modeling science’ and/or in modeling in general?

--I am interested in the relationship between models and practices in various ways. In terms of “modeling science,” I am interested in the practices of doing science, including the incorporation of self-representative models in various institutional sites and levels of practice and during various historical periods and at a larger level of social and cultural understanding. Models of science fold back into the defining and doing of science at many points, and these folds are then refolded and unfolded—according to various intrinsic and extrinsic attractors’—so as to define the sciences and “science” in the future. The issue of method involves, in part, at a general level of analysis, asking what inscriptive practices will be the privileged sites for modeling these practices of folding and refolding. The problem becomes very complicated when different inscriptive practices are accounted for and different ones are modeled in different, inscriptive, ways, as each gives a different view into, and picture of what may be, the various sciences and “science.” Indeed, it might be said that there is no such thing as “science,” but that there are only sciences as traced by different methods of accounting for and representing them—some methods being intrinsic to their practices and others methods of inscription external—institutional or social— in accounting for those practices. If this is true, then it would make sense to ask what are the implications of different methods of accounting for and representing different sciences, and if “science” as a whole may, realistically, be posited and modeled, or if to claim such would be to settle for a norm that may more reflect the institutional, aesthetic, and
ideological norms of a science of modeling than any scientific practices that are said to be “modeled.” This isn’t to doubt the possibility of creating such models or to doubt the political efficacy of doing such, but simply to ask what is being done in such activities, particularly when we hypothesize an entity which we call “science” or even the various “sciences” as our object of representation. Such questions aren’t simply speculative, but rather they are practical question in creating models, that is, they ask what are the possibility and results of such models and how do they affect different scientific practices and larger social and cultural accounts of such in the future.

Specific Questions

What are the major empirical patterns by which science progresses? I would rather say that the various activities by which science is traced are: technical activities (accounted for variously), writings, bibliographical linkages, common vocabulary and rhetorical form, traces of communication and social relationships.

How can one best model the interplay of time (including aging of people, papers, and fields), geography, topics, and resources (e.g., funding) that affect the evolution and diffusion of scholarly knowledge?

--This depends on what is being modeled, the models of time, geography, etc., that are available and desirable, the tools available, and toward what one is modeling.

How can one best model feedback cycles, e.g., highly cited publications increasing the chance of receiving funding, leading to better resources, more highly cited papers, etc.?

How can we model the dynamics of growth and decline of scientific topics over time, as well as changes to topics and their interrelations? Depends on where you want to look, what your materials are, and toward what institutional and social interests and outcomes.

What are the current limitations of the various modeling approaches?

*Please send the completed document by Thursday May 18th, 2006 to Katy Borner <katy@indiana.edu>*