

IFLA Annual Report

September 1999 to August 2000

Section on National Libraries

Scope statement

The National Libraries Section is concerned with the full range of functions within national libraries. The Section also works closely with the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL). National libraries have special responsibilities, often defined in law, within a nation's library and information system. These responsibilities vary from country to country but are likely to include : the collection via legal deposit of the national imprint (both print and electronic) and its cataloguing and preservation; the provision of central services (e.g., reference, bibliography, preservation, lending) to users both directly and through other library and information centres; the preservation and promotion of the national cultural heritage; acquisition of at least a representative collection of foreign publications ; the promotion of national cultural policy; and leadership in national literacy campaigns. National libraries often serve as a national forum for international programmes and projects. They may have a close relationship with national governments, may be concerned with the development of national information policies, and may act as a conduit for the views of other sectors of the profession. Occasionally they also serve the information needs of the legislature directly.

Goals

1. To identify the range and nature of tasks of a national library allowing for differing historical, political, economic, cultural and other circumstances.
2. To serve as a forum to share and learn from the experience of the practical problems of national libraries.
3. To promote research in fields of interest to national libraries - such as acquisition, preservation and servicing of electronic publications - and the exchange of ideas and information, in cooperation with the Conference of Directors of National Libraries.
4. To further the Core Programmes of IFLA.

Membership

177 national associations and institutional or personal members are registered for the section per March 2000.

Officers

During the Bangkok Conference in August 1999, election of new Standing Committee officers took place for the 1999-2000 term :

Chair / Treasurer : Mr Winston TABB
Associate Librarian
Library of Congress
Washington, DC 20540-4000
Fax : (1) 202 707-6269
E-mail : wtab@loc.gov

Secretary : Ms Alix CHEVALLIER
Director for International Relations
Bibliothèque nationale de France
Quai François-Mauriac
75706 Paris cedex 13
Fax : (33) 01 53 79 47 37
E-mail : alix.chevallier@bnf.fr

Information coordination

The secretary of the section.

Meetings

The section has held no special meeting between the two annual conferences. During the Jerusalem Conference, the section has held one open forum on “The role of national libraries in IFLA’s core programmes” and a joint workshop with the Information Technology section on “Uniform resource identifiers and the library community”.

Projects

No running project.

Publications

Newsletter of the IFLA Section on National Libraries, April 2000.

Conference programmes

The section organized two sessions.

1. The theme of the open session was “The role of national libraries in IFLA’s core programmes”.

The session, prepared by the chair of the section, was designed to get clarity on the role of national libraries in support of IFLA’s core programmes and to move to a discussion of IFLA’s draft professional priorities and how those might affect the content and structure of IFLA’s core activities/programmes in the longer-term.

The presentation and discussion basis of the meeting was the report on “the future structures of IFLA’s core activities” drafted by Ross SHIMMON, IFLA Secretary general, and Sjoerd KOOPMAN, IFLA coordinator of professional activities, in June 2000.

Two components were considered :

- History, background and near-term issues

Derek LAW, IFLA treasurer and chair of the Working group on core programmes, explained the context and the financial situation.

Ross SHIMMON, IFLA secretary general, presented IFLA proposals for the future structure of IFLA’s core activities.

Wim VAN DRIMMELEN, CDNL vice-chair, responded on behalf of the CDNL Group of the 7 (the four national libraries hosting the IFLA core programmes and the national libraries of Australia, Netherlands and Japan) set up in Bangkok and tasked with liaison with IFLA.

Among its proposals, the Group of the 7 asked for more flexibility of the core programmes, more consistency between the core programmes and the IFLA objectives and suggested that other libraries than national libraries contribute also to accomplish the IFLA priorities.

- Long term prospects :

Ralph MANNING, chair of the Professional board, introduced the Professional Board's new draft on « IFLA's professional priorities ».

Sally McCALLUM, former chair of the IFLA Professional board, presented possible directions for the core programmes : evolution towards core activity clusters focusing on technology, access, development, preservation, freedom of information ; responsibility of a single core activity dispatched among several sites.

2. The theme of the workshop, organized jointly with Information Technology section, was “Uniform resource identifiers and the library community”.

The library community views the establishment of effective identifier systems as being essential to enabling long-term public access to information by ensuring the distribution of persistent location information. Persistent identifiers are critical to meet the needs of educational research, the continuation of fair use, and the preservation of electronic information. The objective of an identifier infrastructure is not only to support electronic commerce but also to facilitate access and retrieval of electronic resources.

CDNL formed a task force to investigate these issues and, in 1999, endorsed the principles and recommendations issued by the Task Force. Much work remains to do on these issues.

- Name services
Keith SHAFER and Terry NOREAU (OCLC, Dublin, Ohio, USA).
- Handle system overview
Larry LANNOM (Corporation for National Research Initiatives, Reston, Virginia, USA).
- CDNL/CENL activities with identifiers
Titia VAN DER WERF (Royal Library, Netherlands).
- Uniform resource identifiers and digital libraries
Terry KUNY (XIST, Inc., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada).

Relationship with other bodies

The Section has strong relationship with CDNL. Its chair leads a CDNL Task Force on persistent identifiers and some members have contributed to the revised edition of the *Guidelines for legal deposit legislation* funded by UNESCO (2000).

Other events

None.

Action plan 2000-2001-07-26

(many actions support multiple goals)

1. To identify the range and nature of tasks of a national library allowing for differing historical, political, economic, technological, cultural and other circumstances.

Action 1.1. Convene workshop at Jerusalem conference on legislation for national libraries.

Action 1.2. Participate in Library of Congress bicentennial symposium in October 2000, focusing on the past and future of national libraries.

2. To serve as a forum to share and learn from the experience of the practical problems of national libraries.

Action 2.1. Translate Section brochure into all IFLA languages in order to encourage broader participation by libraries throughout the world.

Action 2.2. Publish Section newsletter, including conference papers and news relating to national libraries.

3. To promote research in fields of interest to national libraries - such as acquisition, description, preservation and servicing of electronic publications - and the exchange of ideas and information, in cooperation with the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL).

Action 3.1. Initiate a project/survey of marketing/public relations programmes of national libraries and present results at a conference programme in Boston.

4. To promote the study and sharing of practical experience about ways in which national libraries must adapt to the digital environment.

Action 4.1. Follow progress of CDNL working group on the use of persistent identifiers for digital objects by national libraries. This group is chaired by the Section Chair, and includes members from several national libraries.

Action 4.2. Co-sponsor (with IT Section) programme at Jerusalem conference on URN's.

Action 4.3. Update Section regularly on activities of the "G-7" Biblioteca universalis project.

5. To advance the core programmes and activities of IFLA.

Action 5.1. Plan and deliver program at Jerusalem conference on the role of national libraries in the support of IFLA's core programmes and activities.

Author

Ms Alix Chevallier, secretary of the section.

Date

23 July 2001.