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**WOLFSONIAN/IMLS WEBWISE CONFERENCE DESCENDS ON MIAMI BEACH**  
*Wolfsonian-FIU Emerges As a National Conference Leader*

MIAMI BEACH, FL (February 15, 2008)— Already known for its unique collection and polished exhibitions, The Wolfsonian–Florida International University is earning a reputation as a host of national conferences related to the museum and library fields, and placing Miami Beach on the map for the delivery of innovative cultural content. Following previous conference successes, The Wolfsonian is currently preparing for its largest conference to date, the 2008 WebWise Conference. Taking place March 5-7 in Miami Beach, the WebWise Conference is co-hosted by The Wolfsonian–FIU, the federally funded Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

A signature initiative of the IMLS, the WebWise Conference is an annual national forum that addresses the emergence and implications of digital technologies on the museum and library community. Every two years, the IMLS accepts competitive bids from institutions vying to co-host the WebWise Conference, and in 2007 the Wolfsonian was awarded approximately half a million dollars to co-host the 2008 and 2009 WebWise Conferences. According to Wolfsonian–FIU director Cathy Leff, “Not only are we honored to be sponsoring such a highly regarded conference as WebWise, but we are also excited by the opportunity to showcase the cultural arts community of Greater Miami and generate significant economic benefits for our area.”

Over 350 professionals from museums, libraries, archives, and related institutions will be attending the conference and enjoying what the city of Miami has to offer. “Participants are coming from Alabama to Alaska, and even as far as Macedonia,” notes WebWise coordinator Susanna Temkin. Indeed, conference attendees will be traveling from 36 states to represent such prominent institutions as the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Building Museum, the Smithsonian Libraries, and the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina, among others. Beyond drawing intellectual wealth, the conference is also expected to have significant economic effects for

Miami Beach as participants dine and sightsee during their stay. Already, close to 350 hotel rooms have been booked for the three days of the conference, with a number of participants expected to extend their visit through the weekend.

Reflecting the conference theme of “WebWise 2.0: The Power of Technology,” the 2008 WebWise Conference will feature sessions and demonstrations about the latest web 2.0 tools and software being developed within the museum and library communities. Highlights of the conference will include a National Endowment for the Humanities pre-conference session featuring recent grant supported projects, and a keynote address by Jonathan Fanton, president of the prestigious MacArthur Foundation. Other topics to be addressed at WebWise range from metadata software to 3D imaging to open source technology (Please see the attached WebWise Conference agenda for more details).

Although the conference is still some weeks away, its coordinators already consider it a success. Registration, which is free of cost to those within the museum and library communities and conducted on a first-come, first-serve basis, has been at capacity since January. Demand for the two pre-conference sessions scheduled for March 5 was so high that registration was doubled to accommodate a total of 200 people, while a waitlist had to be established for the day and a half main conference, which is capped at 350. According to the WebWise meeting planner, response to this year’s conference is exceptional, as the conference typically does not “sell out” until a few weeks before the event.

In addition to conference presentations, WebWise participants will attend a welcome reception at The Wolfsonian-FIU co-sponsored by The Steven and Dorothea Green Library, Florida International University; The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University; Miami Art Museum; The Otto G. Richter Library, University of Miami; Vizcaya Museum & Gardens; and The Wolfsonian-FIU. WebWise attendees will be encouraged to visit local museums and libraries during their stay in Miami Beach. This community effort reflects The Wolfsonian’s goal of drawing attention to Miami’s cultural arts institutions. “Many of the registered conference participants have never visited the Greater Miami area, and we are thrilled to be able to welcome such prestigious cultural leaders as Jonathan Fanton (president of the MacArthur Foundation), Bruce Cole (chairman of the NEH), and Dr. Anne Radice (director of the IMLS),” says Leff.

The Wolfsonian’s role as a museum, library, and university department places the institution in a unique position in terms of museum conferences. Situated at the intersection of art and academia, The Wolfsonian’s emphasis on research is particularly appropriate for an institution that hosts conferences that examine the latest work and projects taking place in the cultural arts. Prior to WebWise, The Wolfsonian-FIU has previously hosted the conferences, “The Literacy Question: New Theories and Practices in Arts-Integrated Living,” and “Creator, Collector, Catalyst: The University Art Museum in the Twenty-First Century.” Inspired by The Wolfsonian’s *Artful Citizenship* Project, the conference “The Literacy Question,” took place in May 2006 and attracted some 70 museum educators from both the United States and abroad. The conference examined new definitions of literacy in relation to art, and podcasts and reading materials from the event are available on The Wolfsonian’s website <http://www.wolfsonian.org/education/litsymp/resources.html>. In December of the same year, approximately 240 museum professionals from college and university art museums throughout the nation flocked to Miami Beach for the “Creator, Collector, Catalyst” symposium, which was co-organized

by The Wolfsonian–FIU and Princeton University Art Museum. A white paper with conference findings from “Creator, Collector, Catalyst,” was distributed nationally, and videos of the conference are available on uVu <http://uvu.channel2.org>.

The WebWise Conference will be held in Miami Beach on March 6-7, with a day of pre-conference sessions held on March 5. For more information about the WebWise Conference or to add your name to the conference wait list, visit the WebWise Conference website <http://webwise2008.fcla.edu>. Although targeted for professionals within the museum and library industry, video of the conference will be available for the public on uVu following the event. Planning for the 2009 WebWise Conference, which will take place in Washington D.C., will begin soon after the conclusion of this year’s conference.

The WebWise Conference is sponsored annually by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The 2008 WebWise Conference will be co-hosted by The Wolfsonian–FIU, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Additional support is provided by the Florida Center for Library Automation, the Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority, and uVu, a service of Digital 2.

#### **About The Institute of Museum and Library Services**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute’s mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov).

#### **About The Wolfsonian–Florida International University**

The Wolfsonian is a museum, library, and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design. The collections comprise approximately 120,000 pieces from the period 1885 to 1945 — the height of the Industrial Revolution until the end of the Second World War — in a variety of media, including: furniture; industrial-design objects; works in glass; ceramics; metal; rare books; periodicals; ephemera; works on paper; paintings; textiles; and medals. The curatorial goal is to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, historical, and technological changes that have transformed our world.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, Fla. Admission is \$7 adults; \$5 seniors, students, and children six-12; free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, children under six, and Miami Beach residents with ID. The museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday from noon-6pm; Thursday and Friday from noon-9pm; and is closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at [www.wolfsonian.org](http://www.wolfsonian.org).

The Wolfsonian receives ongoing support from the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Arts Council; National Endowment for the Arts; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council; the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Foundation; William J. and Tina Rosenberg Foundation; The Miami Herald; and Karla Conceptual Event Experiences.

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