



## Newsletter, February 2006

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*Newsletter compiled by Genevieve Clavel-Merrin, Secretary with thanks to all contributors*

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### Editorial



Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to send you greetings as the new Chair of the National Libraries Section. Our section has a long tradition of working together for the benefit of all national libraries as the custodians of the world's documentary heritage. I hope to be able to build on past successes of the section and continue to promote the development of our national libraries.

You will see in this newsletter, so capably prepared by the section's Secretary Genevieve Clavel-Merrin, that the section has been very active so far this year, notably in developing its Strategic Plan for the next two years and a revised version of the section's leaflet which will be widely distributed in several languages. But a lot of time is also being spent on planning for the section's program session at the IFLA Conference in Seoul in August. The response to the call for papers was impressive and some difficult decisions had to be made to finalize the program. The results will be posted on the IFLA website at <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla72/index.htm>

This impressive expression of interest on the part of IFLA members reinforces the important role that national libraries must play in the knowledge society. National libraries have a mandate to collect, preserve and promote access to a country's national imprint. This is an admirable responsibility and national libraries have taken on the challenge of providing

leadership in cooperation with related institutions such as archives and museums. The theme of the Seoul conference will let us explore further how national libraries can play a dynamic role, using new technologies, in their countries' cultural, social, and economic development.

I would encourage all section members to attend the Seoul conference and to support the section at its program session. It will be an exciting and informative event. In addition, in line with our efforts to work across all areas and cooperate with other sections, we will be taking part in a special four hour session with Information Technology, University and other General Research Libraries and Knowledge Management on: Institutional Repositories: policies, implementation issues, an overview of the technologies, and will support Information Technology with Audiovisual and Multimedia in their session: New Access Technologies. Please try to attend these as well to represent the views and interests of national libraries in these fields.

Your comments and suggestions about any aspect of the work of the section are always welcome.

Best wishes to you all,

Ingrid Parent  
Chair, Section on National Libraries

## News from some Section members

### Russia

A snapshot from the Russian State Library Chronicle,

At the end of December the Russian State Library (RSL) hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the two national libraries of Russia: the National Library of Russia and the Russian State Library. Results of cooperation that has been lasting for 10 years were discussed. Participants noted expansion of frames of cooperative work, attention to evolving and burning problems that appeared as a result of a changed library paradigm. Decisions and recommendations adopted during the course of discussions between more than 50 experts from both libraries affect not only the national libraries but are relevant also to other Russian libraries.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2005 The RSL opened the Digital Library hall - the first in Russia. The RSL is continuing implementation of its policy to raise quality of user services. Time and technologies are moving ahead so is the RSL which is located in a historical building but is upgrading historical premises up to modern requirements.

The Digital Library Hall is a unique project for Russia. RSL users have been given admission to a restored interior of the hall constructed in early 50ies of the XXth century, the hall where monumental columns and huge pendants are adjoining 88 note-books generously donated by LG Electronics and two plasma display panels. Not a single wire has disturbed the spirit of a historical place.



The Digital Library project has been under way in the RSL since 2000. At present more than 100 000 full text documents and 2, 5 million bibliographic records are available on line. The user is given free access to digital theses, digitized manuscripts and books dated XV-XXI

centuries. The vision is to continue digitization of other manuscripts, microfilms, books and theses for inclusion into the Digital Library. Digital theses are to be mentioned separately. The RSL started digitization of the theses defended in Russia between 1998-2003 in 2003. 28 000 theses on most demanded subjects were digitized. Beginning with 2004 digitization of all incoming theses (except those on medicine and pharmacy) is being underway. The overall number of digitized materials is about 25 000 theses a year. Thus RSL Digital Library has incorporated extremely valuable research materials highly demanded far beyond the walls of the RSL.

## Singapore

### A Knowledge Hub – National Library, Singapore



The National Library of Singapore

Hailed as the “people’s library for the knowledge age,” the National Library of Singapore is designed as a unique and modern library to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Standing 16 levels above ground, the focus of the Library will be on providing access to a comprehensive range of reference and research collection, services and facilities. The aim is to promote lifelong learning for all communities and to enable the acquisition of knowledge to create lasting social and economic impact for Singapore, Asia and beyond. The Library is situated in the heart of the Arts, Culture, Learning and Entertainment belt of Singapore, thus making it a one-stop information and research centre for researchers, professionals, scholars and students.

With a gross floor area of 58,783 sq m, the building comprises two blocks with distinctive characteristics. One showcases the Library’s contemplative side in the rectilinear block, housing the bulk of the Library’s collections. The other curvilinear block manifests the

Library’s dynamic side by hosting most of the programmes and events there.

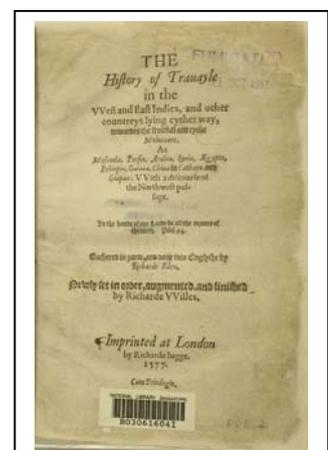
The main attraction of the National Library building is the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library. Named to commemorate a philanthropist and founder of the Lee Foundation, the late Dr Lee Kong Chian who made valuable contributions in the field of public library service, the Reference Library is indeed a treasure trove of knowledge and information. Spanning seven floors, from levels seven to 13, it has over half a million items in its collections on various disciplines, ranging from Science and Business to Arts and Languages.

*The jewel of the Library is the Rare Materials Collection. This collection contains some of the most important treasures of Singapore’s history and literary heritage such as the Jawi manuscripts, Malay and Southeast Asian language dictionaries, directories, almanacs, scholarly journals and casual and serious accounts of travels in the Malay Archipelago and Southeast Asia. It also includes rare and valuable publications, mostly from the 19th and early 20th centuries, many of which were published by Singapore’s earliest printing presses.*

Besides carrying these strong collections, the National Library also

provides reference and advisory services to its patrons. The reference librarians provide answers to reference queries, suggest useful search strategies and guide library users to relevant and useful resources. In addition, the Library also

The oldest publication in the collection – *The History of Trauayle in the West and East Indies, and Other Countreys Lying Eyher Way, Towards the Fruitful and Ryche Moluccaes*



hosts a variety of exhibitions and programmes thus enriching its visitors' learning experience.

Complemented by the Digital Library, which includes a greater selection of unpublished local works, digitised rare materials on Singapore content and an expanded list of databases, the National Library of Singapore promises to be a fusion pod for learning, discovery and application of knowledge.

## Slovenia

National and University Library

Two Deputy Directors to the Managing Director, Mr Lenart Šetinc, have been appointed in 2004: Mr Zoran Krstulović is now responsible for library programs and Dr Melita Ambrožič takes care of the Ljubljana University library system.

At the end of 2004 the Library adopted a new strategic plan to cover the 2004-08 period, along with new human resources plan, thus redefining its mission, values, goals and strategic results to achieve over the timeline.

The exhibition of the four oldest manuscripts in the Slovene language was prepared in 2004 to celebrate the country's accession to EU, a joint project of four EU countries (Germany, Austria, Italy, Slovenia) which turned out to be the most visited exhibition in the Library's history.

Recently the Library has taken important steps towards the digital age by co-operating in European TEL and TEL-ME-MOR projects, by creating the national digital library portal ([www.dlib.si](http://www.dlib.si)) and introducing new remote user services.

## Spain

In June 2005, Ms. Teresa Malo de Molina was appointed as Technical Director of the National Library of Spain. This appointment took place within a realignment process which involved the key areas of the Library. As a result of this reorganization a new functional diagram was approved and it will be available soon at the website of the Library.

The National Library of Spain has launched the Authority File on the web. This Authority file, continuously updated, at this moment offers access to more than 344.000 authority records for the headings used in the bibliographic records of the catalogue. The records can be downloaded in different formats, including MARC and ISO2709, and could be embedded into library's catalogues.

For more information see: <http://www.bne.es/eng/autoridades.htm>

## Turkey

Digitization of Rare Books and Manuscripts in the National Library of Turkey

Rare books and manuscripts are one of the essential resources of our cultural history, are among the most precious treasures of our libraries, which are carried over from one generation to the other. These works of art that constitute our nation's culture and knowledge are a major cultural heritage setting a bridge between the past and the future. Rare books and manuscripts common heritage of the mankind are the most reliable resources in scientific, artistic and cultural research.

We have 26.000 volumes of rare books and manuscripts. In order to protect and make them available to researchers, we have started digitizing rare books and manuscripts in 2004. At the end of 2004, 100.000 pages (Approximately 1200 volumes of rare books and manuscripts) have been digitized and are available on the web. The web address is [www.mkutup.gov.tr/yazmalar](http://www.mkutup.gov.tr/yazmalar). The digitizations of rare books and manuscripts have been continued. 1.200.000 pages (Approximately 9500 volumes of rare books and manuscripts) were digitized in 2005 and will be available on the web in the near future. We are planning to

complete digitization of rare books and manuscripts at the end of 2006. The bibliographic description of rare books and manuscripts contain name of the work; name of the author (commentator, translator, collector, writer); fixture number; general topic title; date of transcriber, copyright or production; and location, language, internal and external size; number of pages and lines; type of paper; the collection which it belongs to, together with its features of illumination and volume are all indicated in the database.

It can be obtained further information on rare books and manuscripts from e-mail address: [yazmalar@mkutup.gov.tr](mailto:yazmalar@mkutup.gov.tr)

## Strategic Plan 2006-2007

At its meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2005 at IFLA/HQ, The Hague the Professional Committee accepted the Section's Strategic Plan, reprinted below and available online at our Section page on IFLA web: <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s1/index.htm> A leaflet based on this has also been drawn up in English and is available at the same address. Colleagues are encouraged to translate this leaflet and send their version to the Section secretary for loading on the site so that we can promote the Section in many languages

### Mission

The IFLA National Libraries Section is a focal point for supporting the vital role of national libraries in society as custodians of the nations' intellectual heritage, thus providing organisation, access to and preservation of the national imprint in all media.

The Section aims at providing leadership in the areas of concern to national libraries, always in recognition of the needs and views of every region of the world.

The Section's activities and goals underpin IFLA's three pillars, in particular: Society Pillar through its work in WSIS and its support of national libraries world-wide; the Profession Pillar through its support and cooperation with ICABS and its professional practice and the Member Pillar through its information services (e-list, leaflets and newsletter).

A related but independent association is the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL) which was established to discuss policies and promote understanding and cooperation on matters of common interest to national libraries worldwide.

### Goals

- 1. To promote the universal availability of information by such activities as encouraging the creation and building of national libraries, the development of national legislation for national libraries – especially legal deposit dispositions and preservation activities – and to promote the convergence of information and heritage institutions.**

**(Professional priorities:** (a) Supporting the role of libraries in society; (b) Defending the principle of freedom of information; (d) Providing unrestricted access to information; (e) Balancing the intellectual property rights of authors with the needs of users; (f) Promoting resource sharing; (g) Preserving our intellectual heritage.)

### Actions

*1.1 Organise a Session on the new proactive role of national libraries for Seoul 2006.*

*1.2 Review the results of the World Summit on the Information Society in November 2005 and advocate specific follow-up actions.*

- 2. To serve as a forum to share and learn from the experience of the practical problems of national libraries, in order to promote benchmarking, best practices and quality models, and to improve management skills.**

**(Professional priorities:** (a) Supporting the role of libraries in society; (b) Defending the principle of freedom of information; (d) Providing unrestricted access to information; (f) Promoting resource sharing; (g) Preserving our intellectual heritage; (i) Promoting standards, guidelines and best practice.)

### **Actions**

*2.1 Continue the survey on performance measurements, already distributed in Europe, Asia and Oceania, for other parts of the world, especially in South-America and the Caribbean.*

*2.2 Establish a Working Group on benchmarking and performance indicators with the objective to develop a workplan and further activities to proceed within the Section. (The CENL has set up a similar group – we could plan to coordinate – many of the people will be the same*

*2.3 Organise a satellite meeting in Durban 2007 with the Division on Education and Training on the new skills needed (curatorial management, etc.) in new knowledge institutions.*

*2.4 Publish the Newsletter of the National Libraries Section in electronic form twice a year.*

*2.5 Update the leaflet on the National Libraries Section and promote its translation into IFLA's official languages and its wide dissemination.*

*2.6 Take proactive measures to retain and recruit new members for the Section.*

*2.7 Maintain the nat-lib discussion list for all Section members and encourage discussion and information sharing through this channel.*

- 3. To promote research in fields of interest to national libraries, always considering the opportunities to share experiences with other groups within IFLA and in close cooperation with CDNL – Conference of Directors of National Libraries – and to promote the development and implementation of standards.**

**(Professional priorities:** (a) Supporting the role of libraries in society; (b) Defending the principle of freedom of information; (d) Providing unrestricted access to information; (f) Promoting resource sharing; (g) Preserving our intellectual heritage; (h) Developing library professionals; (i) Promoting standards, guidelines and best practice.)

### **Actions**

*3.1 Support and cooperate with ICABS (IFLA-CDNL Alliance for Bibliographic Standards) in their workplan regarding bibliographic and resource control and long-term archiving of electronic resources.*

3.2 Encourage members to lobby within their countries in support of IFLA's efforts within the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to promote the essential role of libraries in the Information Society and to help reduce the digital divide.

3.3 Proceed in co-sponsoring the next IFLA Meetings of Experts on an International Cataloguing Code, organized by the Cataloguing Section, and scheduled for 2006.

## Links to our meetings and papers during IFLA 2005, Oslo

**Standing Committee on National Library Minutes:** these are available on our IFLA page <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s1/snl.htm>

Highlights of the SC meetings were: following the end of Fernanda Campos' term as Chair, Ingrid Parent was unanimously elected to succeed her. All SC members thanked Fernanda for her excellent work and support over the past years and welcomed Ingrid as a SC new member and Chair.

Zawiyah Baba informed the Committee about the aftermath of the December 2004 tsunami in Aceh: in addition to the heavy loss of human life, great damage was done to the library services. The National Library of Malaysia led a mission to Aceh from 2-5 August 2005 on behalf of the Libraries' Associations to investigate how best to assist with rebuilding the library services, to establish direct contacts, to see how best to deliver assistance. A report is available on the Section page and will also be submitted to Alexandria with a view to publication.

The overall impression of the Oslo conference was very positive: it was well-organised and exceeded expectations. A special mention was made of the opening of the National Library and special thanks to Vigdis Moe Skarstein.

The Open Session was very well evaluated by those attending, also it was very well chaired and timed, thanks go to Graham Jefcoate for his management. The papers were considered excellent. The speakers felt though that time was overall too short for 7 speakers: a more dynamic session could be done with 2 speakers providing two opposing points of view and a panel debate.

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## Libraries the Information Society in action / the World Summit on the Information Society

For full details of these events and IFLA participation and lobbying see <http://www.ifla.org/III/wsis.html>

Within the framework of the activities running up to the second part of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis in November 2005, Bibliotheca Alexandrina and IFLA organised a pre-summit bringing together around 80 participants from five continents.

The presentations (some available at <http://www.bibalex.org/wsisalex/agenda.htm>) gave an overview of activities in literacy, extending access to information via digitisation and also showcased efforts to bring information and information literacy to fields and sectors often insufficiently served by 'classic' library services (e.g. in the area of AIDS prevention). They underlined the need for libraries to guarantee free access to information in a world in which more and more information sources are fee-paying and therefore increasingly excluding segments of the population. The role of the library as one of the pillars of democracy was underlined on several occasions.

In an interview/debate with Claudia Lux (IFLA President-elect), Ms. Mirja Ryyänen (Vice Chairperson of the Finnish Committee for Development Policy, former MEP and Finnish MP) presented her point of view on libraries and politics: in general she felt that librarians are afraid to get involved in politics and try to remain neutral. They need to create a network of contacts and support but rather than stepping outside their own circle they stay amongst themselves, support one another and seem to be afraid to expose themselves to outside debate and criticism. While conceding that this is probably true of many groups, she encouraged librarians to take part in the parliamentary groups in their own countries and to work at making better cases for budget increases etc. Some examples show that it is not

impossible to bring together librarians and politicians: in Denmark, the Library Association has set up a section which politicians may join (at a national and local level); in Finland, the president of the Library Association is a politician. In Estonia, the Library Association holds an annual forum and politicians are very keen to attend. The main thing is to create a network before a crisis occurs necessitating close work with the political world, to increase the number of information papers, press releases and to maintain a permanent contact with the political world at all levels.

IFLA works in this area at an international level but need these efforts to be taken up by national associations who are encouraged to distribute widely the two manifestos coming out of the pre-summit: The Alexandria Manifesto on libraries, the information society in action <http://www.ifla.org/III/wsis/AlexandriaManifesto.html> (available also in French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish) which calls on governments to :

- invest in library and information services as vital elements in their Information Society strategies, policies and budgets;
- upgrade and extend existing library networks to obtain the greatest possible benefits for their citizens and communities;
- support unrestricted access to information and freedom of expression;
- promote open access to information and address structural and other barriers to access; and
- recognise the importance of information literacy and vigorously support strategies to create a literate and skilled populace which can advance and benefit from the global Information Society.

And the Alexandria Proclamation on information literacy and life-long learning (<http://www.ifla.org/III/wsis/BeaconInfSoc.html> , available also in Spanish, French and Portuguese)

- « Within the context of the developing Information Society, we urge governments and intergovernmental organizations to pursue policies and programs to promote information literacy and lifelong learning. In particular, we ask them to support
- regional and thematic meetings which will facilitate the adoption of information literacy and lifelong learning strategies within specific regions and socioeconomic sectors;
  - professional development of personnel in education, library, information, archive, and health and human services in the principles and practices of information literacy and lifelong learning;
  - inclusion of information literacy into initial and continuing education for key economic sectors and government policy making and administration, and into the practice of advisors to the business, industry and agriculture sectors;
  - programs to increase the employability and entrepreneurial capabilities of women and the disadvantaged, including immigrants, the underemployed and the unemployed; and
  - recognition of lifelong learning and information literacy as key elements for the development of generic capabilities which must be required for the accreditation of all education and training programs.»

IFLA President Alex Byrne was able to build on this in his plenary address at the Tunis Summit the following week: <http://www.ifla.org/III/wsis/Byrne-Plenary-Address.html> (also available in French). It should be noted that it is rare for an NGO to be able to speak at this level and IFLA's success in doing so bears witness to the lobbying efforts of colleagues throughout the summit preparations from 2003 onwards.

National libraries are often very well placed to intervene in a high-level political arena to lobby for the libraries in the Information Society and we encourage all Section members to do so using the material IFLA has placed at our disposal. Please look too at the Libraries' success stories database for examples and ideas: <http://fmp-web.unil.ch/IFLA/>  
G.Clavel