LTR Newsletter May 1999

IFLA Standing Committee on Library Theory and Research
(International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions)

Library Theory and Research

Medium Term Programme
1998-2001

The Section on Library Theory and Research concerns itself with the continuing development of library and information science through theoretical and applied research in all aspects of the discipline.
The Section promotes the importance of investigation and research activities within IFLA's programme, upholds scientific integrity in research and development activities, supports the design and investigation of research projects and the reporting and publication of research results within the library and information science community worldwide.

Welcome to IFLA – 99 in Bangkok, Thailand

The 65th IFLA Council and General Conference will take place at the Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Center (BITEC), 20-28 August 1999

Workshop

The Section will host a half day workshop on Monday August 23, 09.00 – 13.00 hrs. The theme is "*Core Research Areas of LIS: Research Questions and Methodology*." Presenters are Bob Usherwood (United Kingdom) *Value and Impact Research – A Qualitative Approach; Lars Hoglund (Sweden) Information Seeking and Communication Research;* Lis Byberg (Norway), Library History

Revisited: Research Areas and Methodology; Kerry Smith (Australia), *Using Information Research Techniques to Track the Effects of Recent Changes in Australian Science Policy;* Wilda B. Newman (USA), *Knowledge Management Research and End User Work Environments 2010.*

Open Session

The following papers will be presented at the Section's programme on Wednesday, August 25, 12.30 – 15.00 hrs. The theme is *Library Research in South East Asia:* Presenters are:
Nongyao Premkamolnetr (Thailand), *Doing Research Overseas without Tears: Adventures of an Innocent Abroad;* Prapavadee Suebson (Thailand), *Overview about Library and Information Studies in Thailand*.

Officers of the Section on Library Theory and Research.
Chair:
Ms Lis Byberg
Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science
Pilestredet 52
N-0167 Oslo, Norway
Tel. *(47)224526080,
Fax *(47)22452605
E-mail: lis.byberg@jbi.hioslo.no

Secretary/Treasurer:
Ms Mirja Iivonen
Department of Information Studies and Sociology
POB 111
FIN-90571 Oulu, Finland
Tel. *(358)(8)5533352,
Fax *(358)(8)5533451
E-mail: mirja.iivonen@oulu.fi

Information Coordinator:
Ms Wilda B. Newman
Johns Hopkins University,
Applied Physics Laboratory
John Hopkins Road
LAUREL, Maryland D 20723-6099, USA
Tel. * (1) (301) 953-5721
Fax * (1) (301) 953-5418
E-mail: wilda.newman@jhuapl.edu

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Standing Committee
Meetings in Bangkok, 1999:

SCI 21 August, 12.00 – 14.50 hrs.
SCII 27 August, 10:30 – 11:30 hrs.

Old members who continue are:

Gunter Beyersdorff, Germany
Lis Byberg, Norway
Ines Davyes Queiros, Guone-Bissau
Christine Girard, France
Mirja Iivonen, Finland
Wilda B. Newman, USA
Steffen Ruckl, Germany
Chutima Sacchanad, Thailand
Bob Usherwood, United Kingdom

New nominations for 1999 are:

Natalia Ivanova Gendina, Russia
Beverly Lynch, USA
Silvia Nestorescu, Romania
Daniel R. Rios, Argentina
Pascal Sanz, France
Kerry Smith, Australia

Members' responsibilities

Standing Committee members are
expected:

    to be fluent in at least one of the official
IFLA languages (English, French, German,
Russian, Spanish);
    to attend, at no expense to IFLA, at least
3 of the 4 annual conferences during their
four year term;
    to contribute actively to ideas for projects
and programme meetings;
    to be prepared to join fully in the work of
their Section (e.g. undertaking projects,
organising workshops, preparing
translations, etc);
    observe strictly deadlines for reporting
financial and other information about
projects which they are undertaking with
IFLA funding to the financial officer of
the Section or Round Table;
    to be available to respond to requests
from IFLA Headquarters for advice,
representation at non-IFLA meetings, etc.

Existing Standing Committee members are
expected to ensure that new members can
play a full part in the Standing Committee's
work by providing them with all relevant
information.

At meetings, Standing Committee members
should observe the need to speak clearly
and slowly and to avoid jargon and
acronyms.

LTR Medium Term Programme 1998-2001

Goals 1998-2001
1.Encourage and promote research that is
designed to improve the quality of library
and information science.

2.Encourage and promote research that
builds upon solid theoretical foundations.

3.Promote the practical application of
relevant research findings in library and
information science.

4.Inform researchers in other countries of
research progress.

5.Develop the profession's collaboration with
related research communities in the
information field.

6.Encourage educators in library and
information science worldwide to include the
training in research in their programmes.

Action Plan, 1998-1999
1.Establish a closed listserv for the Section's
Standing Committee.

2.Edit the bibliometric studies sponsored by
the Section for publication in 1999.

3.Summarise the research papers presented
at the Division VII sessions at IFLA
conferences.

4.Sponsor at least two research papers on
the topic of importance of library and
information science at the Section's open
meeting at each IFLA conference. At least
one of these papers should be presented by

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researchers in the region, in which the conference is located.

5.Prepare and distrribute a call for papers", to be presented by researchers in the region, for the Sections's open meeting in Bangkok 1999.

6.Publish and distribute two issues of the Section's newsletter each year.

7.Distribute widely the Section's leaflet (prepared in 1997) and review and revise the leaflet in 1999.

8.Translate the Section's Medium Term Programme into all IFLA official languages.

9.Cooperate with Division VII in establishing standards for library and information science education, placing special emphasis on training for research.

10.Sponsor annually a workshop on a particular research topic

Biblos
(A Romanian Library Research Journal)

Biblos is a peer review journal publishing original papers (and some translations from the leading literature) on libraries and librarians, interviews, discussions on special topics, under the following topics and headings: "In Iasi, in libraries But Not Only", "Patrimony Values", "Trends in Librarianship", "Causeries", "Libraries, Readers,...Reading", "Meridian - Contacts with the World", "Book and Software Reviews", "Librarians' Life".

To submit a paper it should be forwarded to the editorial board in a double spaced typed copy, up to ten pages (or the equivalent in electronic form, as attached file in Word 6 or 7) at the address:

Biblos c/o BCU "M. Eminescu"
Str. Pacurari, nr. 4
6600 - Iasi, Romania
e-mail: dino@bcu-iasi.ro

The papers in Romanian must be accompanied by an abstract in French or English. Those in a foreign language (which can only be either French or English) must have an abstract in Romanian. These abstracts should include in the end some key-words proposed by the author, describing the content. At the end of each paper, notes and a bibliography may be added where applicable. For non Romanian speaking authors, an abstract in French or English will be accepted and the editors will provide the translation into Romanian.

The LTR committee could be the team of referees for the papers LTR may publish in *Biblos.* There could be a special issue of papers proposed by LTR. A cost of $500 would be needed for publication of the issue. If LTR decides to participate in this project the committee will need to insert this into the finances of LTR.

The journal is a 100% non profit one, and is published with support from sponsors, and it is offered free of charge to 150 Romanian libraries and 150 foreign libraries and institutions in the world.

Dan Stoica
Chief-Editor of Biblos
BCU - Iasi
Str. Pacurari, nr.4
6600 - Iasi, Romania

1998 64th IFLA, Amsterdam

WINDMILLS, FLOWERS, CANALS, ART, AND INFORMATION SPECIALISTS

The 1998 venue was somewhat different than conference sites, such as Beijing, China, (1996) and Istanbul, Turkey, (1995). Cities and countries are always different and always fascinating. But, nothing, nothing, has the charm and ambience of Amsterdam The canals woo you, the flowers entice, and the windmills remind us in a gentle way of other necessities in life. And, if that wasn't art enough, all that was necessary was to take a short walk to the Rijks Museum to see fantastic collections of Dutch artists' work. George W. Oakes writes in **Turn Right at the Fountain**, (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971) "…Amsterdam combines business with art – the modern with the old – an

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active commercial port with the charm of the days of Rembrandt. It's a colorful city, with flower markets along the quays and music in the streets. It's a city of some 50 canals. …most…waterways are lined with cobblestoned streets." Not a bad place to work for a week and that is the point.

Some of us lived at residences on the cobblestone streets overlooking a canal at Hotel Ambassade, a collection of 17th Century row houses. Transportation was simple enough; a short walk and you were near a tram stop in the inner city and in minutes (usually) you were at the conference center, the Amsterdam RAI

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) General Conference ran from August 16-21, 1998. But, for those people on standing committees and other program responsibilities, then you must be there earlier and leave later than the conference period itself.

The conference theme for 1998 was "*On Crossroads of Information and Culture*" showing theme banners at the Amsterdam RAI and was the most active conference yet in terms of interaction and networking. The plenary session is always a highlight of the conference. We were greeted this year by a number of people (young and old, male and female, and a dog) marching through the auditorium in costume to the front of the room and onto the main stage. They assembled into a fantastic rendition of Rembrandts' painting *Night Watch* and were met with a standing ovation.

By the end of the week everyone had renewed old acquaintances and made new friends; had discussed last year's meeting and attended this year's sessions, and begun plans for next year's conference. In fact, you could say we ended in a yarn of tales and networking. This ending took everyone by surprise and delight (from most people). It started with hundreds of balls of colorful yarn thrown by a "tall man" on stilts, after several other antics by him. The idea was to have everyone join in and throw the balls of yarn throughout the auditorium. It was fun and exhilarating. At the end, hundreds of strands across the width and length of the auditorium were rolled up from the back of the auditorium to the front into a tapestry of color, representing the broad and

diverse group of IFLA members as a whole. My thanks and congratulations to whomever had this wonderful idea.

This year's conference had 3,328 visitors, all inclusive of "…participants, accompanying persons, day visitors, exhibitors, exhibition visitors and 75 volunteers…" representing 120 countries. Over 100 companies and organizations were there to display their products and services. Sessions (throughout the week) and workshops (Thursday) were plentiful and informative. The meeting also included open forums, guest lectures and contributed session papers (NOTE: URL: www.ifla.org). There were also 34 Poster Sessions on display in the conference center hallways, with their respective presenters.

An Internet room was available and so was an Internet Café. Workstations were available to conference participants and many of us took advantage of them to contact our offices and families. These services have been available at IFLA the last few years and offer an excellent communications vehicle to people from all over the world at no cost to the user.

Some unusual and special exhibits were available this year: (1) *The Wonderful Alphabet*; This display was offered in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek at the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam. The exhibit was from A to Z and included large meandering exhibits dedicated to each letter of the alphabet. It included a small book with descriptions and definitions; and (2) *The Silent Library*; a project undertaken "…by a group from Belgium and the Netherlands who met on a number of occasions to discuss the essence of the Silent Library." Another book was given to those that were interested in this project. A quote from it follows: "What is a Silent Library? Are or were not all libraries silent? Perhaps a story can help to illustrate what is meant. A Silent Library is a cultural monument; it is also a concept (that) underlies all library services and therefore requires the attention of all those in libraries. Those who are interested may find inspiration in the description of the concept and the first presentation of the Silent Library project on a special occasion. "

On Saturday one of the excursions was to The Hague and the Peace Palace

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and its library and the International Court of Justice. I had traveled there in November 1997 but was unable to enter at that time. It was wonderful to go there again and go inside and see the palace, the international court chambers and the library. "The Library of the Peace Palace has the world's most important older collection in international law. This unique organization not only serves the International Court of Justice (founded by Andrew Carnegie), but the national and international law profession as well." In the evening, following this excursion, we had a reception and dinner at the Atrium in the City Hall of The Hague.

There is no way to really convey what happens at these conferences. I can only say if you get the chance to participate then do; no, make sure you get the chance to get involved in these conferences. For more information about IFLA, past and future contact **IFLA@IFLA.ORG.**
(Reprinted with modification from SLA *Sci-Tech News* Newman, Wilda B., Vol. 53, Feb. 1999.)

LTR - 1998
Open Session:
Two papers were presented and questions and discussion followed. Abstracts are given here:

New Library New Measures: A Social Audit of Public Libraries, by Bob Usherwood and Rebecca Linley (presented by Usherwood) (Depart. of Information Studies, The University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK)

The full impact of public library services can not be demonstrated by statistics alone. Library managers must be prepared to use indicators that use "soft" as well as "hard" data. The paper describes the social audit approach to evaluate the impact of public library services in Newcastle and Somerset. The various components of the audit are described and the results of the study briefly discussed. The author concludes that qualitative data, properly gathered are valid evidence and argues that they should be treated as such by politicians and professionals alike. The social audit is a practical approach which can help library managers monitor and guide the service,

improve the way the value of the service is reported to policy makers, enable stakeholders to make a judgement on the service, and affect organizational behaviour. (Full paper is available at **http://www.ifla.org/iv/ifla64/054-94e.htm**)

The Non-existing Point: On the Subject of Defining Library and Information Science and the Concept of Information, by Romulo Enmark (Hogskolan i Boras, Boras, Sweden)

The primary purpose of this essay is the following: to criticise a discipline-defining concept of information that has its point of departure in the uncomplicated cognitive metaphor's "subject/object relationship". In my understanding, the cognitive channel metaphor is equal to the sender /receiver model, with the addition of the receiver's understanding, as both physical and mental aspects are used in one and the same metaphor: the "subject" so to speak meets the "object".
In this essay I will state:
    that the point at which the "subject" specifically meets the "object" does not exist, that the study of that which the non-existing point symbolises is impossible to describe on a general level without becoming trivial, that it is not possible to find an obvious relationship between the sender's statement and the receiver's understanding and that the study of the "subject" and the study of the "object" exist in different methodological and theoretical dimensions.
This leads to the conclusion that the cognitive channel metaphorical definition of the discipline of library and information science must preferably be abandoned and that this should take place such:
    that consideration is taken to the empirical research that is carried out in library and information science and that the research removes itself from the profession's legitimate ambitions for usefulness. (Full paper is available at **http://www.ifla.org/iv/ifla64/029-94e.htm**)

(Should you want paper copies of these papers or those that follow under the Workshop, please contact the Secretary,

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Mirja Iivonen. Her address is given on the front page.)
LTR Workshop Joint with Library Services to Multicultural Populations

Theme: "The Need for Research in Multicultural Librarianship"

1.Analyzing and understanding cultural differences: experiences from education in library and information studies by Mirja Iivonen, Diane H. Sonnenwald, Maria Parma and Evelyn Poole-Kober (Department of Information Studies, University of Oulu, Tampere, Finland)

In the paper the need to understand cultural differences is discussed. The authors show how cultural differences can be analyzed. They also describe how cultural information was exchanged and analyzed during the library and information studies course that was taught via the Internet simultaneously in Finland and North Carolina. In addition, the authors discuss how libraries could use experiences of the common class when they act in a multicultural environment. In the paper, culture is defined to be a framework to our lives, something which affects our values, attitudes and behavior. In analyzing and understanding cultural differences it is important to pay attention to how members of various cultures see I) the nature of people, ii) a person's relationship to the external environment, iii) the person's relationship to other people, iv) the primary mode of the activity, v) people's orientation to space, and vi) the person's temporal orientation. These dimension will be explained in the paper. In addition, the authors pay attention to language and communication styles as a dimension of cultural differences. The paper describes differences in cultures of Finns, Sami People, North Carolians and Cherokee Indians. Sami People and Cherokee Indians were chosen to represent minor cultures in Finland and North Carolina. An interesting similarities can be found on the one hand between major cultures (Finland and North Carolina), and on the other hand between minor cultures (Sami and Cherokees). The authors propose that there are a few lessons learnt in the common class which can be useful also for libraries and librarians serving multicultural populations. They are i) to understand people's behavior as a reflection of their cultural background, ii) to understand differences in language and communication styles between cultures, iii) to understand that collaboration across cultural boundaries and sharing cultural information occur together, and iv) to take advantage from the Internet in crossing cultural boundaries but not to forget that people have various attitudes toward the Internet and therefore some clients continue to prefer books and face-to-face interaction with library professionals. The authors emphasize that cross-cultural communication and collaboration does not occur effectively without understanding other cultures. (Full paper is available at
http://www.ifla.org/iv/ifla64/077-155e.htm)

2.De la bibliothèque au droit de Cité: une recherche sur les jeunes usagers des bibliothèques dans des "quartiers sensibles" des villes francaises. (From Libraries to Citizenship: Study on Young Users in Low-Income Neighborhoods of French Cities) by MICHELE PETIT (National Center for Scientific Research, Université de Paris, Paris, France)

Quelle peut être la contribution des bibliothèques à une lutte contre l'exclusion ? Une recherche publiée en France en 1997 tente de répondre à cette question, à partir d'entretiens avec des jeunes issus de milieux socialement défavorisés qui ont vu le cours de leur vie infléchi, peu ou prou, par la fréquentation d'une bibliothèque. Fondée sur l'analyse de parcours singuliers, attentive aux déplacements qui scandent ces parcours dans différents champs, cette recherche appelait une méthodologie qualitative. L'analyse a fait apparaître la multiplicité des formes d'utilisation de la bibliothèque. Parmi celles-ci, les formes d'utilisation relatives à la construction de soi sont peu connues. Elles sont pourtant essentielles : en élaborant leur subjectivité, ces jeunes se décollent des stéréotypes ou des images stigmatisantes, ils sortent des places assignées et trouvent une marge de manoeuvre dans l'échiquier social. Par des trouvailles faites en bibliothèque, ceux qui sont issus de l'immigration, en particulier, conjuguent leurs appartenances et élaborent

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une identité ouverte, plurielle, qui les protège de certaines dérives. (Full paper is available at
http://www.ifla.org/iv/ifla64/078-155f.htm)

3.Non-traditional approaches to serving new Americans
Gary E. Strong (Queens Borough Public Library, New York, USA)

4.Multicultural library services in Oslo Public Library by Kirsten Leth Nielsen (Multilingual Library, Oslo Public Library, Oslo, Norway)

5.MCL - multicultural library - an Internet Nordic cooperation by Kristina Virtanen (Central Multilingual Library Service, Helsinki City Library, Helsinki, Finland)

66th IFLA Council and General Conference Jerusalem, Israel, 13-18 August 2000

"INFORMATION FOR COOPERATION: CREATING THE GLOBAL LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE"

The Subtopics are:
1.Exchange of electronic bibliographic data
2.Cross-cultural networking partnerships
3.The multicultural Internet
4.Management of information: "librarianship" for the 21st century
5.The on-site library in the era of the virtual library
6.Educating the professional for the Global Information Infrastructure
7.Research in a global environment
8.The study of reading in the digital society
9.Preservation of the past for the future

67th IFLA Council and General Conference Boston, USA 16-25 August, 2001

"LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE KNOWLEDGE AGE"

The library exists as an idea and a symbol as well as a physical reality. Throughout history the mission of the library -- to facilitate the free flow of information -- remains unchanged although change is constantly occurring in the ways in which librarians fulfill the library's mission.

Librarians, as knowledge workers, collect, transmit and preserve recorded messages. They organize and manage the storage, retrieval and use of information. They provide personal assistance in tailoring information services for people and institutions. Librarians analyze, evaluate and synthesize the information they collect to create new forms of knowledge. The technology changes, but the mission endures. The power of technology supports sophisticated systems for connecting people to new forms of knowledge and creates linkages between the expanding physical and intellectual universes. By harnessing rapidly developing technology with a reaffirmation of the historical values and contributions of librarianship, the chaos and experimentation of the Information Age transforms into a new era of human development -- the Knowledge Age.

Subthemes

Advancing the Leadership Role of the Librarian in the Information Age
Delivering Lifelong Learning Across Space and Time
Managing Information and Technology in the Knowledge Age
Developing Information Policies for the Knowledge Age
Forging Collaborative Partnerships
Making a Difference – to Government and Industry in Economic Development to Society in Social and Cultural Development to Researchers and Scientists Exploring the Frontiers of Knowledge to Children and Young Adults in Learning Opportunities in the Quality of Life to the Public

IFLA – 99 , Bangkok, Thailand

For further information on the conference programme and on registration see
http://www.ifla@ifla.org. Join us for the 65th IFLA Council and General Conference.
IFLA Headquarters
    P.O. Box 95312
    2509 CH The Hague
    The Netherlands
    Tel.: + 31 70 314 0884
    Fax. : +31 70 383 4827
    Email: IFLA@ifla.org
    WWW**: http://www.ifla.org/**