

# **International Federation of Library Associations**

General Conference and Assembly 2016

Attendance Report

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## IFLA 2016

### Sunshine Coast Libraries

The International Federation of Library Associations General Conference and Assembly was held at Columbus, Ohio in August 2016. Over 2,500 delegates from 137 countries attended the World Library and Information Congress.

Public Libraries Australia sponsored a delegate from Sunshine Coast Libraries, Celia Donnellan with a conference grant of \$2,000 to off-set the costs of travel to the conference. This report provides a summary of the nominated delegate's experience and summary of learnings at the conference.

#### Session summaries

##### **Session: Access to information for sustainable communities. Asia and Oceania**

Speaker talked about the many issues in the region including, climate change, emerging economies, multiple languages that has issues for education and literacy and vast distances. Traditional ways of working and new ways regarding public health, tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage.

The importance of access to information was emphasised in relation to having the power to create change. This is a small non-profit organisation in Latin America at a momentous time of change for libraries globally, particularly in relation to new policies and new technologies. Reimagine relationship between libraries, technology and community organisations and the changing needs of communities and local economies. Information is a powerful tool for development and decision making and Libraries have the ability to improve communities through education, citizen engagement and empowerment by providing access to information. Here are some examples of the initiatives being undertaken;

- Dokk1, Aarhus, Denmark - a bell rings when there's a newborn baby in the town.
- San Juan Planes library brings clean drinking water to community.
- Libraries partnering with airports.

- *Librarians Gather* is a group that organises and distributes information to help communities. They promote that the connectivity between librarian colleagues is essential and tools for effective engagement includes webinars and discussions on Facebook, hashtags and Twitter. They have a New Librarians network for newcomers to the industry.

The Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development was described by the presenter as it advocates for inclusion at the United Nations. This is the first time libraries made it onto the global agenda. The target set is to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedom to build data infrastructure and share with users.

The global information economy will be transformed by libraries. Some of the new trends include:

1. Be aware of global information environment. New technologies will expand and increase the number of people who have access to information.
2. Develop collaborative work to advance social good. Online education will increase
3. Strengthen library associations. Boundaries of privacy and data protection will be redefined. BSLA - Building Strong Libraries Association - an online learning platform.
4. Work together, partnerships with private organisations is a game changer, for example, Bill and Melinda Gates.
5. Importance of advocacy. Each librarian is an advocate!

##### **Session: Shedding light on the reverse side of acquisitions – Using deselection to build stronger collections – Acquisition and collection development.**

Speaker from Bremen Public Library in Germany spoke of two strategies for deselection - collection centred and community centred. Queensland Public Library standards and guidelines were quoted - discard rate per annum 0.125 items which results in weeding 50% of collection purchased in last five years.

Question posed, why is it a problem to discard in libraries when we have guidelines? Bremen public Library has 3.4 million loans to members 69,000. When the collection went down, the loans went up. Although visitors are on the decline the virtual visits to their website are on the increase. Clear link between the number of loans in relation to collection renewal ie purchase of new stock. German libraries have a smaller collection but higher number of loans with a 10% renewal rate of collection. Key points:

- Renewal of total collection of library is every ten years.
- Fully filled shelves deter customers.
- Shelves with books that aren't new deter customers.
- Reduce physical collection to provide space for seats and technology.
- The actual deselected books are sold or given away. Return for old books is 30,000 euro per year.
- Incentivisation of loans, a good turnover at branches is motivated by number of loans, the more loans, the more money the branch receives in a non floating collection.

### **Session: High-Yield, Low-Risk Deselection in an Academic Library.**

Meredith Giffin, Concordia University, Montreal.

This academic library developed a cycle of weeding rather than a weeding project. Some of the key points from the session are outlined here.

#### **Reasons to weed**

- The aim of the cycle is to weed in order to improve findability and access.
- Less cluttered library in catalogue and on shelves, keeps collection relevant to students and the curriculum.
- Size of a collection is not a reflection of quality - the perception that quantity equals quality is not true.

#### **Barriers to weeding**

- Financial investment in libraries and personal investment by librarians who

believe they own the collection are two key barriers to weeding.

- Books are sacred, perception from public that loss of books indicates loss of information and knowledge.

#### **Weeding cycle**

- Major removal of duplicate copies freed up large amount of space.
- Reference weed - removed 55% of material in the collection.
- Govt publications weeded.
- Old and rare material kept, non digitised copies were kept.
- Anything digitised was removed and the collection was reduced by two thirds.

### **Session: Connecting Reference to the wider community**

Mark Jamieson, Queens Library, NYC

This library implemented a training program to provide information and resources to 400 employees.

The Queens demographic has over 100 cultures represented and is continually shifting. The aim was to write a professional development curriculum for reshaping library services for immigrants. Sent out a survey to staff asking what services most needed by community and what information was being most requested.

The answers from the community and from the staff corresponded well which demonstrated library staff understood the community well.

Topics included; support for post secondary education, health information, English classes needed more than ever before and the need for technology education as there's a major gap for library to fill.

The goal was to leverage existing tools in the system to take care of communities needs. For instance, the staff were recognised as an amazing resource equal to books.

Four key ideas were developed regarding how to train staff to engage effectively with the diverse community; Break bias; Integrate information; Revisit reference; Provisioning process. Training was broken into 12 modules eg Module 1. Cultural competence and the

diverse community. 2. Digital tools and technological resources. Module 3. Immigrant resource development. Module 4 naturalisation, citizenship and integration support.

Identified driving issues that block staff from initiating reference that is, initiating a conversation with customers. Determined that staff members needed to be equipped with information beyond books in the library for example, resources available for immigrants.

Project evaluation was conducted by independent evaluators New York University McSilver Institute to test if the curriculum for the training would be effective. To date, 275 staff have been trained and 20 Queens library staff have become the trainers along with the original content experts. Preliminary results demonstrate success with an increase in staff confidence, increase in knowledge and skill development and better work with immigrant community.

As part of the project Queens Library developed a digital gateway and a reference management system.

### **Session: The Reference interview in the Google age**

Evelyn Curry, Texas Woman's University

Over 12,000 libraries in the US, of which 9,000 are public libraries.

People using physical libraries less and less. By the time they do approach libraries they are already frustrated and overwhelmed by the amount of information on internet. As they aren't sure if the information is reliable they go to the library for help deciphering the facts.

Traditionally the Reference Interview could be complicated. Once the reference interview moves online to a Virtual Reference enquiry it can be even harder to understand user needs.

Taylor's stages of information seeking. Q1 to q4 1968. Taylor's filters for questions.

The guidelines for behavioural performance of reference and information service providers reinforces the need to be non-judgemental. Listen, listen, listen. But how does one listen in person compared to how one listens online. Many librarians are using Google but this is not ideal. It's fine to get searches started ie as

a beginning point. Data files and file searching techniques Virtual Reference Interview (VRI).

Non verbal cues. Other search engines used beyond Google eg Silo Breaker, Zulu, Bing, Coach and web discovery tools.

Hold firm to what we have been doing well using best reference practices. Invest in writing and compiling. Increase budget in Reference depts for training. Commit to staying the course as we look for better ways to improve reference interviews.

Concluding statement, 'The reference Interview is evolving as reference practice changes. Librarians have embraced newer technologies as they seek to improve the delivery of reference services. Although the tools in the librarians' toolbox are changing, patrons want – at the end of the day – excellent service. The reference community is up to the task.

At the conclusion of the session a question was asked regarding the need to move on from the term 'reference.' There seemed to be general agreement across the panel that the word could be replaced with terms such as, 'information' or simply to 'service'.

### **Session: Homelessness**

#### **Guidelines for managing homelessness.**

Julie Ann Winked Stein, University of Tennessee

Homelessness is a worldwide challenge and a human rights issue. UN right to housing, participation in cultural life. Libraries help by providing community connections, a safe and restful place, access to information. Libraries are central locations for all community members. Libraries can help change negative community attitudes to homelessness. Lack of critical access to technology, health information and education. Our job is to connect them to resources so they can help themselves. Large survey undertaken to inform the guidelines. Would someone without a safe place to sleep feel welcome in your library? Listen to the homeless, ask them how the library can help them improve their lives. In Paris shop signs indicate what services are available to homeless the signs show that shopkeepers care. Would be good to have similar signage in libraries. Dallas public libraries host 'coffee and conversations' invite homeless in to have discussions and share

information. Barriers for homeless people using the library include the need for a permanent address so they can borrow books and that sleeping is often not allowed. Challenge for libraries is to address and overcome these barriers and make libraries a welcoming space for the homeless.

### **Practical tips for working with patrons experiencing homelessness**

Ryan Dowd Works in a homeless shelter in Illinois [www.homelesslibrary.com](http://www.homelesslibrary.com)

Training for library staff is the same as that provided to staff working in homeless shelters and advises libraries to run themselves as a homeless shelter.

Being homeless is exhausting, dangerous streets, crowded shelters, eating poorly and sporadically and often only what the shelter serves. Feeling stressed out about survival all the time. Imagine then, what it's like for a homeless person when they are in the library, it's safe, there's a comfortable chair, it's not crowded, the only place they can go to be alone but nothing like how we can go home and close the door and feel safe and alone. Possessions are different when you're homeless. Imagine owning only one bag. Everything you own fits in the one bag - you would never want to give it up especially not when entering the library.

Physical tips - how to stand. Never walk away with back or give impression you can be physically dominated. Don't give impression you will be physically dominating. Stand a few feet away and at a slight angle. So you're not square against their shoulders. Slightly off centre sends a lot less hostility. Be aware of your hands. Fists says punch, hips says judging you, crossed arms say I don't like you. Better to put hands in pockets or hands behind your back as this says your calm (so long as you don't think there's any chance of getting punched). When someone challenges a rule you don't get into a debate, explain rather than send message that it's open for debate. Don't dictate ie without giving rationale. Validate their humanity, here is why the rule exists, explain. Have phrases ready so when things get tense you have key phrases ready to go. For example when someone is shouting at you it's ok to say, 'would you mind dialling it down a notch.' Or

move the blame away to a non-present person eg, 'I would let you do that, but the bosses would probably fire me.' You probably didn't realise we have a rule about this, but...'

Model the behaviour you want them to emulate.

### **Association Members meeting - IFLA**

The Association Members meeting was a highlight of the Congress. The meeting agenda reflected a strategic purpose to the meeting and the desire to inform, consult and engage with the numerous international library associations represented.

Specific feedback was sought on two key projects – Library Map of the World and Copyright.

IFLA President Donna Scheeder emphasised the importance of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and its increasing significance for the international library community.

The President also referenced the IFLA Trend Report that identifies five top level trends that will play a key role in shaping our future information ecosystem.

**TREND 1** New Technologies will both expand and limit who has access to information.

**TREND 2** Online Education will democratise and disrupt global learning.

**TREND 3** The boundaries of privacy and data protection will be redefined.

**TREND 4** Hyper-connected societies will listen to and empower new voices and groups.

**TREND 5** The global information environment will be transformed by new technologies.

Gerald Leitner IFLA Secretary General spoke about his vision for IFLA - Global Vision: Local impact.

There are 120 national associations, with members from nearly 140 countries and this

unique network can join forces to act more closely together. He encouraged associations to bring forward ideas to the governing body and the start of a global discussion to reach 600 members who will participate in six workshops around the world.

The Library Map of the World project is in line with the Development and Access to Information DA21 report. IFLA is seeking access to library data as some countries don't make it available. Data could include; number of libraries, circulation (number of loans), libraries providing Internet access, registered staff or registered users. Collate some basic indicators to get a global perspective of libraries around the world. The Library map of the world is intended to become a powerful advocacy tool. Meeting attendees were asked to provide input regarding the most appropriate measures to use and if any additional measures could be included.

Copyright discussion. All Associations were asked to complete a worksheet to rate copyright law in their country. It was a chance to check how the law performs and compare with other countries. IFLA collected all the responses and it will be interesting to see if anything comes of it.

## **Session: Literacy matters**

### **The Netherlands literacy program.**

3.8million members of library and 61% are youth. Adult membership is decreasing. Schools encourage library membership.

Family, health and employment are the main areas for focus on literacy training for the community.

3 programs:

- Book start for babies (Boekstart)
- Library at school
- Adult literacy program

**Boekstart** provides a bookcase for 60,000 babies per year that includes a leaflet, cd and book. Parents of four months old babies get a voucher from the municipality to get the suitcase with two books. The baby is registered as a new member and 32% of babies became members.

**Library at School** - national strategic approach, every school doing more or less the

same. It's measurable. It increases pleasure in reading and consequently improves language, reading and information skills. Benefits for the school include - building blocks for reading and literacy - policy, expertise, collection, activities and monitoring. Benefits for the library - logistics, marketing and collection. 45% of schools are reached 2900 schools, 640,000 pupils. Librarians organise train the trainer sessions at child care centres and health care centres.

### **Introducing digital innovation services at the Toronto Public Library**

Johnathon Demers

The Toronto Public Library Service has 100 branches. Over the past decade they had been experiencing the erosion of traditional reference enquiries, an increased emphasis on programming and events, and higher demand for user education.

In response to these influencing factors they introduced Digital Innovation Hubs at three branches. The Hubs are for all ages and offer services including 3D scanners and printers, arduino kits, Lego mind storm, Raspberry Pi making and filmmaking equipment.

Training for the public is delivered by library staff and external experts. People come with specific projects and goals. For instance, filmmakers who want to create demo reels, authors who want to self-publish, businesses wanting to make advertisements and anyone wanting to develop coding skills. Staff are developing new skills and courses like graphic design are being offered to library staff.

The Hubs attract users from beginners to intermediate to advanced. They are a learning, collaboration and creation space, that have attracted a whole new demographic to the library.

### **Becoming Anythink - A revolution of Rangeview library**

Inherited the worst library in the state of Colorado and also the lowest funded library in the state. They recognised that they needed to design a space that encouraged people back to the library. They transformed the organisation by building a brand and determined to build their brand one interaction at a time. The brand started with the staff.

They eliminated the Dewey system and adapted a bookstore approach of using words instead of numbers.

Created experience zones and provided opportunities for people to play inside and outside the library building. Tree houses were built into structures and three nature explore gardens created opportunities for families to explore nature. Hired 300 goats to mow the lawn that stimulated reference enquiries about goat behaviours and habits.

### **BiblioTech - the first US all digital public library Bexar BiblioTech on FB.**

Laura Cole

Bexar BiblioTech is a library in the cloud. To create the cloud library they stopped thinking of the library as a place to go or a destination and started thinking of the patron as destination. Digital libraries are uniquely positioned to serve disadvantaged users - disabilities, rural areas, seniors, low income and the incarcerated. There is a BiblioTech information desk located at the local courthouse for people summoned to court waiting for their hearing. In this way people are introduced to devices and how to use the online library. The digital library is then introduced to people who might end up with a prison term.

What makes a great marketing initiative in libraries? Presentation of the International IFLA BibLibre Marketing Award - Management and Marketing

The IFLA–BibLibre International Marketing Award recognises organisations that have implemented creative, results-oriented marketing projects or campaigns. The finalists and winners were officially awarded during the IFLA WLIC Awards Ceremony in Columbus, Ohio, USA.

Objectives of the award are to reward the best library marketing projects worldwide during the previous calendar year, encourage marketing in libraries and give libraries the opportunity to share marketing experiences.

Presentations of the three winners included Sunshine Coast Libraries for the Libraries Pop

Up campaign.

<https://www.facebook.com/SCLibraries> Unique library pop ups were created and held at six major events across the Sunshine Coast. Each pop up had its own slogan that was crafted specifically to suit the event. Libraries Colour My Life, Libraries Light Me Up, Real Aussies Read, Where's Wally - at the Library! Reading - Food for the Mind and Run to Reading.

Xiamen University Libraries China presented, Tuan Time - each library experience is a memorable treasure <http://tuan.xmulib.org>.

Since 2013, each graduate student's library usage record was transferred by librarians into a personalised eaccount with painting and music, showing their lists of borrowings, library entries, favourite seats, and so on. The theme of the website, Tuan Time, conveys the notion that a library is both a book collection shelter and soul enriching harbor. The e-Accounts are valid permanently for graduates to review their library experiences. Graduates keenly share them on popular social media like microblogs and WeChat, and receive huge amount of attention and positive comments on their message board.

Vancouver Public Library presented the Inspiration Lab Campaign <http://www.vpl.ca/InspirationLab>.

The city's newest free creative destination – the Inspiration Lab – a hands on digital media hub with sound studios, video production and editing, analogue to digital conversion, and self-publishing software. The launch campaign's marketing objectives included driving traffic to the Inspiration Lab, increasing awareness of the Lab and features, and reinforcing the perception of the library as a modern, progressive and creative space. To achieve these marketing objectives, the promotional campaign targeted early adopters and media outlets, who could extend awareness through their own networks and channels.

### **Summary**

The presentations and sessions held during the Congress ranged over numerous topics related to the management of library services around the world. Not all sessions were of a

high standard in relation to the skills of the speaker, the quality of the content being presented and the standard of presentation.

Some presentations stood out from the program and they are the ones presented in this paper.

The three sessions that really stood out included;

- Anythink Libraries rebranding
- Toronto Digital Labs
- Homelessness – practical tips for staff

Included in the program was the Exhibitors and Sponsorship. This section was large in scale and size and hosted a wide range of international and national vendors. My personal interaction in this space was quite limited as my area of interest was primarily attendance at the sessions.

The Cultural Evening brought Congress delegates together to showcase the culture of the city of Columbus and the United States. It was an incredibly impressive event of entertainment and fine cuisine. It was also the most useful session for networking opportunities and was the prime chance to meet other delegates in a relaxed and fun environment.

Since the Congress I've presented to Sunshine Coast Council management and library staff about some of the learnings from the conference. Library staff have commented on how inspiring it is to hear about what is happening internationally across the library sector.

The key highlight was the opportunity to present at the Congress. It was hugely rewarding to get feedback from delegates about the presentation and to make connections with other countries and library services particularly in relation to their marketing activities.

For anyone working in Libraries attendance at an IFLA Congress is highly recommended. It is a rewarding and information rich experience and a strong reminder of the significance of Libraries around the world.





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