

The 35th annual conference of the IIMA (International Information Management Association – iima.org) took place at the University of Salford in Manchester, UK September 2-4, 2024. I had a great time – reconnecting with “old” friends, meeting new colleagues and learning more about various applications of information systems and using AI to do good in this world... Here are some of my memories of this conference (and if you want more – just ask me!):

I arrived in Manchester on Saturday evening – and who should I meet at the hotel check in desk but Helen – one of my former students and co-author – who loves to stay connected with the IIMA. We had a delightful dinner together.

Sunday morning I had breakfast with Anand – who put together a rich and varied program for us. He was so dedicated to the task of putting the final touches on the book of abstracts for the conference that he passed on a free ticket to the Manchester United / Liverpool football game that afternoon.

Ian had gotten tickets to the football game for Jim and myself (he sent me through the turnstiles first – in case the ticket QR code was invalid!?) I think the only rain we had during the week was for 15 minutes before the football game when we were in the team store buying footballs to give out as appreciation gifts at the conference. (So much for the myth that it always rains in the UK!) What a memorable experience at a UK football stadium – lively fans that liked to sing - and cheered every good move their team made (although the local team lost 😞).

Ian had arranged for dinner at the Botanist lounge for those who were in town on Sunday evening. Ramesh made it in time for dinner – all the way from Chennai including a train from London and a (slow) tram from downtown Manchester.

The conference started Monday morning in the modern facilities of the University of Salford – Media City – with a view overlooking the city and in the distance Old Trafford. Trevor had AI create not only a poster for the conference but also his welcome speech (he must have been busy with saving people’s lives just before the conference!)

There were lots of interesting and thought provoking keynotes and paper presentations – and I could only attend half of them since there were usually two tracks. Tough choices had to be made. Emmanuel who had just arrived that morning was one of the first presenters. Nerko presented on copyright issues for Dutch musicians... Jim on identifying customers via their voice... Manjinder on ethical and unethical uses of AI... and Alison gave professors ChatGPT resources for use in teaching (too bad I’m retired!). Laurence shared a keynote on ethics and responsible technologies – and stayed with us throughout the conference.

Our conference dinner took place at the Lowry Gallery where we first got a tour and explanation of some of L. S. Lowry's artwork. Ian had ordered a delicious meal for us with a focus on local specialties including Manchester tarts for dessert.

Tuesday started off with a tour of Energy House 2.0. There were two typical English houses inside a building which could simulate various weather conditions (I was hoping they would have started the snow machine while we were there! 😞). We also got a tour of The North of England Robotics Innovation Centre (NERIC UoS) – fascinating to see what a variety of robots could do.

Back for lunch and then our presentations continued including Prince's presentation on AI in the legal environment and Richard's on Global South AI implications. Tanya, Pascal and Ian (experienced academics!) led a very practical session giving career advice for doctoral candidates and younger academics.

Our IIMA business meeting was chaired by Trevor, our CEO. Pascal was commended for his diligent efforts in managing our two journals and Diana for keeping our website up to date. Various dedicated participants received a Manchester United football.

It was announced that next year's conference – the 36th Annual Conference of the IIMA will be held at the California State University, San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus - Monday, October 20 – Wednesday, October 22, 2025. We've been there before – it's a couple of hours drive from Los Angeles and San Diego, and less than half an hour from Palm Springs, CA. Time to think about submissions and making plans to attend!

35 of us went out to Pizza Express – more than enough appetizers and pizza for all! Lots of opportunities for good conversation and even planning joint research projects. And we got to sing Happy Birthday to Chiara!

Wednesday started with a keynote by Darren describing a variety of applications of drones – including their help in identifying land mines. (Research can be very dangerous!)

Ramesh had a wonderful presentation on media and internet censorship in India and Kingsley shared his findings on creating digital policies in Nigeria. Sagwadi introduced her work on comparing cybercrime legislation in South Africa, Nigeria and the UK.

Alison, our president, concluded the conference by expressing her appreciation and encouraging us to make plans to attend the next conference. Rick took a group photo with his impressive camera (I think he was the only one there with a "real" camera!) Then most of us walked a couple of blocks to visit the Vodafone 5G Digital Innovation Hub. Fascinating what Vodafone is doing...

What a fabulous conference. Thanks to all who helped put on this conference from our program chairs (Anand assisted by Gloria, Taha, Peter and David), Julian who was our local sponsor, Ian who made most of the local arrangements including finding our keynote speakers, and all of those who shared their research and provided feedback and suggestions...

I can't wait to see you all in Palm Desert, California next October!

Gerhard Steinke