

Meet the Editor

The Enterprising Michelle Manafy

by LAUREE PADGETT

It's a good thing Michelle Manafy multitasks well. When she took time to answer my questions, she was in the middle of doing podcasts for the Enterprise Search Summit conference, for which she is the conference programmer; judging videos in connection with *EContent* (the journal she edits); and doing her "regular" work, which also includes editing the *Intranets* newsletter and the annual *Enterprise Search Sourcebook*.



Lauree Padgett

Manafy's interest in journalism goes back to high school, where she was editor of her school newspaper. She received a B.A. in journalism from San Francisco State University and, as she says, "I've been in publishing for more than 20 years, in everything from music journalism to academic and scholarly publications."

Manafy joined ITI as part of its acquisition of Online, Inc., where she worked

on *EContent* magazine prior to taking the helm of *EContent* for the past 7 years. She is now the editorial director of ITI's enterprise group as well as co-chair of the Buying & Selling eContent conference. She has also worked on *Intranets* for 5 years and the *Enterprise Search Sourcebook* since it debuted 3 years ago.

Checking Out the Pubs

"All of my publications are targeted at enterprise applications," she says. "Our readers are line of business managers, decision-making executives, and knowledge and information professionals." She acknowledges that the subject matter of her pubs may overlap somewhat, noting that *EContent* magazine covers digital content, from creation, to management, monetization, and delivery. But as Manafy says, "Despite the fact it may seem narrow, 'digital content' is, in fact, wonderfully broad, allowing us to tackle emerging digital applications as long as they impact our readership, including social media, social networking, mobile media, and more."

She calls *Intranets* "a highly targeted publication" that covers the most important strategies and trends relevant to those involved in managing corporate intranets or portals. The *Enterprise Search Sourcebook* is an annual that provides expert analysis of the strategies and solutions for maximizing search in the enterprise.

What makes her pubs unique? Manafy strives to provide "highly readable content" and to make it "lively and concise" to engage her busy executive readership and provide a valuable payoff for the time they spend reading.

EContent Rocks

In 2009, Manafy's publications will focus on ways to maximize existing in-

vestments in technology. At the same time, she also wants to help her readers get beyond the hype to make wise new investments. "*EContent's* readership will certainly be looking hard at ways to make additional revenue from existing content and how to make more with less," she says.

EContent has two new columns this year: Eureka!, written by Martin White, founder of Intranet Focus and author of *Making Search Work*, focuses on enterprise search. The other is Tech Watch by Tony Byrne, founder of industry analyst group CMS Watch.

Manafy says that *EContent* features many regular columns written by experts in all corners of the digital content space. She finds the *EContent* news section particularly interesting: "We produce two newsletters every week with breaking news for our digitally savvy readers. To keep our print news relevant, we work very hard to obtain advance notice on forthcoming announcements so that we can provide in-depth print coverage at the same time the public announcement is made." This keeps the news current despite the lag time of producing a print publication.

Manafy calls After Thought writer David Meerman Scott her "rock star" columnist. "His last book [*The New Rules of Marketing and PR*] was the No. 1 marketing book on Amazon for months," she says, "and there's incredible buzz already on his next one, *World Wide Rave: Creating Triggers That Get Millions of People to Spread Your Ideas and Share Your Stories*," which was released on March 9 by Wiley.

As for her concerns for 2009? "*EContent* puts me in an interesting position," she says. "We produce a print magazine about digital content. Sure, we have newsletters and a website, but with the devastating impact the recession has had on magazine publishing, I worry about the future of print publishing as a form." She adds, "Once we'd have said, 'Everything will end up digital because digital will be better.' Now it seems like a simple matter of survival."

Show Business

Manafy is looking forward to this year's Enterprise Search Summit conferences (ESS East in May in New York, and ESS West in San Jose in November). This year's theme is Enabling Information Access and Action.

"Search has become one of the ways in which workers feel most comfortable accessing information," she says. "It needs to be effectively deployed as part of an information management strategy. It also needs to deliver real value to organizations."

The agenda is geared toward the way enterprise search software, information architecture, classification, and other related strategies work inside organizations. "This year, we've drawn in speakers from a number of Fortune 500 companies, which I believe will help provide our attendees with true thought leadership in how to effectively deploy search." Recognizing that it is important to justify conference attendance, especially this year, Manafy also initiated a



Michelle Manafy

speaker preview podcast series, so potential attendees can sample some of the event beforehand.

And Snow Business

Manafy is always busy, and she's the first to say, "Relax? What's that?" But she does confess to snowboarding, a sport she started at age 29. "I skied as a kid, but only at the intermediate level. My husband has done it [snowboarding] since the sport was invented and got me to go on our honeymoon. It had to be the power of love that got me started."

Snowboarding is the one time when Manafy "can't think about work at all. I mostly think, 'Don't die, don't die, don't die. ...'" She adds that her 4-year-old daughter has a board she uses already and predicts that she'll be better than her mom in about a year.

While Manafy may be willing to let loose on a snowboard, she scrutinizes all the words destined for her publications: "Impress me with your ideas; ideas are my very favorite thing."

Lauree Padgett is Information Today, Inc.'s senior managing editor. Her email address is lpadgett@infotoday.com. Send your comments about this column to itletters@infotoday.com.

