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# JOURNAL

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## CONTENTS

<b>Editorial: From Grassroots to National Libraries</b>	
Stephen Parker . . . . .	3
<b>The President's Page</b>	
Claudia Lux, IFLA President, 2007–2009 . . . . .	5
<b>Facilitating Grassroots Development: the role of ALP in Division VIII countries</b>	
G.E. Gorman, Daniel G. Dorner and Birgitta Sandell . . . . .	7
<b>Reaching Out to Vulnerable Groups in China: a broad library with social inclusion</b>	
Li Zhaochun and Huang Qunqing . . . . .	13
<b>E-Government in the Islamic Republic of Iran: reaching out to the world?</b>	
Nancy Beygjianian and John V. Richardson Jr. . . . .	20
<b>Recognizing Best Practice in Portuguese Higher Education Libraries</b>	
Luiza Baptista Melo, Cesaltina Pires and Ana Taveira . . . . .	34
<b>The Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment: embedding information literacy into student learning through an online environment</b>	
Helen Partridge, Sylvia Edwards, Andrew Baker and Lynn McAllister . . . . .	55
<b>Library Personalization Systems: an Indian experience</b>	
V.K.J. Jeevan . . . . .	72
<b>Library Services for Blind People: an African perspective</b>	
William Rowland . . . . .	84
<b>The National Library of Pakistan: an overview</b>	
Pervaiz Ahmad . . . . .	90
<b>REPORT</b>	
<b>How to Get Libraries on to the Political Agenda. The President's Workshop on Successful Lobbying in Durban</b>	
Bernd Schleh . . . . .	99
<b>NEWS (with separate Table of Contents)</b> . . . . .	101
<b>INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR</b> . . . . .	106
<b>SOMMAIRES 108 — ZUSAMMENFASSUNGEN 110 — RESÚMENES 112 — Рефераты статей 114</b> . . . . .	108
<b>Notes for Contributors</b> . . . . .	117

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# EDITORIAL

## From Grassroots to National Libraries

**Stephen Parker**

Appropriately enough, the first paper in this issue deals with IFLA itself – specifically, with its Advancement of Development through Libraries (ALP) programme. In ‘Facilitating Grassroots Development: the role of ALP in Division VIII countries’, Gary E. Gorman, Daniel G. Dorner and Birgitta Sandell describe the origins and development of ALP) and outline the ALP philosophy, which is based on a belief in grassroots development. Since 1991, 181 ALP projects, mainly concerned with different aspects of training have been carried out at a total cost of more than USD 3 million. The grassroots approach means that projects are initiated from within the developing regions and carried out by colleagues in the regions. The paper identifies the characteristics of a good project and briefly describes some examples of good training workshop projects. It concludes that, while ALP is very important to library development and the visibility of IFLA in developing countries, the financial support base – provided up to now mainly by the Nordic countries – needs to be broadened.

The next paper provides brief but vivid descriptions of a number of grassroots activities undertaken by the Sun Yat-sen Library of Guangdong Province in China. In ‘Reaching out to Vulnerable Groups in China: a broad library with social inclusion’, Li Zhaochun, Chief Librarian of the Sun Yat-sen Library, and his colleague Huang Qunqing point out that various groups of people in China are facing social exclusion. They include those who are unemployed or suffer ill health, labourers with poor skills, teenagers in prisons, residents suffering from natural disasters, and peasants in the remote countryside. The Sun Yat-sen Library has been active in providing services to these vulnerable groups, creating 56 branch libraries countrywide. The paper describes innovative services provided to residents of a special community for families with financial difficulties, to prisoners – especially juveniles and prisoner students – to a library devastated by flooding, and to two remote mountain communities in Tibet.

A very different aspect of information dissemination in Asia is dealt with in the next paper,

‘E-Government in the Islamic Republic of Iran: reaching out to the world?’ by Nancy Beygijanian and Dr. John V. Richardson Jr. from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). This paper aims to reveal the nature and extent of the official English language websites of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the motivating factors for the use of English on these sites. The main reasons for the relatively large number of English language sites are considered to be the promotion of tourism, a desire for international scientific cooperation, and increased financial dealings. The paper provides information on the English language content of the main Iranian government websites, identifies some of the obstacles to effective access to this content, and argues for improvements in Iranian website design, so that the Iranian government can fully achieve its goals.

From Asia we move to Europe, with a paper on ‘Recognizing Best Practice in Portuguese Higher Education Libraries’, by Luiza Baptista Melo of the Faculty of Science of the University of Porto, Cesaltina Pires of the Management Department of Évora University and Ana Taveira of the University of the Azores. The paper describes an ongoing project to assess the performance of library services, resulting from a partnership of six Portuguese higher education libraries. The study involves: selection of criteria to be evaluated and selection of their corresponding performance indicators; data collection and analysis; and identification of best practices. The selection of the criteria to be evaluated is based on a mixed model combining the Common Assessment Framework and the Balanced Scorecard, while the associated performance indicators are in accordance with international standards.

We remain with academic libraries in the next paper, which describes an e-learning tool designed to develop student skill and knowledge in online searching. The tool was developed at the Queensland University of Technology in Australia. ‘The Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment: embedding information literacy into student learning through an online environment”, by Helen Partridge, Sylvia Edwards, Andrew Baker and Lynn McAllister of Queensland University of Technology, provides a demonstration of the ROSS

environment and how it was embedded within the curriculum of two contrasting disciplines: information technology and science. ROSS pushes the boundary of online information literacy programs by guiding learners to know, reflect, and practice information literacy concepts through the use of case studies or problem based learning.

Still in the academic library environment, but returning to Asia, the next paper, by V.K.J. Jeevan of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in New Delhi, India, deals with 'Library Personalization Systems: an Indian experience'. The paper reviews the background to personalization of library resources and reviews the different components of a content personalization system. Library personalization projects in university libraries in advanced countries are discussed before the paper goes on to describe the personalization prototype developed in the Central Library of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur in detail.

Library services to the blind are discussed in the next paper, by William Rowland. In 'Library Services for Blind People: an African perspective'. The aim of this paper is to raise awareness in the IFLA community regarding the situation of blind people in Africa. There are nearly 7 million blind people in Africa; in most African countries, less than 10 percent of blind children receive schooling. This paper is based on information gathered from African delegates to the IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section Conference in Grahamstown, South Africa, in August 2007. No information was available about the Francophone or Lusophone countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The paper briefly outlines the situation of library services for the blind in South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia

and Gambia, and goes on to discuss issues of literacy and education, scarcity of services, standards and expectations, and the technological divide. The author concludes that what we do in the field of education, and what we do about education in each and every country, will change the future prospects of blind people.

The final paper in this issue takes us back once again to Asia. In 'The National Library of Pakistan: an overview', Pervaiz Ahmad of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in Islamabad describes the history and development of the National Library of Pakistan, which was founded in 1949. The prime function of the Library is to receive, preserve, and maintain the literary heritage of Pakistan under copyright provisions, and the annual Pakistan National Bibliography, published by the National Library, is based on copyright receipts. The Library faces many problems, and both library membership and daily readership are very low, while services to users very limited. The author concludes that development of staff and services need immediate attention.

We welcome in this issue the second 'President's Page', in which IFLA President Claudia Lux discusses some aspects of her presidential theme, 'Libraries on the Agenda'. This is also the subject of the report by Bernd Schleh, 'How to Get Libraries on to the Political Agenda. The President's Workshop on Successful Lobbying in Durban', which was attended by over 100 librarians and information specialists during the recent World Library and Information Congress in Durban, where the different task groups assigned to consider the question produced suggestions that were "as colourful and international as their composition".

# The President's Page

**Claudia Lux, IFLA President, 2007–2009**

'Hearing the voice and thought of the IFLA President' – this was what IFLA Journal Editor Stephen Parker asked me to do for this new President's Page.

'Hearing the voice' – this reminds me of an article I have read from a Futurologist: Thomas Frey. When talking about trends relevant for libraries he defines the trend of a transition to a verbal society. This trend relies on a citation from Dr William Crossman, Founder/Director of the CompSpeak 2050 Institute for the Study of Talking Computers and Oral Cultures, who predicts, "that as we say goodbye to keyboards we will begin the transition to a verbal society. He also predicts that by 2050 literacy will be dead."<sup>1</sup>

Even though I do not believe this will happen so soon, and I will probably not be able to prove it, the trend of podcasting and using streamlining videos to listen to a conference paper instead of reading it is already becoming a part of my life. And this is even more a part of the life of our young librarians. And my Presidential newsletter<sup>2</sup> will hopefully soon be enhanced by video clips, addressing IFLA members each month, when our IFLANET has its new shape.

Does this have anything to do with my presidential theme 'Libraries on the Agenda'?

Yes it does. Our advocacy work supports the implementation of technology in libraries, access to information for all, no matter in which format it comes along. Libraries are no longer just printed book institutions. Big collections of records, cassettes, videos, CD, DVD, CD-ROM, e-books, e-journals and other electronic files are collected in libraries alongside printed books and journals, with growing use by their patrons. University libraries and special libraries build up digital repositories with files in different formats. This is a big challenge, not only to give access to this material, when needed, but even more to preserve the analogue and the digital material that libraries collect.

IFLA members know this all and it is nothing new when an IFLA president talks about this. But



*Claudia Lux, IFLA President 2007–2009*

during my travels around the world I still meet many colleagues who focus on their books in contradiction to the digital world when discussing matters with politicians. This is not at all wrong, as some politicians see libraries on one side and the Internet on the other side. This is not at all wrong, as many readers come to the libraries for this reason – to read a book. This is not at all wrong, as, at least, this is still one of our values. But this *is* wrong, when we stick to printed books and journals only.

We all know, better than many politicians, that a library is first of all about content and access to this content – no matter be it through books or electronic media. Our competence is to select, file, retrieve and preserve knowledge – a competence with a growing importance for future students, scholars and businessmen, and for the people next door.

The world of knowledge is rich, and it will never be completely in a monopoly of one publisher or one company of the entertainment industry. As librarians we see trends very early, which are hindering the access to information for economic or political reasons. Therefore, to stand up for free access to information, to support open access initiatives world wide and to build up libraries

which are able to provide cross-media access is a part of what I understand to advocate for "Libraries on the Agenda".

### Notes

1. <http://www.davinciinstitute.com/page.php?ID=120>
2. <http://www.ifla.org/III/PresidentsProgram.htm#President>

# Facilitating Grassroots Development: the role of ALP in Division VIII countries

**G.E. Gorman**



**Daniel G. Dorner**



**Birgitta Sandell**



About the Authors: page 12

## Abstract

Describes the origins and development of the Advancement of Development through Libraries (ALP), launched as a core programme of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in 1984 and funded mainly from sources in the Nordic countries. Outlines the ALP philosophy, based on a belief in grassroots development, and its grassroots framework, expressed in terms of its Strategic Plan. Since 1991, 181 projects, including inservice trainings, training in ICT and information literacy, and travel grants, have been carried out at a total cost of more than USD 3 million. Projects are initiated from within the developing regions and carried out by professionals in the regions. These activities support the three pillars of IFLA: The Profession; Society; and the Membership. Identifies the characteristics of a good project and briefly describes examples of good training workshop projects on the Preservation of African Photographic Collections, Managing Digital Libraries and Information Literacy. Concludes that ALP is very important to library development and the visibility of IFLA in developing countries, but that the financial support base needs to be broadened.

**Keywords:** International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions; IFLA; Advancement of Development through Libraries programme; ALP programme; grassroots library development; library and information training; developing countries

Third World is a northern concept.  
We are less developed and this is good.  
We sustain ourselves and this is good.  
We have little waste and this is good.  
We are not third rate.

Peace Corner (2007)

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## Background

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IFLA has taken a special responsibility for its members in developing countries by creating a core programme, Advancement of Development through Libraries (ALP), through which financial and administrative support to regional activities is channelled.

ALP was launched as a new core programme at the IFLA conference in Nairobi 1984. The programme was at the beginning managed by IFLA HQ. As a result of intense discussions within IFLA in the late 1980s, the Nordic countries offered to find a host for and finance ALP. In 1989 Sida, the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency, offered to fund a pre-study to reformulate the programme. ALP was re-launched at the Stockholm IFLA conference in 1990. Sida also funded most of the programme during the following start-up period 1990–1991.

After these preliminary phases ALP has been fully operational since 1992, with an international focal point hosted by Uppsala University

Library. It is financed by Uppsala University, Sida, IFLA and 20 Nordic library associations and institutions. Sida is funding most of the projects but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland is also giving support through the Finnish Library Association. Up to 2001 Danida, the Danish equivalent to Sida, was one of the donors who contributed most to ALP.

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### Learn from the Fisherman

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One day a fisherman returns home from his canoe and is met by a foreign expert who is working in this developing country. The expert asks the fisherman why he is back so early. The fisherman explains that he has already caught enough fish to feed his family that day.

‘So what will you do with the rest of the day?’ the expert asks.

The fisherman’s response: ‘Well, I do a little fishing. I play with my children. We have a siesta when it gets hot. In the evenings we eat together and visit friends.’

The expert interrupts: ‘Look here, I have a university degree and have studied such matters. I want to advise you. You should stay out fishing longer. You would earn more money and be able to afford a bigger boat and soon you would be able to invest in a fleet of trawlers.’

‘And then?’ The fisherman inquires.

‘Then, instead of selling fish through a middleman you could deal directly with the factory. You could leave your village and move to the city, New York, or London and run the company from there. You could even put your company on the stock market and earn millions.’

‘How long would this take?’ the fisherman asks.

‘About 25 years,’ the expert says.

‘And then?’

‘That’s when life gets interesting. You could retire and move to a small village away from the pollution of the city.’

‘And after that?’ the fisherman asks.

‘Then you will have time to relax, do a little fishing, play with your grandchildren and visit friends.’ (Peace Corner, 2007)

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### What Is ALP’s Philosophy?

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Like the fisherman, we do not accept development for the sake of development – this is pointless for those most in need of development assistance, and is generally a vehicle for international ‘expert consultants’ to advance their own status. However, we do believe in development as a means of empowerment – the empowerment of individuals, communities and cultures, on their own terms.

Likewise, we cannot countenance development as something done by experts to the inexpert; but we do condone development that arises from a need expressed by the local community, and that is undertaken by the local community (with a little help from their friends).

In view of this development philosophy, the ALP standard takes a holistic approach to the needs expressed by people in countries that make up the bulk of the world’s population. ALP works at the local level through community and professional development, and through the personal empowerment of those who become involved with us. The key, in other words, is grassroots involvement.

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### What Is Our Grassroots Framework?

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‘Grassroots’, according to *The Free Dictionary* (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>), has two principal meanings that are relevant to the work of ALP:

‘fundamental’, as in ‘the grassroots factor in making the decision’

‘basic’ – ‘of or involving the common people as constituting a fundamental politico-economic group’, as in ‘a grassroots movement for nuclear disarmament’

‘Grassroots development’ implies that its genesis arises directly from the people most in need of assistance, unlike development that is orchestrated by traditional power structures. Thus ALP works



closely with those partners who are most closely attuned to local needs: the International Focal Point of ALP and IFLA's Regional Offices, IFLA's Division VIII and its three Sections for Africa, Asia and Oceania and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Results of grassroots development can inform decisions, signal challenges, confirm achievements and suggest areas for further development activity. The premise of grassroots development is that results are tangible at three levels: individuals, organizations, and the local community or society at large. Therefore, it is perhaps easiest to visualize a continuum pyramid when visualizing the multiple dimensions of grassroots development, progressing from individuals and families, to organizations, to the community or society at large.

Individuals/families → organisations → community/society.

A development project is an investment that should produce both tangible and intangible benefits at every point on this continuum, and ALP seeks to measure and document both. ALP's experience has demonstrated that each project can facilitate change and that grassroots development creates results not only for individuals but also for the society in which individuals live and organizations that serve their needs (such as libraries).

ALP has been able to support three to four projects per year in each region. That means that, since 1991, 181 projects has been carried out, 78 persons have received inservice training, 49 training scholarships in ICT and information literacy have been offered, and 196 persons have received travel grants. A total of SEK23,048,813 (approximately USD3,157,370) has been spent on projects during this period.

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### A Grassroots Development Framework

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ALP's grassroots development framework is expressed in terms of its Strategic Plan, which in turn is based on the strategic plans of the three regions and has been the guiding principle behind the selection and implementation of projects. The projects are initiated from within the regions and are also carried out by colleagues in the regions. That is the grassroots strength of ALP.

The objectives in the Strategic Plan are:

- To provide opportunities for education and development of LIS staff.
- To facilitate the establishment of new library associations and the implementation of IFLA Guidelines on the management of library associations.
- To promote the function of libraries: information literacy and lifelong learning, and to combat functional illiteracy.
- To promote the use of ICT and the creation of local electronic resources.
- To increase publishing activities and the dissemination of information to the communities, with special attention to marginalized groups. (IFLA ALP Strategic Plan 2008–2009)

Thus it can be seen from the Strategic Plan that ALP aims at supporting basic human development issues: literacy, lifelong learning, bridging the digital divide and sustainable development. And it does this at the individual, organizational and societal level.

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### Supporting the Three Pillars of IFLA

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ALP's work also supports the three pillars of IFLA: The Profession; Society; and the Membership. (IFLA ALP, 2007)

With respect to the Profession Pillar, ALP works with colleagues and local library stakeholders in developing countries to assist in capacity building for the library profession, library institutions and information services. Promoting the development of quality in library and information service is an essential task for ALP and many activities and projects that have come out of the ALP Strategic Plan cover these issues. Some examples include:

- Inservice training for librarians in Asia and Oceania.
- Training programme for paraprofessionals to promote reading.
- International Workshop on Library and Information Management Education for Countries in the Greater Mekong Region of South East Asia.
- International workshop on information literacy in Bangladesh.
- Scholarships to attend training programmes in information literacy education.

- A workshop on information literacy in Indonesia.

The last three projects mentioned above are all related to information literacy, so they are also part of the Society Pillar, to promote reading, information literacy and lifelong learning, which are keys to participation in the information society.

In support of the Membership Pillar, ALP has, as one of its priorities, to make library associations more effective. The associations in developing countries have an important role to play in the improvement of library services and advocacy, and for the democratic, effective and efficient governance of the associations.

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### What is a 'Good Project'?

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ALP works mainly by supporting activities such as conferences and seminars, scholarships and attachments (inservice training) and pilot projects. Most projects have involved participants from more than one country. A project should be of relevance to several countries in the subregion or region, or, if it is national, it should lend itself to development as a model or pilot project, able to be repeated. The proposal should come from an institution in the region and have the support of relevant authorities or organizations. The outcome should be measurable in a good project. Expected effects could be that a number of people have improved their skills or knowledge in a special area. The improved skills will not only give the beneficiaries better self-esteem and maybe better job opportunities and/or better salaries, they also help them to give better service, and the community – and of course the institution where they work – will benefit.

In the project reports and evaluations ALP receives we can see how many people and who or which target group have received training and what they have learned. Unfortunately ALP does not have the means to follow up all the projects before, six months after and a year after, to see what has changed for the beneficiaries. However, ALP also receives reports from librarians who have received inservice training or scholarships in information literacy. These reports shows that they have learned and gained new knowledge and that they will be able to do better work.

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### Some Examples of Good Projects

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To put flesh on this somewhat theoretical discussion, it is appropriate to look at some examples of well-managed, effective projects in the regions. We have selected three such projects, as discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### Preservation of African Photographic Collections Workshop

The Workshop on Preserving Our Pictorial Heritage: Photographs in African Collections, held at the National Archives of Namibia from 3–7 April 2006 (Project 164 (<http://www.ifla.org/VII/s25/conf/ws-3-7-April2006.htm>), was aimed at curators, librarians and archivists who were directly involved in the day-to-day care of the photographic collections in heritage institutions in Southern Africa. The workshop was advertised on the IFLA website so that participants and their institutions could apply. Fifteen candidates out of 34 applicants were chosen. After the workshop an evaluation was done and it revealed that the workshop was relevant and useful as it directly related to the participants' daily practical challenges at their own institutions; it provided them with practical examples of preservation and the care and storage of photographs. The workshop methodology was aimed at keeping things simple in order to facilitate the transfer of skills; the activities were an eye opener for the participants who promised to improve the management and care of the photographic collections. Although it is difficult to know for sure what people do with knowledge and understanding acquired through the training, participants promised to train others and raise awareness on care needed to maintain photographic collections. Participants were also requested to give written feedback after six months.

#### Managing Digital Libraries Workshop

Another well-structured and successful project was the Managing Digital Libraries Workshop, held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 23–27 February 2004 (Project 150 ([www.ifla.org/VII/s26/annual/s26-AnnualReport05.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/VII/s26/annual/s26-AnnualReport05.pdf))). The selection procedure here was different. Delegates were required to demonstrate their interest and their personal commitment by submitting a proposal outlining a digital library project for their own institution and support for it had to be sought from a superior officer in that institution. A further level

of accountability was added in the requirement for a progress report from each delegate at six months, one year and two years following the workshop. In this manner, a sense of urgency was instilled in the workshop proceedings and an expectation of tangible evidence of applied knowledge gained in the workshop. Evidence of the success of this strategy was reflected in the high level of enthusiasm displayed by participants. Practical exercises were aimed at building capacity in technical areas of expertise, while interactive sessions provided an opportunity for participants to share ideas and develop their project proposals on a practical level to ease re-entry into the workplace. The 20 participants came from Southern Africa.

### **Lao Information Literacy Education Workshops**

The decision to fund the Lao Information Literacy Education Workshops (Project 264: no published information available as yet) was based on the project's close relationship with Goal 3 in ALP's Strategic Plan: "To promote the function of libraries: information literacy and lifelong learning, and to combat functional illiteracy".

A preliminary research project funded through Victoria University of Wellington was conducted in 2006 by Dr Dan Dorner from Victoria University of Wellington and Dr Aree Cheunwattana from Srinakhawinarot University in Bangkok. The researchers interviewed teachers and students at four schools (including a rural high school) plus the Deputy Director of the Lao Ministry of Education. This work has provided a basic understanding from which a general model of information literacy has been developed and which will form the basis of workshop discussion in the Lao Project.

The Project Manager for the Lao Project is Mr Chansy Phuangsouketh, University Librarian at the National University of Laos. Mr. Phuangsouketh learned about the ALP projects as a participant in an ALP project held at Mahasarakham University in Thailand in 2003 and 2004 about library and information management education in the Greater Mekong Region of South East Asia. The Project advisers are Professor G.E. Gorman and Dr Daniel G. Dorner (Victoria University of Wellington).

The Lao Project will consist of two workshops – the first one will cover two days devoted to establishing the sustainability of the project through

raising the consciousness of fifteen principal stakeholders (Ministry of Education officials, policy makers, head teachers, principal librarians) who are able to serve as 'champions' of information literacy in Laos. The aim is for the final outcome of the first workshop to be a draft information literacy policy for Laos.

The second workshop will cover three days and is intended for teachers and librarians. Participants will include practising teachers and trainee teachers, as well as librarians in various organizations likely to be able to implement information literacy instruction for their constituents.

Over the three days the participants will be introduced to information literacy, examine the generic model of information literacy education in Laos and the contextual factors that affect it – and will revise the model if needed. They will also be introduced to needs assessment for information literacy education as preparation for developing an information literacy education programme. Curriculum planning, programme implementation, ex post evaluation and revision, will all be covered.

A report will be prepared at the end of each workshop and translated into the Lao language to serve as guidelines for policy development and information literacy implementation. A final report and final budget reconciliation will be prepared in English and submitted to ALP by the Project Manager, with assistance from the Project Advisers. Twelve months following the second workshop, the Project Manager will report on the current situation with regard to the further implementation of information literacy programmes in Laos, possibly supplemented by a visit from one of the Project Advisers to review progress.

The intention of the Lao project, as well as the two projects from Southern Africa, as one can see, is to ensure that there is grassroots involvement right from the their conception, through their implementation and their evaluation.

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### **Where to in the Future?**

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ALP has recently conducted a self-assessment, and an external peer review has also been carried out. These reviews show that ALP is very important to library development and the visibility of IFLA in developing countries. Core human development

issues such as literacy, lifelong learning and bridging the digital divide (all supported by IFLA/ALP) remain the most important areas of development. When ALP started more than 10 years ago, we thought that it would not be needed for so many years. But today it seems as if the need is even bigger.

However, a problem area is the financial base, that needs to be broadened. Efforts have been made, but the result has not been very successful. With the Sida contract, ALP has support until 2009, but after that funding from other sources has to be found to complement the Sida funding. We hope that with the help of our friends we will succeed in finding new sources.

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# Reaching Out to Vulnerable Groups in China: a broad library with social inclusion

**Li Zhaochun**



**Huang Qunqing**



## Abstract

In developing China, groups of people are facing social exclusion. They are citizens unemployed or with ill health, laborers with poor skills, teenagers in prisons, residents suffering a disaster, and peasants in remote country-side. Library service is crucial for these vulnerable groups. The Sun Yat-sen Library has been active in providing services to these vulnerable groups, creating 56 branch libraries countrywide. The paper describes innovative services provided to residents of a special community for families with financial difficulties, to prisoners – especially juveniles and prisoner students – to a library devastated by flooding, and to two remote mountain communities in Tibet.

**Keywords:** Public libraries; social inclusion; disadvantaged groups; prison libraries; children's libraries; flood damage; Guangdong; Tibet; China

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## Introduction

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China's economy has been developing rapidly and unevenly. With the transformation of the social structure, the rich-poor gap is becoming wider. While more rich groups of people are emerging, there exist vulnerable groups who are facing social exclusion. They are the citizens unemployed or with ill health, laborers with poor skills, teenagers in prisons, residents suffering a disaster, and peasants in the remote countryside, all of whom face social resistance. It would lead to serious social problems if this situation is not changed. We realize that, as an essential part of public social services, the public library must do its part to offer services to these vulnerable groups, which can improve their abilities and competence and enhance the stability and harmony of society as well. This is what we are striving for.

The Sun Yat-sen Library of Guangdong Province, set up in 1912, is a large provincial public library named after Dr. Sun Yat-sen, carrying forward his great spirit of humanity and for the sake of all the public. It has a collection of 5.2 million items and over 450 staff. Up to November 2007, the Library has set up 56 branches inside or outside Guangdong Province and 25 'Reading Bases' in the prison system of Guangdong Province by cooperation; these services are also accessible to the general public, making it a broad public library. Here are stories of five branches with pictures to demonstrate how the Library reaches out to vulnerable groups.

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## Tangxia Branch, Reaching Out to Disadvantaged Citizens

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### Where did we Reach Out to Disadvantaged Citizens?

We had a strong sense of the need to reach out to disadvantaged citizens, but they were too scattered. In September 2002, we read

a report in the newspapers that in Tangxia Street on the outskirts of Guangzhou, more than 4,000 poor families, 20,000 disadvantaged persons, 200 handicapped persons and a large number of laborers with poor skills were living in Tangde Garden, the largest special community for families with financial difficulties. These communities are supported by government; residents live in small apartments at low prices. Registered families in Guangzhou with poor household income can apply to buy an apartment. If the per capita income of a household is under CNY 300 each month, the family can rent an apartment for only CNY 1.00 per square meter per month.

**With Whom did we Cooperate to Set Up a Branch Library?**

After reading the newspaper report, we understood that these disadvantaged people were in great need of cultural life, but lacked cultural resources, which could play an important role for them. We realized that this was exactly a place to reach out, so we talked with the Street Committee the

next day. Fortunately, there were rooms with over 500 square meters of space in the Tangxia Street Cultural Center, so we agreed on starting a library branch soon. We offered books and training and the Street Committee was responsible for rooms, staff, management and maintenance. We put in 30,000 books, 39 periodicals and 2 computers, which were connected with our digital databases. It took us only one month from the decision to its opening on 2 December 2002.

**What Praise was Received from the Community Residents?**

Tangxia branch was the first of its kind started in a community for disadvantaged citizens. Since its opening, the branch became popular, with the number of readers doubled at the weekends. The immigrant workers in this community came to have fun in groups, residents came to read with families, and unemployed citizens came to refresh their knowledge. One gentleman said that he had graduated in middle school, he wanted to improve himself by reading, but he had not read any book



*Figure 1. Tangxia Branch Library: the reading room.*

for nearly two years, because books were too expensive for him and he had to change buses to visit a library in downtown. Now the library branch near his house is free and convenient. Besides reading, residents also enjoyed free computer training. As a whole, the residents in this community spoke highly of the library service as timely cultural rain – the cultural facility came in good time, just like the rain after a drought.

### Which Service has become the Most Popular?

A child is the hope of a family, especially for poor families. We found that the poor families paid great attention to the education of their children. Besides the 9-year free compulsory education in school, many parents let their children develop interests such as piano playing, singing, dancing or sports. We understood that the educational fees are a big problem for them; even bus fares to downtown may become a burden. We therefore started a free painting and calligraphy class in the branch for children from poor families since September 2005. We sent a qualified teacher, who

is a member of the Art Association of Guangdong Province, to give lessons every Sunday. Children made great progress in their painting skills and enjoyed the happy hours.

### Reading Bases, Reaching Out to the Prison System

#### Reading Bases for all the 25 Prisons

Prisoners, who serve their sentences for the crimes they committed, even though they are receiving punishment and reform, are usually looked down upon by people. However, when we change our view a little bit, they are just a special vulnerable group who has lost their freedom; why not let them share in the achievement of social cultural construction inside the high prison walls? To enrich the cultural life in prisons and encourage the prisoners to turn over a new leaf, we have agreed with all 25 prisons in Guangdong Province to build Reading Bases called 'Seek Knowledge for New Life' since April 2004. We have donated



Figure 2. Tangxia Branch Library: a lesson for the children.

over 120,000 books worth over CNY 3.2 million. We hope that ‘One book more, one mistake less. One library more, one prison less.’

### **Various Activities for Juvenile Prisoners**

Juvenile prisoners mostly have poor literacy, but they are energetic and want to learn through playing, like other juveniles. For a long time, therefore, we built a partnership with the Juvenile Offender Correctional Institution of Guangdong Province to help teach the juvenile prisoners by various activities, such as personal face-to-face conversations, letters, performance, sport, competitions, stories or lectures by famous persons. For example, we invited Ms. Cheng Xiaomin, a weight lifting champion of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, to give a lecture in September 2004, confirming the truth that ‘no pain, no gain’. In addition, most of our young librarians have been volunteers to help the young prisoners face to face in pairs bimonthly. Although juvenile prisoners have to spend their youth in prison, meanwhile they can enjoy social inclusion as much as others.

### **Picture Exhibition for Women Prisoners**

Women prisoners are mostly puzzled by problems of love, marriage, drugs or finance for lack of understanding of the law, but they are sentimental and long for family love. So we ran a large picture exhibition called ‘Under the Sky of Learning Laws’ which took three months to prepare together with the women’s prison. The exhibition was held in November 2004, and prisoners’ families were also allowed in. At the opening ceremony, a ‘patter’ performance (in which the performers speak rhythmically, making rhythm with two small bamboo clappers in their hands) entitled ‘How



*Figure 3. Young prisoners learning to use computers with volunteers.*

Much Law Do You Know?’, a lecture competition – ‘Law and Life’, and a keep-fit performance were carried out by women prisoners. Through the visual exhibition, women prisoners could learn easily what is legal or illegal in daily life, and how to protect their legal rights and interests. The prison, library and family help teach the women prisoners jointly.

### **Special Service for Student Prisoners**

Prisoners can continue their study inside the high walls, treating the prison term as a school term, for bachelors’, masters, or doctoral degrees. To help these students carry on their study, we provide reference and information services. For example, we sent a total of 66 reference books, of which 16 were subscribed to his topic, and 8 were transferred from the basic preservation stack, to a male prisoner about 50 years old, who had passed all the subjects for a doctoral degree before he was imprisoned. With the help of our books, he finished his dissertation in prison by April 2007, and took part in the dissertation defense for a doctor of science in journalism late in May 2007. Completing a dissertation in prison is something unusual in the history of Justice in China.

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## **Lechang Branch, Reaching Out To A Disaster-Hit County**

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### **What had we Done for the County?**

The county libraries in Guangdong province have been developing unevenly. Since 2004, the Guangdong Mobile Library project has been put in place as an important act to construct a cultural province and a harmonious society. A special fund of CNY 5 million per year will be used to build mobile branches in the public libraries of underdeveloped counties. We take the responsibility of purchasing books and equipment such as bookshelves, book carts, printers, magnetic monitors, etc. and sending them to each branch, which has a standard quota of 10,000 new books at the beginning and exchanges their new books with other branches every 6 months. The branch in Lechang, a mountainous county in northern Guangdong, as the twenty-second mobile branch, was built in July 2005.

### **How had the Flood Destroyed the Library?**

On July 14, 2006, a catastrophic flood caused by the hurricane Bilis reached Lechang. Early next



morning, the library, located at the riverside, learned from the flood forecast department that the river would rise about one meter. Meanwhile, the staff worked hard to move the books and office equipment to the second floor until the afternoon. However, the river was in spate, the librarians were unsafe and were moved away by lifeboats. Late at night, the library was flooded to a depth of over 5 meters; the mobile branch on the second floor was flooded to a depth of over 1.62 meters. Almost all the 80,000 volumes of the Lechang public library, which had been collected for decades, and 20,000 volumes of the mobile branch, were destroyed in a moment, so was the office equipment.

### What Could we do for the Rebuilding?

The flood covered the whole town, ruining more than 12,060 residential homes and 3,000 shops, causing a large loss of over CNY 3 billion. Although the government attached great importance to rebuilding the homeland, it was hard to rebuild the library in a short term. To meet the residents' urgent need for cultural life, chief librarians in Guangdong province got together to discuss ideas in October and came up with a written proposal, appealing to all libraries and librarians in the province for assistance, donation of books, office equipment or money that would help the library rebuild and reopen earlier. The proposal was published in newsletters, on websites of public libraries and college libraries, and in the blog of the chief librarian of Sun Yat-sen University, with pictures.

### How Much Later did the Library Reopen?

The proposal attracted widespread support from libraries, publishers and librarians. Six months after the disaster, the library opened again. The ceremony of donation and unveiling was held on 14 January 2007. We renewed the mobile branch, still with the standard quota of 10,000 new books worth CNY 400,000, sixteen bookshelves, two book carts, computers, printers, a magnetic monitor and other office equipment. The Sun Yat-sen University Press donated 4,000 new books; a librarian from Urumchi, a city far away from Guangzhou city, contributed CNY 2,000, and so on. In total the library received a new mobile branch from our library, 20,000 books from 20 other libraries and CNY 20,000 from individual librarians. Its reopening meets the residents' thirst for reading.



*Figure 4. Lechang Branch Library: the children's reading room after rebuilding.*

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## Two Branches, Reaching Out to Remote Counties In Tibet

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### Motuo, a Beautiful Place without a Road

In the Yarlung Zangbo Grand Canyon in Tibet, there is a place called Motuo, meaning 'Hidden Snow Lotus' in Tibetan Buddhism. It is surrounded by high mountains, which are covered with snow from November to April each year. Any of the four paths to the outside leads to a mountain over 4000 meters high. All supplies have to be carried physically, and there have been deaths caused by snow or land slides on the paths every year. Actually, the government has tried many projects and invested a lot on the road in recent decades, but it was either too hard for construction or destroyed by landslides after completion. Because of its extremely complicated geology, Motuo is the only county in China that has no road for motors up till now.

### A County Library with Great Meaning

With less than 1,000 books in total in the local government and schools, and no library in the whole county, the population had been suffering from poor literacy and cultural life. However, prospects are now different because the Motuo library was started in August 2006 as a branch of our library. We provided 17,000 volumes of books, computers, office equipment (including a projector, pocket disk, sound boxes, etc.) and training. The Motuo library has taken a big stride forward, for its 1.7 volumes of collection per capita leaps to the top of all county libraries countrywide. Reaching out to 36 schools and teaching centers,

the library services benefit the residents in terms of literacy, health, cultural life, economic activities and understanding the world outside. The books are mental food and cultural vaccines to help the residents cope with the cultural impacts coming with the road and the Internet.

### A Unique Transport with Strong Responses

The 17,000 books and devices we donated weighed a total of 7,500 kg, and were carried into the county by 300 porters on their shoulders through the tough path for 4 days. From a digital video taken for this special transport, a 9 year old girl porter would catch your eyes. She and her mother carried a 25 kg load in turn to earn a carriage fee of CNY 50. In isolated Motuo, being a porter is the only way to earn money. Many children are therefore sent to be porters instead of going to school. After we published the pictures on our website, strong responses have arisen. The Guangdong S.F. Express Company, who had



Figure 5. Porters carrying books to Motuo.



Figure 6. A nine-year-old girl porter.

donated CNY 150,000 to pay the porters, donated another CNY 240,000 to support 100 children of Monba nationality in Motuo to continue their school life.

### Chayu Branch, another Cultural Fairyland

Chayu County, 1,000 kilometers from Lhasa, is also located in the remote mountainous area in Tibet, though with better conditions compared with Motuo. But residents still suffered from poor cultural life, because there was neither bookstore nor public library here. On 8 May 2007, Chayu library, also as a branch of Sun Yat-sen Library of Guangdong Province, was born beneath the holy Demula Snow Mountain. We donated 15,000 new books, computers and other devices, and sent a work team to help set up the library. They traveled a long way from Guangzhou to Chayu, got over the 4,700 meter high Sejila Snow Mountain and



Figure 7. Chayu Branch Library: librarians sorting newly-arrived books.



Figure 8. Chayu Branch Library: local residents applying for library cards.



*Figure 9. Cheyu Branch Library: girl readers enjoying story books.*

the 5,080 meter high Demula Snow Mountain, and started to work in spite of suffering from altitude sickness. It was not easy, but they were pleased that the cultural life would be improved, and the digital gap would evidently be narrowed, because this library could share the mass storage digital resources in our central library.

### **About the Authors**

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# E-Government in the Islamic Republic of Iran: reaching out to the world?

*Nancy Beygijanian*



*Dr. John V. Richardson Jr.*



## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to reveal the nature and extent of the official English language websites of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the motivating factors for this practice. The main reasons for the relatively large number of English language sites are considered to be the promotion of tourism, a desire for international scientific cooperation, and increased financial dealings. The paper provides information on the English language content of the main Iranian government websites, identifies some of the obstacles to effective access to this content, and argues for improvements in Iranian website design, so that the Iranian government can fully achieve its goals.

**Keywords:** electronic government; e-government; government electronic administration; official government websites; information policy; Islamic Republic of Iran

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## Introduction

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The term ‘electronic government’ or ‘e-government’ has been used differently by various authorities in the field of government information. However, a generally accepted definition of e-government is the “use of technology, particularly the Internet, to enhance the access to and delivery of government information and services to citizens, businesses, government employees, and other agencies at the federal and state levels.”<sup>1</sup> In any case, governments around the world are employing the Internet because of a widely-held belief that “e-government can produce . . . reduced costs, and increased revenue, economic development, reduced redundancy, increased transparency and accountability, and improved services to citizens.”<sup>2</sup> The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), like many other nations, has also joined in this new frontier and has designed websites for almost all of its ministries (including its bureaus and departments) and other branches of government including the Majlis and the Judiciary.

It is surprising to discover that Iran, which has been depicted as being anti-West<sup>3</sup> for more than two decades by much of the Western media, has chosen to play a traditional American folk song—‘When the Saints Go Marching In’<sup>4</sup>—as their call-waiting music at the Ministry of Industries and Mines or that the President spends 15 minutes a week on his personal blog! Another interesting fact about the Iranian government is that they have not only published government information on their websites in Farsi, the official national language (aka Persian in the west),<sup>5</sup> but they have also published many of their websites in English as well as Arabic, Azerbaijani, French, Indonesian, Italian, Kurdish, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu.<sup>6</sup>

Even more interestingly, the former Iranian President Mohammed Khatami, when interviewed on 7 January 1998 by Cable News

Network's Christiane Amanpour, "proposed cultural exchanges between the American and Iranian peoples as a way to bring down the walls of mistrust that had been constructed to separate them."<sup>7</sup> In this context of this article, 'cultural exchange' is exactly the intention of several of the English-language Iranian federal-level government websites. For instance, the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) publishes news on Iran and its international relationships. In addition, one can also learn that Iran is a member of the International Co-operative Alliance, an NGO dating back to 1895, on the website of the Ministry of Cooperatives. Moreover, the Ministry of Roads and Transportation's website provides tidbits on transportation projects between Iran and neighboring countries. Furthermore, the IRI's National Library and Archives has an acquisitions policy to collect materials in English. Also, the Petroleum Ministry website welcomes petroleum organizations to submit URLs to link to them.

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### Objectives, Literature, and Methodological Issues

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The purpose of this article is to increase reference librarians' awareness that all three branches of the Iranian government, but especially the President and the Cabinet level ministries, are publishing government information online in English in addition to Farsi (the official language), so that they will be able to provide this information for library users who need official Iranian government information in English. So, this study focuses on the official websites of government ministries and other federal-level government agencies of the Islamic Republic of Iran that provide content in English. As library and information science researchers, we would like to see the English-language versions of these Iranian government websites display their information in a more coherent and systematic manner in order to help people who are looking for information on these websites and also so that the government is able to achieve their publicly stated main goals, which are:

1. to invite foreign business
2. to engage in international scientific collaboration
3. to promote tourism, or, as they frame it, disseminating "national and domestic content in English and other foreign languages"<sup>8</sup> as well as "make relations with other countries."<sup>9</sup>

Please note that all of our comments, especially in the Implications section below, are intended as constructive criticism; we, the authors, applaud the Iranian government's interests in reaching out, especially in these troubled times.

A comprehensive literature review for this article was conducted in several databases through November 2007; however the main electronic ones include: *Library and Information Science Abstracts* (LISA), which dates back to 1960, *ERIC*, which also started in the mid-1960s, *Library Literature and Information Science*, which indexes materials back to 1984, but with some items from as early as 1979, and *Dissertation Abstracts International*, going back to the later part of the 19th century. Useful, but general, search terms included 'information policy' as well as 'government information-internet resources,' but most productive were the search terms 'electronic government,' 'e-government,' 'government information,' and 'websites.' These preceding keywords were paired with the keyword 'Iran.' Not surprisingly, this search still only revealed a handful of relevant citations,<sup>10</sup> although 34 dissertations have been written about government information and Iran.

In order to achieve reliable and valid results for this research article, the entire population of Iranian government websites needs to be discussed first. To get an idea of the magnitude of the Iranian web presence, one should note that a Google search retrieves a total of 852,000 web pages on governmental servers in Iran and 718,000 in the Farsi language; furthermore, 134,000 pages are in languages other than the official language.

In terms of scope, this article examines only the English language web pages of the executive branch including the President and his Ministers who make up the Cabinet (i.e., the Ministry level agencies and their bureaus and departments as well as the Spokesman, the official Iranian government portal site). So, the logical first step required a complete listing and location of all of the Iranian ministry websites, so we searched the official websites of the President of Iran<sup>11</sup> and the government portal, the Spokesman of the Republic of Iran,<sup>12</sup> as well as the World Wide Web via an advanced search of Google, filtering for language and domain name.

In addition to the President's Cabinet (see Table 1), we specifically covered the Judicial System of the



Islamic Republic of Iran (including the Supreme Court)<sup>13</sup> and the Consultative Assembly<sup>14</sup> – the legislative branch. However, we were only interested in the secular, political, or civic administration, not the sacred or spiritual power structures of the Supreme Leader or the Council of Guardians of the Constitution (see Article 57 of the Constitution). Moreover, the 64 Supreme Councils, which are supra-governmental, are not analyzed here. And, to be clear, the other two levels of the Iranian government—the 30 provinces and local administrative units – were out of scope for our purposes.

For a complete list of all 21 of the Iranian Cabinet Ministries, including the personal names of the respective cabinet ministers, see ‘Iranian Cabinet’ at <http://www.president.ir/eng/ahmadinejad/cabinet/> (accessed 15 August 2007), presented as Table 2.

For clarity, we included the IRI’s embassies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs located in such countries as Finland, Greece, India, New Zealand, and the Republic of South Africa, because they provide English-language web pages.

Finally, one methodological issue arose. All of the examined and listed links were current as of August 2007. After that date, however, *IFLA Journal* readers may find page revisions and a few page updates as well as other changes. Throughout this investigation, we unfortunately encountered numerous infrastructure problems including ‘500–internal server error,’ ‘bad server response,’ ‘Bandwidth Limit Exceeded,’ just blank English language pages (i.e. constructed pages, but without any content), and links labeled ‘English’ which lead to Farsi pages. Indeed, many of the English language pages are not being updated as regularly as when we started this project in early 2006. Many problems were simple 404 ‘not found’ errors (note that the Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture and, perhaps, the Ministry of Industries and Mines had the most numerous dead links) on our visits to these websites. Nonetheless, we have done our best to provide up-to-date information for this article.

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### Two Research Questions

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The two main questions posed in this article are:

1. Which official Iranian government websites have some English language content?

2. What are the incentives for the Iranian government choosing to publish in English, when the official national language is Farsi and especially when one considers that all Iranian government documents are required to be in the official language, according to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran?<sup>15</sup>

There are three other questions of interest, but which are outside the scope of this present article. First, are the English websites correctly translated from their Farsi versions? We would note, for instance, that much of the content on the Farsi sites is different from the English version, perhaps because the Farsi site is clearly intended mainly for a national audience. Secondly, how current are any of these websites? Again, this question cannot be answered at the moment, because the official webmasters have not provided every website with a last modified date. Perhaps, if more websites had a news section, this feature could be used to determine the latest update. Finally, not every website has been indexed on the Wayback Machine, so, one can only speculate as to what was the first website in English. Nonetheless, it appears that the first website to have an English version was the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, which provides copyright claim of 1997–2001, according to the website of the Wayback Machine, which was accessed 3 July 2006. A further, but minor, question also arises: have these Web sites changed over the course of the research? Certainly the websites have changed over this period, but no clear pattern emerges. We found that some English links have disappeared while other new content has been posted.

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### Findings and Discussion

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As mentioned above, we speculated that there were three primary reasons for providing English language web content on official Iranian government sites. Allow us to address each of the three branches of government seriatim.

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#### Executive Branch (President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad)

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##### Marketing in the English Language for International Business Purposes

Several criteria have been used as evidence of whether these governmental websites are designed

#	Name of cabinet level ministry	L	Official website (F = Farsi) and English information website (E = English)
1	Ministry of Agricultural Jihad (a)	F E	<a href="http://www.moa.or.ir">http://www.moa.or.ir</a> or <a href="http://www.maj.ir">http://www.maj.ir</a> <a href="http://www.agri-jihad.ir/portal/Home/Default.aspx?CategoryId=Home">http://www.agri-jihad.ir/portal/Home/Default.aspx?CategoryId=Home</a>
2	Ministry of Commerce	F	<a href="http://www.moc.gov.ir">http://www.moc.gov.ir</a>
3	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology	F	<a href="http://www.ict.gov.ir">http://www.ict.gov.ir</a>
4	Ministry of Cooperatives	F E	<a href="http://www.icm.gov.ir">http://www.icm.gov.ir</a> <a href="http://www.icm.gov.ir/Default_jcm.aspx">http://www.icm.gov.ir/Default_jcm.aspx</a>
5	Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance	F	<a href="http://www.ershad.gov.ir">http://www.ershad.gov.ir</a>
6	Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (b)	F E	<a href="http://www.mod.ir">http://www.mod.ir</a> <a href="http://www.mod.ir/">http://www.mod.ir/</a>
7	Ministry of Economy and Finance	F E	<a href="http://www.mefa.gov.ir">http://www.mefa.gov.ir</a> or <a href="http://www.economicaffairs.ir">http://www.economicaffairs.ir</a> <a href="http://www.mefa.gov.ir/ministry/index-eng.asp">http://www.mefa.gov.ir/ministry/index-eng.asp</a>
8	Ministry of Education	F E	<a href="http://www.medu.ir">http://www.medu.ir</a> <a href="http://medu.ir/en/">http://medu.ir/en/</a>
9	Ministry of Energy (c)	F E	<a href="http://www.moe.org.ir">http://www.moe.org.ir</a> <a href="http://www.moe.org.ir/HomePage.aspx?TabID=1&amp;Site=DouranPortal&amp;Lang=en-US">http://www.moe.org.ir/HomePage.aspx?TabID=1&amp;Site=DouranPortal&amp;Lang=en-US</a>
10	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	F E	<a href="http://www.mfa.gov.ir">http://www.mfa.gov.ir</a> <a href="http://www.mfa.gov.ir:7777/mfa/cms/Tehran/en/index.html">http://www.mfa.gov.ir:7777/mfa/cms/Tehran/en/index.html</a>
11	Ministry of Health, Medicine, and Medical Education (d)	F E	<a href="http://hbi.ir">http://hbi.ir</a> <a href="http://www.hbi.ir">http://www.hbi.ir</a> or <a href="http://mohme.gov.ir">http://mohme.gov.ir</a>
12	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	F E	<a href="http://www.mhud.gov.ir">http://www.mhud.gov.ir</a> <a href="http://www.mhud.gov.ir/english/default.htm">http://www.mhud.gov.ir/english/default.htm</a>
13	Ministry of Industries and Mines	F	<a href="http://www.mim.gov.ir">http://www.mim.gov.ir</a>



14	Ministry of Intelligence (and Security) aka Information		No website
15	Ministry of Interior	F	<a href="http://www.moi.ir">http://www.moi.ir</a>
16	Ministry of Justice	F	<a href="http://www.moj.gov.ir/Portal/Home/">http://www.moj.gov.ir/Portal/Home/</a>
17	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	F	<a href="http://www.irimlsa.ir">http://www.irimlsa.ir</a>
18	Ministry of Petroleum	F	<a href="http://www.nioc.org">http://www.nioc.org</a>
19	Ministry of Roads and Transportation	F	<a href="http://www.mrt.ir">http://www.mrt.ir</a>
		E	<a href="http://www.mrt.ir/New/MainE.asp">http://www.mrt.ir/New/MainE.asp</a> and <a href="http://www.mrt.ir/New/static/UcE.asp">http://www.mrt.ir/New/static/UcE.asp</a>
20	Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology	F	<a href="http://msrt.ir">http://msrt.ir</a>
21	Ministry of Welfare and Social Security	F	<a href="http://www2.refah.gov.ir/c/portal/layout?p_l_id=PUB.1001.83">http://www2.refah.gov.ir/c/portal/layout?p_l_id=PUB.1001.83</a>

Table 2. *Alphabetical list of the 21 IRI ministries which belong to the President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Cabinet and those 11 sites which have had English information (and approved by Parliament, as of 14 August 2005)*

Sources: President's Cabinet" at <http://www.president.ir/en/government/cabinet/index.htm> (accessed 30 November 2007) as well as <http://www.sokhangoo.net/en/> and [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

Notes: (a) As of August 2007, this Ministry added an English language page, but dropped the invitations for foreign investment. For the interested reader, Jihad-e-Agriculture should be translated as "using human endeavor to fight famine by producing as much agriculture as possible," according to Diana Badalian, a native Farsi speaker.

(b) Because the Ministry of Defense requires a username and password in English, but not in Farsi, we assume that it is designed for an international audience; furthermore, the Spokesman's website listed this ministry's site as of 28 June 2006, but it included another URL for that ministry which defaulted to Farsi and did not have an English language link.

(c) As of November 2007, the Ministry has updated its website, but the English link is not ready, so the link leads back to Farsi content. As of November 2007, however, there is no longer an English version of this website – "The website is encountering problems."

(d) As of November 2007, however, there is no longer an English version of this website – "The website is encountering problems."

for the international business community. The obvious first criterion is whether the government offers a website in English. The reason the English language was chosen is because English is used commonly in the global market. It is common knowledge that English is one of the most popular languages in the world, being spoken by more than 300 million people as a first language. The other criteria that were employed are, whether the English-language ministry websites link to web pages or websites that invite foreigners to invest in Iran and/or provide downloadable business registration forms for foreign companies, or publish business laws/policies for foreign entrepreneurs, or make announcements on international business exhibitions in Iran, and give contact information.

As of 17 November 2006, the Ministry of Energy posted a variety of links leading to foreign investment invitations including the Law of Promotion of Investment in Iranian Water Project.<sup>16</sup> On the website of the Ministry of Industries and Mines a variety of links can be found for foreign investors. Policies of the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Act (FIPPA), a link to the Tehran Stock Exchange, instructions for registering branches of foreign companies in Iran as well as the Minister's contact information are just some of the details listed for foreign investors.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, under the heading 'Investing in Iran,' links lead to 'Forms,'<sup>18</sup> which in turn lead to functioning downloadable forms for different investment licenses, such as buyback and financing contract forms. Furthermore, the 'Exhibition'<sup>19</sup> links provide past and upcoming international exhibitions, along with their dates, such as the Thirteenth International Exhibition of Pack and Print Machineries of 2007.

Interestingly, the website of the Ministry of Petroleum does not default to English as it did in early 2006, but its English version still connects to sites which usually have English links. On the home page of the Ministry of Petroleum, one can find information for foreign investment, such as the link 'Tenders & Auctions,' which provides announcements for submitting tenders along with contact details.<sup>20</sup> Another link, which connects to the website of the National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Company, publicizes a current project entitled the 'Tehran Refinery Products Upgrading Project,' which it plans to tender to a contractor or consortium, and provides the preliminary estimated cost in Euros. In addition, the link to this project offers

downloadable forms for an assessment, the contractor's prequalification assessment, and written instructions for completing the form as well as contact information along with a mailing address.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the website of the Iranian Fuel Conservation Organization (IFCO), which is a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company, invites international and national companies to submit bids on purchases made by the fuel company.<sup>22</sup> Also, international investors clicking on the website of the Kala Naft Company (Tehran) will find a link to the Twelfth International Oil, Gas, and Petrochemicals Exhibition, its date on 18 to 22 April 2007, the location of the event, contact information, rules and regulations, and even an online registration form.<sup>23</sup>

On the MFA's website, which links to the Iranian Embassies in different countries, there is a range of information that promotes international business relations with Iran. For instance, the websites of the Iranian Embassies in Finland, Greece, India, New Zealand, and the Republic of South Africa provide either links to web pages or websites that lead to information on Iranian foreign business laws, Iranian companies, and business and/or work permit visa applications to Iran.<sup>24</sup> In addition, these embassies as well as the MFA's site provide relevant contact information.

Presently, the website of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance publishes all kinds of Iranian taxation laws, which some are intended for foreign nationals, such as Title A of Article 1(5), which covers taxation rules for non-Iranians conducting business with Iran.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the Ministry links to the website of the Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Iran's Customhouse<sup>26</sup> and local Teheran banks.<sup>27</sup>

### **Creating Websites for International Scientific Collaboration**

The standards that have been employed to identify whether the Iranian Ministry websites are primarily intended for promoting international scientific collaboration include: whether the website is in the English language; does the website lead to announcements on international conferences; are conference registration forms available for an attendee; and is contact information provided. Again, English is used as one of the criteria because scientific publications are mainly in the English language.

Several of the ministry websites fulfilled part of the criteria mentioned above including the Ministry of Petroleum and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For example, the Petroleum Ministry links to the National Petrochemical Company, which in turn, connects to an announcement for the First Iranian Knowledge Management Conference (4–5 September 2007)<sup>28</sup> which includes an online registration form as well as contact information.

Other bureaus and departments, such as the Geological Survey of Iran and the Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran as well as the Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Medical Sciences, provide English text. Notably, though, the page on ‘Workshops, Meetings, Conferences and Symposia’<sup>29</sup> on the website of the Academy of Sciences of the Islamic Republic of Iran, does not provide the most recent dates on international congresses nor any registration forms for an attendee. Nevertheless, the Academy has made the effort to collaborate with fellow scientists from around the world by posting, in the past, announcements on scientific meetings in Iran and other countries.

At first glance, the English website of the Academy of Medical Sciences may appear to offer the international medical researcher little useful information in English because there is a just single link labeled ‘General.’<sup>30</sup> Yet this site links to the Iranian Medical Academy (IMA), which provides useful websites for foreign physicians who might want to collaborate with their fellow Iranian doctors. For instance, the IMA’s ‘Publications’ link leads to ‘Govareh’ which connects to the Iranian Association of Gastroenterology and Hepatology’s website. Here, medical researchers can register online for upcoming meetings such as the American Association for Study of Liver Disease for 29 December 2007.<sup>31</sup> Another interesting facet of the Academy’s home page is that the ‘Medical’ link lists a variety of useful resources including one entitled ‘Medicine Related Congresses Worldwide.’<sup>32</sup> This site which defaults to a website called the Doctor’s Guide Congress Resource Center allows physicians to specify their interests. For example, if a physician chooses Tehran as a location to attend a conference, s/he will find several upcoming Iranian conference announcements such as the First International Online Medical Conference.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the link labeled ‘Medical’ connects to medical universities’ websites, and perhaps surprisingly to the Tabriz University of Medical Sciences’ stated admissions

guidelines, which clearly encourage international students to apply.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, the link ‘Education and Research’ on the MFA’s website leads to a website called the ‘Institute for Political and International Studies’ but which defaults to a link entitled ‘Upcoming Events’ and provides the title, date, and location of international conferences hosted by Iran, such as the Fifteenth International Conference on Central Asia and the Caucasus held in October 2007.<sup>35</sup>

### Using the English Language to Promote Tourism

In investigating for evidence of promotion of tourism to the international community through Iran’s Ministry websites, five measurements have been utilized. The first test is whether the website offers links to Iranian Embassies in other countries. The second test is if the embassy site has contact information. The third measurement is whether the embassy provides downloadable forms for a tourist visa. The fourth standard asks, does the embassy encourage tourism to Iran? The fifth criterion is whether the embassy links have an English version, since “a large number of educated people in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and other areas have studied English as a foreign language.”<sup>36</sup>

The only ministry website that meets all these requirements is the website of the MFA. Although several Iranian Embassy links are listed for different countries, not all lead to a government website and some that do are not in the English language.<sup>37</sup> Listed in alphabetical order are some of the embassies that were accessed and which also meet the five criteria, specifically the Iranian Embassies in Denmark, Finland, Greece, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of South Africa and also the Iranian Consulate General of Hong Kong.<sup>38</sup>

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### Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles-e-Shura-ye-Eslami)

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The Consultative Assembly or simply Majles, plays an important role in Iranian international relationships because the Constitution requires that “International treaties, protocols, contracts, and agreements must be approved by the Islamic Consultative Assembly.”<sup>39</sup> Not surprisingly, the Iranian Parliament’s top level page opens in Farsi with five menu options.<sup>40</sup> Two of these links

offer functioning English language options on the second level down, leading to the Parliamentary Library (PL)<sup>41</sup> and to the SAC, or Supreme Audit Court (with beautiful calligraphy and pre-Islamic music using Macromedia's Shockwave Flash).<sup>42</sup>

The Parliamentary Library, established in 1909, provides an aesthetically satisfying website which also includes options to search their own OPAC or dozens of other national library catalogs, all arranged alphabetically by country. In addition, one can search nearly two dozen online databases (with additional links to patent databases as well as theses and dissertations worldwide). However, the e-resources page loads with labels to 'books and journals' as well as 'newspapers,' but no active links. As for the 'web resources,' although this page loads, it is blank at the moment; and finally, the link labeled 'search the web' provides three options including search engines, meta-search engines, and general directories.<sup>43</sup>

According to Articles 54 and 55 of the Constitution,<sup>44</sup> the SAC was founded in 1906 as the national accounting agency and is responsible for auditing those public institutions which benefit from the Beit-ul-mal (i.e. the public treasury). From this site, one can download a booklet as well as a brochure detailing its history, responsibilities and powers, its organizational structure, auditing procedures, the role of the General Board as well as the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Judicial Boards.<sup>45</sup> An additional twelve options offer news and announcements as well as publications (such as the *2002 Annual Report*) and reports (listing only the yearly *ECOSAI Circular* from Pakistan) along with the usual contact information and a functioning site map.<sup>46</sup>

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### Judicial System of the IRI and the High Council of the Judiciary

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Currently, most of the links on the international site of the Judicial System of the Islamic Republic of Iran are either under construction, lead to no content, or contain some links leading to the wrong place. For example, the link under 'Crime Prevention'<sup>47</sup> leads to the webpage of the Faculty of Computer Science at the University of Vienna, which has nothing to do with preventing crime! However, the few links that the Judiciary site of Iran has posted which have authentic judicial content are informative and provide insight into the country's judicial system from Iran's

perspective. For instance, official Iranian government information on Iran's Supreme Court, which "is the highest judicial authority in the country"<sup>48</sup> can be found under 'Courts.'<sup>49</sup> This site includes descriptions of how the Administrative Court of Justice<sup>50</sup> and the Revolutionary Courts<sup>51</sup> function. Furthermore, information seekers can learn some official information under the main link 'Affiliated Organizations' on the Judiciary site, such as how the Iranian Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces handles court cases that are related to army personnel.<sup>52</sup> As far as the link 'Laws' is concerned, the only link under it that was not under construction was labeled 'Links.'<sup>53</sup> It led to a webpage listing such options as Banking Law, Crime Prevention, Human Rights, IP (intellectual property), and Law of Nations. Surprisingly enough, under Human Rights, there is a link to Amnesty International's website, which contains several articles about Iran's violation of human rights.<sup>54</sup>

On a more positive note, 'Links' also connects to the website of the United Nations<sup>55</sup> and the World Intellectual Property Organization,<sup>56</sup> of which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a member. If the website of the Judicial System of the Islamic Republic of Iran were to spend more time and money on their international site, which would enable more people to read about Iran's judicial system from that country's perspective, we believe that would result in less fear and anxiety of the unknown and allow a mutual respect to develop.

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### Implications

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First of all, there are social and technical difficulties with many of the Iranian government websites. Although the Iranian government is using its websites in the three branches to communicate with an international, non-Farsi speaking audience, notably in the English language, the present inconsistencies in all of these websites makes finding information an arduous task at times. The website design or programming errors include links that lead to Farsi content rather than English, different URLs listed for the same agency, and links listed under vague or grammatically incorrect titles. These problems suggest the need for better technical training. Furthermore, e-mails bounce back and numerous server difficulties (e.g. internal server error or bad server response) suggest that the ITC infrastructure needs enhancement. Another reason for these discrepancies in the Iranian government websites

lies in the fact that “none of them have a [w]eb projection strategy.”<sup>57</sup> The term ‘web projection strategy’ was “a phrase coined by [the] Neda Rayaneh Executive Project Team back in 1997. Derived from the marketing strategy deployed by mostly US information firms, such as Dialog Corporation in the early 1990s, the strategy offered benchmarks in the design and deployment stage of [Iranian government websites].”<sup>58</sup> However, many web designers in Iran either do not want to follow site design standards or are not aware of any standards.<sup>59</sup> Technical training is an issue.

Next, if the Islamic Republic of Iran wants to conduct business with other countries, it would be prudent for the Iranian web designers to follow web design standards. “Textual content on government websites is an important source of information. Citizens increasingly use information on government websites to research issues, understand government programs, and obtain benefits.”<sup>60</sup> Therefore, foreign investors, as well as anyone who seeks official government information about which Iranian oil, gas, and petrochemical company seeks foreign investment, will be able to find that information faster if the web designers of the Ministry of Petroleum list those companies under a new heading, such as ‘Foreign Investment’ rather than under the current heading, ‘Related Links.’ Additionally, the link that leads to contact information, including the URL address for the Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran, which is one of the organizations that coordinates “all referrals by foreign-investment applicants,”<sup>61</sup> is also listed under ‘Related Link’ on the Ministry of Industries and Mines’ website. Such an ambiguous title can confuse and/or frustrate a user who is looking for specific information. Thus, web designers should make the effort to place website information under title headings that are informative (i.e. clear and logical).

The policies of the Fourth Five-Year Development Plan of 2005–2009 are supposed to continue to encourage foreign investment and privatization. However, the current parliament and the President favor reducing privatization as well as foreign investment and increasing support to state-owned companies.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, whether there will be further design improvement with those ministry websites that could be used to encourage foreign investment remains uncertain for now.

Moreover, since Iran is seeking collaboration with international scientists and “has more

collaborative projects with the United States than with any other nation,”<sup>63</sup> the Iranian web editors should check to make certain that a Farsi page has been translated into the English language when it is listed on the English site, in order to help facilitate communication. For example, the website of the Ministry of Petroleum, which has an ‘Exhibitions and Conferences’ link, has been carelessly linked to a conference announcement for The First Iranian Thermodynamics Conference, which only has Farsi text on its English site.<sup>64</sup> Careless errors, such as the one mentioned, may cause less motivated information seekers to give up their search because finding relevant information is extremely time-consuming for the non-Farsi speaking audience.

Furthermore, Iran is using its Embassy websites to publicize tourism. Yet it is difficult to find tourism information, such as tourist sites, hotels and other lodging, because this information is not provided consistently. First of all, not every Iranian Embassy website provides information for tourist accommodations, such as links to travel agencies in Iran, in a manner that is easy to locate. For example, the Embassy in India lists tourism information under the heading entitled ‘Iran Links.’<sup>65</sup> The other difficulty is that, rather than listing the official Iranian tourism and travel website under ‘Tourist Information,’ it is listed under two different links: once, under the ‘Media Section’ and again in the ‘Cultural Section’ on the Embassy website in Greece.<sup>66</sup> Also, not every Embassy connects to an Embassy web page, such as the IRI Embassy in Kiev. Or in one case, the name of the Iranian Embassy is listed under the wrong country’s name – that is, the Iranian Embassy in New Zealand is listed under the country of Venezuela!<sup>67</sup> Since it is difficult to find tourist information on some of the embassy websites, it would be helpful if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs directly linked Iran’s official tourist website at <http://www.irpedia.com/> on the home page, in order to attract the attention of an interested traveler to Iran much faster. Furthermore, the editors for the ministries should conduct link checking to make certain that the correct URL address is provided for the ministry websites.

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### Conclusion

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The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has implemented electronic government extensively in the executive branch’s Ministries as well as in its

legislative and judicial branches and has chosen to disseminate government information not only in Farsi, but also in English. Impressively, one can find English language websites for eleven of the 21 ministries, or almost 50 percent of their executive branch websites. English language websites exist in the other two branches of government as well. The majority of the government websites which provide an English language option appear to be doing so in order to encourage foreign business, promote international scientific collaboration, and promote tourism. We believe that the legislative branch does so for similar reasons, especially for transparency in international business dealings.

Yet these websites are encountering some difficulties. Echoing Kaaya's finding for the government of Tanzania, many of the Iranian websites experience server problems due to poor telecommunications infrastructure and many sites experience discrepancies in their language translations due to poorly trained IT staff. Underlying these social barriers are economic barriers including the lack of physical resources and sufficient financial support.<sup>68</sup> Right now, it is difficult to determine how much traffic these governmental English-language websites are attracting, for two reasons. The first reason is that most of the websites do not have a visible site counter; therefore, it is not clear how many people are visiting some of these sites. The second reason is that the international community might not even consider that a supposedly 'anti-West' country is disseminating any government information in the English language online. Hence, the international community might think that Iran's government information is published solely in Farsi and therefore, will not take the time to visit Iran's government sites if they cannot read in Farsi. But one thing is certain, by publishing their government information in Farsi and English, the Islamic Republic of Iran can reach a broader audience and thus, appear more transparent to the world.

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# Recognizing Best Practice in Portuguese Higher Education Libraries

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**Ana Taveira**



## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to identify best practices in order to improve the quality of services in Portuguese academic libraries. This article describes an ongoing project to assess the performance of library services, resulting from a partnership of six Portuguese higher education libraries. The study has three main steps: (1) selection of criteria to be evaluated and selection of their corresponding performance indicators; (2) data collection and analysis; (3) identification of best practices. The selection of the criteria to be evaluated is based on a mixed model combining the Common Assessment Framework and the Balanced Scorecard. The associated performance indicators are in accordance with International Standards ISO 11620:1998 and ISO 2789:2006.

**Keywords:** benchmarking; academic libraries; performance assessment; Portugal

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## Introduction

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This article describes a project to assess the performance of library services, resulting from a partnership of the Libraries of the Applied Mathematics and Pure Mathematics Departments of the Faculty of Science of the University of Porto, the Abel Salazar Institute of Biomedical Sciences of the University of Porto (ICBAS), the Lusíada University of Famalicão, the European Documentation Centre at the General Library of the University of the Azores, and the Documentation Centre of the Higher School of Nursing of Porto – S. João.

In an age of constant change and great competitiveness among companies, benchmarking has been widely used in commerce and industry over the past 25 years, in order to improve the quality of services and products (Camp, 1989). In an effort to improve the performance of documentation services, librarians and information managers all over the world have used this tool together with quality assessment models and performance indicators.

The vast body of literature on the subject provides multiple definitions of benchmarking. Cullen (2003) states that, in its application to libraries and information services, Foot offers a useful and pertinent concept – “a process of measuring your service’s processes and performance and systematically comparing them to the performance of others in order to seek best practice” (Foot, 1998). This definition focuses several concepts in the area of Quality Management which are extremely relevant: systematic comparison; processes; performance; and analysis to achieve best practices.

Ponjuán (1998) identified 5 stages of the benchmarking process:

1. definition of the purpose of the benchmarking study (define critical factors of success)

2. formation of a benchmarking team
3. identification of the benchmarking partners (define organizations that can offer useful solutions to problems)
4. collect and analyze benchmarking data
5. act (obtain best practices and use them to enhance services/products).

These stages are represented in Figure 1 (adapted from Grandi and Ferrari, 2005). Our study follows the general benchmarking process. However we did not follow the sequence presented in Figure 1. The librarians involved in the project worked together from the beginning. Thus step 2 and 3 preceded step 1 and all the benchmarking partners participated in the selection of criteria to be evaluated.

Our study has three main steps:

1. Selection of criteria to be evaluated and selection of their corresponding performance indicators.
2. Data collection and analysis.
3. Identification of best practices.

The selection of the criteria to be evaluated is based on a mixed model combining the Common

Assessment Framework and the Balanced Scorecard. The associated performance indicators are in accordance with International Standards ISO 11620:1998 and ISO 2789:2006.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: in Section 2 we present the methodology used. Section 3 describes our sample and Section 4 presents and discusses the results. The final section concludes the paper.

## Methodology

The project 'Recognizing Best Practices in Higher Portuguese Education Libraries' presented in this article results from a partnership of six academic libraries that are using a performance assessment system based on two familiar methods: the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) (European Institute of Public Administration, 2006) and the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) (Kaplan and Norton, 1992).

Figure 2 describes the three steps of the methodology used: selection of criteria to be evaluated and selection of the associated performance indicators; data collection and analysis and identification of best practices.

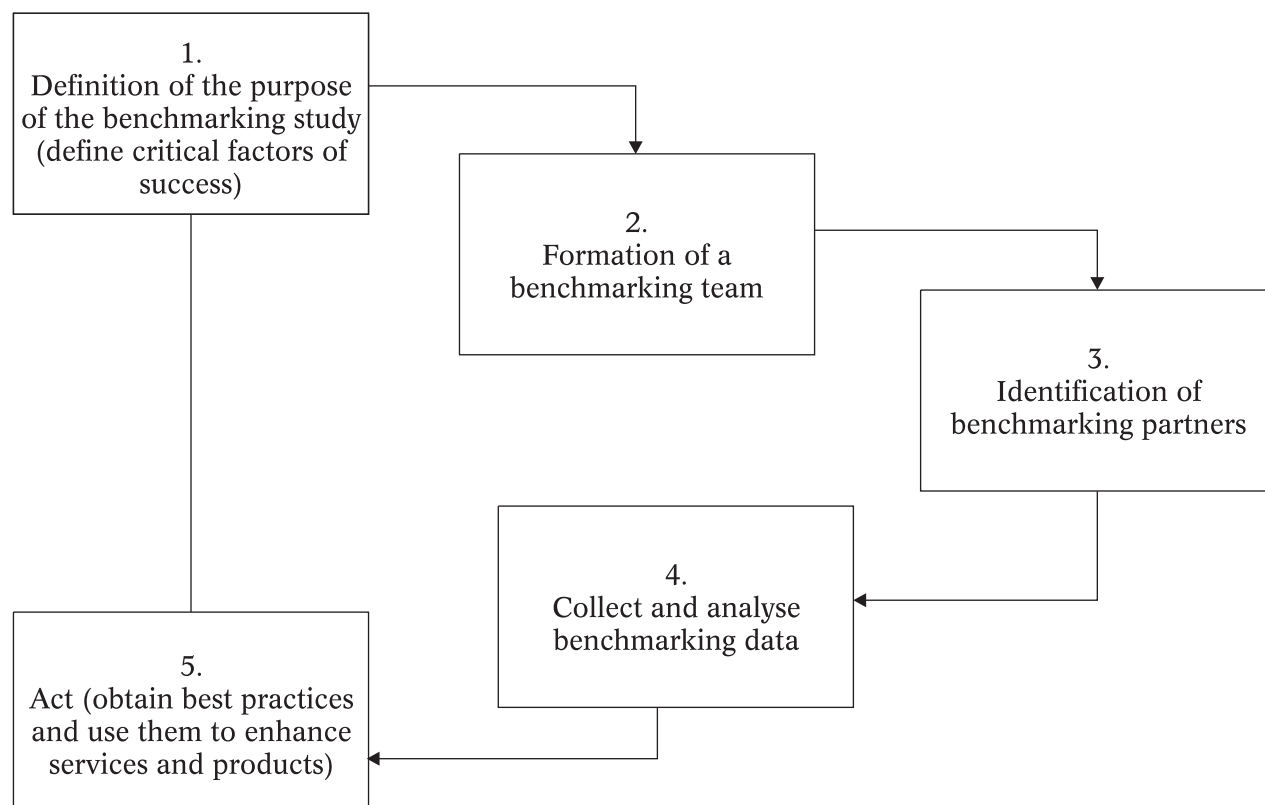


Figure 1. Stages of the benchmarking process.

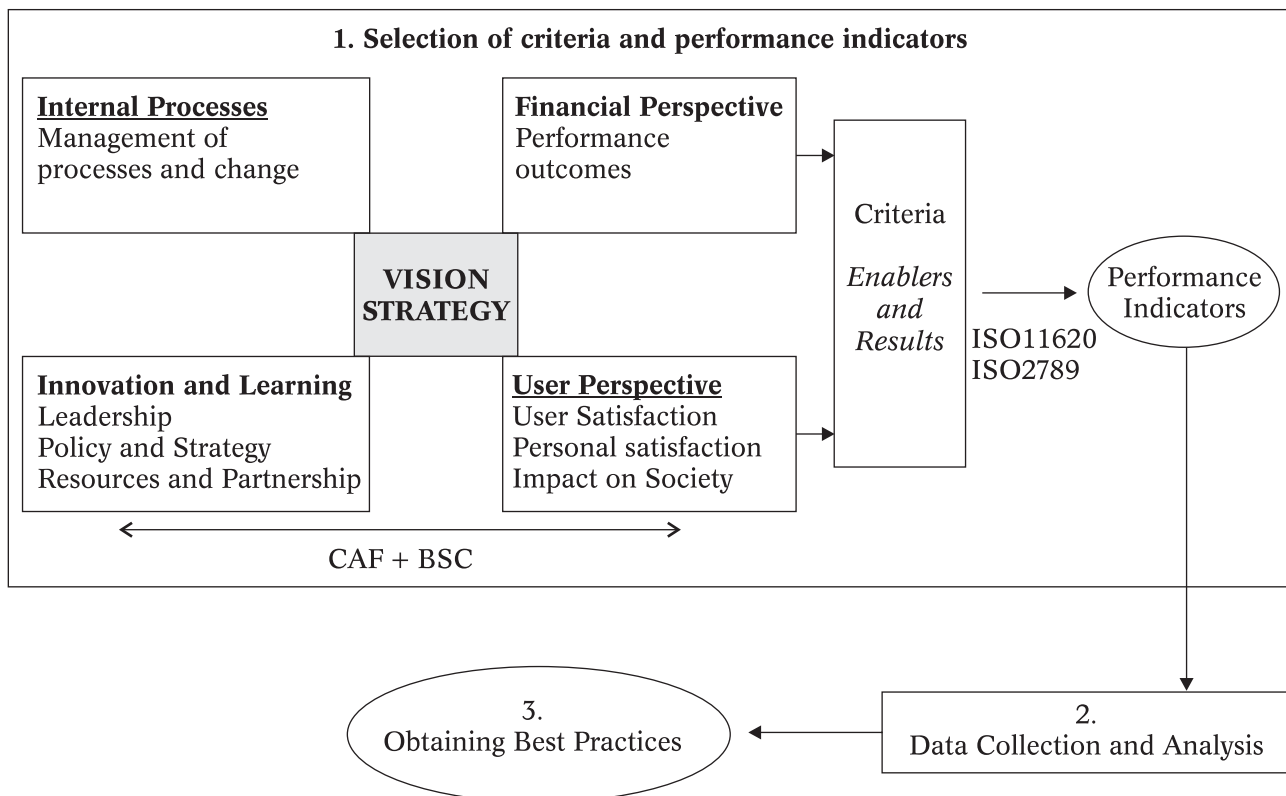


Figure 2. Steps of the methodology.

### Selection of the Criteria and Performance Indicators

The top part of Figure 2 illustrates the first step of our methodology: the selection of the criteria and associated performance indicators to be evaluated. The selection of the criteria is based on a model developed by Melo (2005) which combines the CAF and the BSC.

The CAF is a self-assessment tool which comprises “an assessment based on evidence, against a set of criteria which has become widely accepted across the public sector in Europe” (European Institute of Public Administration, 2006). The organization is questioned about nine criteria for means and results (subdivided into 32 sub-criteria) which are predefined and classified on a scale of 0 to 5. The assessment must then be validated by defining the actions, concrete practices, objective facts and data identified.

The criteria for the enablers are:

- leadership
- strategy and planning
- human resources management
- management of resources and partnerships
- management of internal processes.

The criteria for results are:

- customer outcomes
- staff outcomes
- impact on society
- financial performance outcomes.

The Balanced Scorecard is a model for performance management that can be used in organizations of any size, to translate the strategy used into specific, measurable objectives. This tool is based on the breakdown of vision and strategy into four aspects:

1. financial
2. internal processes
3. learning and innovation
4. the customer.

The CAF-BSC mixed model (Melo, 2005) is illustrated in the top left part of Figure 2. Each one of the four aspects of the BSC corresponds to a subset of criteria in the CAF assessment tool. The mixed model has a set of measures which proves very effective because it deals with various aspects at the same time, namely:

- the development of an organizational model based on teamwork

- performance assessment
- the identification of areas to be perfected
- the adoption of benchmarking techniques for the recognition of best practices
- the definition of a set of strategic objectives relating to the measures to be assessed and to the respective initiatives involved.

A set of criteria was adopted based on this model which was linked to the respective performance indicators in accordance with international standards issued by the International Standards Organisation, namely, ISO11620:1998, ISO11620:amend.1:2003, ISO 2789:2003 and some indicators used in performance assessment initiatives carried out in universities in Germany, Australia, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Denmark (Poll, 2007). Tables 1 and 2 present the various criteria and the corresponding performance indicators, and indicate how they relate to both the CAF and BSC models.

In this project we focused on the following criteria: leadership; planning and strategy; management of resources and partnerships; management of internal processes; the client; the staff; and, the impact on society. Thus, we only excluded the financial perspective. We believe that it would be desirable to include the financial perspective in our benchmarking exercise. However our partnership includes both private and public institutions, which leads to very different budget policies and budget implementation. In addition, institutions are quite reluctant to provide this type of information. As a consequence we were forced to pursue our project without the inclusion of the financial perspective.

In order to assess these criteria, the following 20 performance indicators were applied:

### *Leadership*

1. the definition and divulgation of the library's concepts of mission and vision
2. the development of the library management system based on the knowledge of the stakeholders
3. the promotion of learning and activities to improve the library's performance

### *Planning and Strategy*

1. the conduct of a survey of library users
2. updating of the strategic plan

3. the collection of statistical data on performance for the use of benchmarking techniques

### *Management of Resources and Partnerships*

1. number of monographs, journals (print version)
2. number of seating places for reading in the library
3. partnerships to minimize costs

### *Management of Internal Processes*

1. average time to retrieve a free access document
2. average time to provide a document that does not exist in the library

### *The Client*

1. number of library visits per capita
2. loans per capita
3. rate of use of electronic information resources
4. user satisfaction

### *The Staff*

1. collaborator satisfaction

### *The Impact on Society*

1. amount of academic publications
2. amount of academic publications and papers by the library staff
3. amount of training sessions for library users
4. the adoption of sustained development principles.

## **Data Collection**

The data collection process included three types of questionnaires: a user questionnaire (see Annex A), a librarian questionnaire (see Annex B), and a questionnaire for other staff of the library (see Annex C). In the case of the users, the questionnaire was applied to a sample of potential users in each institution. On the other hand, every member of library staff answered the corresponding questionnaire.

The questionnaires were based on the performance indicators to assess academic libraries enablers and results (see Table 1 and Table 2). The performance indicators that use the CAF methodology are based on the data collected

CAF criterion	BSC perspective	Measurement issue	Performance indicator	Source of indicator
Leadership	Innovation and learning	How librarians develop and facilitate the achievement of mission and vision of the library	Communicating the vision and mission to all employees in the organization and to other stakeholders	CAF criterion 1.1
			The development of an organizational structure in accordance with the tasks of the library	CAF criterion 1.2
			The promotion and training to improvement the activities	CAF criterion 1.3
Strategy and planning		Strategy and planning of structure and operations taking account of the priorities and needs of the library users	The systematic gathering of information about the needs and expectations of the users	CAF criterion 2.1
			The reorganization and improvement strategies and methods of library activities	CAF criterion 2.2
			The development and application of methods to measure the library performance and benchmarking	CAF criterion 2.3
External Partnerships and Resources		Management of the resources and partnerships to support the effective operation of the library activities	Number of monographs. e-books journal and e-journals	Adapt. ISO 2789 3.2.32
			Opening hours per week	Adapt. ISO 2789 3.4.3
			The identification of strategic partners and the nature of the relationships	CAF criterion 4.1
Process and change management	Internal Processes	Process management to get quality services	median time of document acquisition	Adapt. ISO 11620 B.3.1.1
			median time of document retrieval from Open Access Area	Adapt. ISO 11620 B.2.3.2
			to assess market penetration of electronic service	Adapt. ISO 2789 A.6.2

Table 1. Criteria and performance indicators to assess academic library enablers.

CAF criterion	BSC perspective	Measurement issue	Performance indicator	Source of indicator
Customer outcomes	Customer	User satisfaction outcomes	Library visits per capita	Adapt. ISO 11620 B.2.1.3
			Loans per capita	Adapt. ISO 11620 B.2.4.2
			Overall user satisfaction (between 0–5)	ISO 11620 B.1.1.1
Staff outcomes		Staff satisfaction outcomes	Levels of absenteeism or sickness	CAF criterion 7.2
			Overall staff satisfaction (between 0–5)	CAF criterion 7.2
Impact on society		Scientific research	Rate of professors and researchers publication	CAF criterion 8.1
			Rate of the library staff participation in internal discussion groups. international professional meetings with senior librarians, etc.	CAF criterion 8.1
		Librarianship and information science research	The degree of compliance with environmental principles (for ex. energy saving, reduction of waste and packaging. use of recycled material)	CAF criterion 8.2
			Integration of the principles of the sustainable development in the decision making process	
Performance outcomes	Financial	Costs	Cost per user (student or professor)	Adapt. ISO 11620 B.2.1.2
			Cost per library visit	Adapt. ISO 11620 B.2.1.3

Table 2. Criteria and performance indicators to assess academic library results.

Score	Enablers	Results
0	No evidence or only anecdotal evidence of an approach.	No results are measured.
1	An approach is planned P (plan).	Key results are measured and show negative or stable trends.
2	An approach is planned and implemented D (do).	Results show modest progress.
3	An approach is planned implemented and reviewed C (check).	Results show substantial progress.
4	An approach is planned, implemented and reviewed on the basis of benchmarking data and adjusted accordingly A (act).	Excellent results are achieved and positive comparisons to own targets are made.
5	An approach is planned, implemented, reviewed on the basis of benchmarking data adjusted and fully integrated into the organization.	Excellent results are achieved, positive comparisons to own targets are made and positive benchmarks against relevant organizations are made.

Table 3. Assessment scale of the model CAF for enablers and for results (EIPA, 2006).

through the various questionnaires and classified on a scale of 0 to 5 as defined in Table 3 (European Institute of Public Administration 2006).

To measure user satisfaction we conducted surveys. The data used to assess the degree of satisfaction with the various services and resources were obtained using Likert scales (a scale to measure opinions, attitudes or satisfaction in a non-neutral way, that is, it presents negative, neutral and positive poles (Hill, 2002)), and each category was scored from 1 to 5, complying with the recommendations of International Standard ISO 11620:1998.

Since there exists a very large number of potential users among the participating libraries, the questionnaires were applied to a sample of the population. In order for us to be able to make inferences about the population, we have to use probabilistic sampling methods, such as simple random sampling or stratified random sampling. In our case we used stratified random sampling in each institution participating in the study. In each institution we tried to obtain a sample large enough to guarantee accurate estimates.

**Data Analysis**

The first step of the analysis is to summarize the data collected. In the case of user satisfaction this involves estimating the mean for each item

in the questionnaire. We decided to estimate confidence intervals for the population mean of each institution. This is preferable to just presenting a point estimate, since it gives us an indication of how accurate our prediction is. The accuracy depends on the sample size (the bigger the sample the more accurate will be the estimate) and on the variability in the population for the variable under analysis (the smaller the population variability the higher will be the accuracy). The confidence interval for the population mean,  $\mu$ , is given by:

$$\left[ \bar{x} - z_{\alpha/2} \left( \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}} \right), \bar{x} + z_{\alpha/2} \left( \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}} \right) \right]$$

where  $\bar{x}$  is the sample mean,  $s$  is the sample standard deviation (which is the estimator of the population variability),  $n$  is the sample size and  $z_{\alpha/2}$  is the critical value from the normal distribution for a confidence level of  $(1-\alpha) \times 100\%$ . The confidence level indicates the degree of confidence that the estimated interval contains the true value of the population mean. In our case we worked with a 95 percent confidence level. The confidence intervals can be estimated using any statistical software, such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) or even Excel (using the Data Analysis Tool).

The next step involved the comparison between institutions of the values obtained for each performance indicator. For the performance indicators



which are based on sample data we intend to pursue, in a future study, additional analysis will be needed in the future, so as to test if the observed differences are statistically significant. In fact, an institution might present a better average mean just due to sampling error (with a different sample the result might have been different). We intend in future to perform t-test to compare each institution with the best performing institution in each item. Let  $m_x$  and  $m_y$  be the population means of institutions  $x$  and  $y$ , respectively. We will test the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the two institutions,  $\mu_x - \mu_y = 0$ , against the one-sided alternative that  $\mu_x - \mu_y > 0$ , (where  $x$  is the institution though to be the best performing one). If the null hypothesis is rejected, one can conclude that there is evidence that institution  $x$  performs better than institution  $y$ . The t-statistic is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\bar{x} - \bar{y}}{\sqrt{\frac{s_x^2}{n_x} + \frac{s_y^2}{n_y}}}$$

Assuming large samples one can use the normal distribution (many statistics books assume that  $n_x$  and  $n_y$  larger than 30 is enough for the normal to be used). The null hypothesis is rejected if the value of the statistic is larger than  $z_\alpha$ , where  $z_\alpha$  is the critical value of the normal distribution for the level of significance of  $\alpha$  (usually 1 percent, 5 percent or 10 percent).

**Identification of Best Practices**

The previous step allows us to identify the institution which performs best in terms each of critical success factor. Once this is done, one needs to identify the reasons for the better performance. Which practices explain that a given institution performs better? If all the process is done correctly, at the end of the process we will have identified the best practices and actions to be taken so that the other institutions can adopt them.

**Description of the Sample**

The assessment was based on three types of questionnaire: one for librarians, one for collaborators and one for library users (the questionnaires are presented in Annexes A, B and C). All librarians and collaborators answered their questionnaires. The library users questionnaire was administered to a sample of the population of library users.

Table 4 presents data on the potential library users (students, teachers and personnel in each of the institutions). It should be noted that the institutions vary quite a lot in size. The smallest is the Higher School of Nursing of Porto (776 people) and the largest is the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Porto (4174 people). In the last line of Table 4 we present the percentage of each institution in the total population under analysis (10,861 people).

We used a stratified sampling procedure. We divided the population into three groups: teaching staff, students and non-teaching staff of the institutions. Then in each group we selected randomly the elements of the sample. The questionnaires were sent by e-mail to all elements of the sample. In addition, to increase the response rate, the elements of the sample were also contacted in the library installations, in the classrooms and in the corridors of the institutions. The percentage sample we aimed for was 25 percent.

Table 5 presents the number of respondents in each institution and their percentage of the total of 1,285 respondents. Due to differences in the willingness to answer the questionnaires we did not get a proportional stratified sample (for example, University of Azores represents only 9 percent of the respondents). The two first institutions represent a smaller proportion of the respondents than their proportion in the total population and the reverse holds for the last three institutions. Although this may look as a serious drawback of our study, it should be noticed that for comparison purposes it is not necessary to have a proportional sample. For example, if one wants to do t-tests to compare means between two different institutions, what is important is that, for each institution, the sample is large enough to provide us with accurate estimators for the population of that institution. In that respect the most problematic sample of respondents is the one from the University of the Azores, which is the smallest both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the population (representing only 4 percent of the population of the institution). This implies that our estimates for University of Azores will be less accurate. For the remaining institutions the respondents sample sizes are much higher and are considered excellent representations of the universes under investigation.

	UAzores Ponta Delgada	FCUPorto Mathematics	ICBAS UPorto	ESEnfPorto SJ	ULusíada Famalicão	Totals
Universe	Students	3728	1553	689	1313	9283
	Teachers	283	273	54	69	949
	Personnel	163	117	33	40	629
Total	2546	4174	1943	776	1422	10861
Percentage	24	38	18	7	13	100

Table 4. Description of the universe of library users.

	UAzores Ponta Delgada	FCUPorto Mathematics	ICBAS UPorto	ESEnfPorto SJ	ULusíada Famalicão	Totals
Respondents	Students	388	259	117	291	1130
	Teachers	31	28	8	12	106
	Personnel	19	10	5	5	49
Total	112	438	297	130	308	1285
Percentage	9	34	23	10	24	100
Respondents as % of Institution Universe	4	10	15	17	22	

Table 5. Description of library users respondents.

## Analysis of the Results

In this section we present the preliminary results of our study. We start by analyzing the results of the user surveys. These results are particularly important for measuring the performance of library services, since the users are the ultimate judges of whether the quality of the services is good or not. Next we analyze the results obtained for the 20 performance indicators, which are based on the user surveys and the questionnaires and interviews with the librarians and other staff of each library.

### Results of the User Surveys

The user satisfaction surveys involved 1,285 questionnaires and were conducted from 15 October to 15 November 2006. Table 6 and Table 7 summarize the results of these surveys. Table 6 shows the percentage use of the library and the users' satisfaction with the various library services; Table 7 presents the percentage use of electronic resources.

The first item in Table 6 indicates the percentages of respondents who said they had used the library or documentation centre in the previous 12 months. The figures show that this percentage varied from 74 percent to 100 percent, depending on the institution and type of user. The data reveal the extent to which the services have been used.

The next item, *Analysis of services/resources*, presents the average of the user satisfaction degree with various services/resources of the library. As mentioned before these questions used a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (5 – very good, 4 – good, 3 – satisfactory, 2 – mediocre and 1 – bad). The average level of satisfaction with specific library services or resources ranged from 2.7 to 4.3.

The General Library of the University of the Azores, the Mathematics Libraries of the FCUP and the Documentation Centre of the Higher School of Nursing of Porto have particularly good results in relation to the comfort of their installations. The ICBAS library obtained a lower score (3.2), which can be explained by the fact that the library building is relatively old (beginning of the 20th century) with bad illumination (this was indicated by the respondents).

With respect to the updating of the documentation, the Mathematics Libraries of the FCUP are at

Assessment	UAzores		FCUPorto	ICBAS	ESEnPorto	Ulusfada
	Students	Teachers	Personnel			
Use in last year (%)	89	96	80	88	86	82
			100	89	88	100
				90	100	100
<b>Arithmetic Average</b>						
<b>Analysis services/resources</b>						
Comfort of installations	4.3			3.2	3.9	3.6
Updated documentation	3.4			3.4	3.6	3.2
Computer equipment	3.0			2.7	2.7	2.9
Document loans	3.7			3.5	3.8	3.3
Photocopying/Printing services	3.2			3.3	3.3	3.1
Overall satisfaction with library (Average)	3.76		3.76	3.44	3.83	3.36

Table 6: Results of user surveys (user satisfaction and percentage of library use).

the forefront, whilst the lending services are considered good (we consider a score above 3.5 'good') in all of the libraries in this project, with the exception of the services of the Lusíada University of Famalicão. The most likely cause for this result is the very short loan period (3 days) in this institution. Thus, an extension of the loan period is suggested to meet with user expectations.

The lowest average figures refer to the degree of satisfaction with the information technology equipment available. This is due to the fact that in recent years there has not been a significant growth in the number of wired network terminals (in the open question of the questionnaire many respondents complained about the small number of terminals). The option was to make wireless networks widely available on the campuses of the academic institutions, hoping that students would acquire laptop computers in order to access the electronic services/resources. The comments of the respondents show that users desire more terminals for their work.

Regarding the photocopying/printing services the level of users satisfaction is very similar across institutions (varies between 3.1 and 3.4).

The last item in Table 6, *Overall Degree of Satisfaction with the Library*, assesses the set of services/resources that the library or documentation centre provides. The average of the overall satisfaction is relatively good in all the institutions, varying between 3.36 in Lusíada University and 3.83 in Documentation Centre of the Higher School of Nursing of Porto – S. João. The last institution benefits from spacious, comfortable installations, up-to-date documentation and the loan service functions smoothly in the opinion of its users.

Table 7 shows information about the rate of use of the open access catalogue and of various electronic resources, as well as the places where these resources were used.

It should be noted that the percentage of users who utilize open access catalogues, bibliographic data bases and full text journals is already noticeable, although it varies quite a lot among the various institutions and types of users. On the contrary, the percentage use of e-books is very small.

With respect to the open access catalogue there is a striking difference between the Azores University

and the remaining institutions (the teachers of the Faculty of Sciences of Porto University are also frequent users of the catalogue). This might be explained by the location of the computer terminals in the library, very close to the library entrance.

Regarding the electronic resources the teachers have the highest percentage use in all institutions except in the Documentation Centre of the Higher School of Nursing of Porto. In addition, the teachers access these resources in the institution but not in the Library. It is also interesting to notice that, in general, the students seem to be lagging behind in the use of these resources. This suggests the need for marketing strategies especially directed to students. The objective is to inform and train the user on the utilization of these resources, so as to increase their autonomy and to alleviate the reference services.

### Results for the Performance Indicators

Let us now analyze the results for the 20 performance indicators which were chosen to assess performance. Table 8 shows the quantitative and qualitative results obtained for the various performance indicators.

The figures in Table 8 come from different sources. The scores, which are in the shaded cells, were assigned as a result of the questionnaires and interviews with the librarians, using the CAF scoring criteria, on a scale of 0 to 5, as described in Table 3. The user satisfaction indicator is the overall satisfaction score obtained in the user survey (from Table 6). The remaining figures in white cells refer to hard data collected by the librarians.

### Leadership

All the academic libraries involved in this project have a clear definition of their mission and vision. In addition, they develop management policies which take the dialogue with collaborators into consideration and promote activities to improve the library's performance, with the exception of the General Library of the University of the Azores. Thus the various institutions show a good performance regarding the leadership criterion, excepting the General Library of the University of the Azores. This institution does not promote activities to improve the library's performance and the management system has not been based on the knowledge of the stakeholders.

## Best Practice in Portuguese Higher Education Libraries

Assessment		UAzores	FCUPorto	ICBAS	ESEnfPorto	ULusíada
<b>Use of on-line services/ resources</b>		<b>Percentage</b>				
Catalogue	Students	81	48	54	47	46
	Teachers	89	90	36	25	58
	Personnel	75	75	70	100	25
<i>Satisfaction with catalogue</i>		Modal response and respective frequency				
		45-Good	29- Good	34-Good	30-Enough	33-Enough
<b>Electronic resources</b>		<b>Percentage</b>				
	Students	63	55	57	52	45
	Teachers	89	90	82	50	50
	Personnel	63	75	50	100	25
Bibliographic data-bases	Students	68	49	38	43	37
	Teachers	70	87	64	63	50
	Personnel	63	75	40	0	0
e-books	Students	0	10	10	4	13
	Teachers	4	19	18	13	8
	Personnel	0	50	0	0	0
Full text journals	Students	15	15	35	28	10
	Teachers	44	74	61	50	25
	Personnel	25	25	30	0	0
Place of use		<b>Percentage</b>				
<b>Library</b>	Students	52	32	39	24	22
	Teachers	15	23	7	13	17
	Personnel	25	25	20	100	25
Institution	Students	11	16	19	21	15
	Teachers	70	87	71	38	33
	Personnel	38	50	40	0	0
Remote	Students	17	16	17	18	20
	Teachers	30	23	7	13	17
	Personnel	38	50	0	0	25

Table 7. Results of the percentage use of various electronic resources.

Performance indicator	Assessment				
	UAzores Ponta Delgada	FCUPorto Mathematics	ICBAS UPorto	ESEnfPorto SJ	ULusíada Famalicão
<b>Leadership</b>					
The definition and divulgation of the library's concepts of mission and vision	4	4	4	4	4
The development of the library management system based on the knowledge of the stakeholders	3	4	4	4	4
The promotion of learning and activities to improve the library's performance	2	5	5	5	5
<b>Planning and Strategy</b>					
The conduct of surveys of library users	3	4	3	4	3
Updating of the strategic plan	3	4	4	4	4
The collection of statistical data on performance for the use of benchmarking techniques	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Management of Resources and Partnerships</b>					
Number of monographs /Number of Journals (print version)	11810 / 554	23474 / 380	19779 / 1114	4832 / 121	9240 / 389
Number of seating places for reading in the library	239	166	46	80	120
Partnerships to minimize costs	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Management of Internal Processes</b>					
Average time to retrieve a free access document	-	1' 21"	1' 15"	-	1' 10"
Percentage use electronic resources (weighted average)	66%	58%	60%	54%	45%

Average time to provide a document that does not exist in the library	4 weeks	3 weeks	3 weeks	3 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks
<b>The Clients</b>						
Number of library visits per capita(from 15th Oct. to 15th Nov. 2006)	-	0.9	6.4	11.3	4.1	
Loans per capita	-	1.4	-	10.7	4.9	
User satisfaction – Sample Arithmetic Average	3.76	3.76	3.44	3.83	3.36	
Confidence interval for the population mean ( 95% confidence level)	[3.60; 3.90]	[3.69;3.83]	[3.36;3.52]	[3.73;3.93]	[3.28;3.44]	
<b>The Staff</b>						
Collaborator satisfaction (Arithmetic Average)	-	3	3	3	3	
Number of the library staff	13	5	4	5	4	
<b>The Impact on Society</b>						
Amount of academic publications per capita (2005)	-	4	3	2	3	
Amount of academic publications and papers by the library staff (2005)	-	4	2	3	2	
Amount of training sessions for library users	3	3	2	3	3	
The adoption of sustained development principles Arithmetic Average (Model CAF Scale)	3 3.2	4 3.9	3 3.4	4 3.7	4 3.6	

Table 8: Results for the 20 performance indicators.

Note: the symbol – means that we were not able to get data for that performance indicator.

### *Planning and Strategy*

In terms of planning and strategy the various libraries show a very similar performance. They routinely collect statistical data for benchmarking purposes and perform user surveys. In addition they update their strategic plans. We believe this result is due in large part to the ongoing partnership which has encouraged these types of procedures.

### *Management of Resources and Partnerships*

In terms of resources there exists a wide variation across the participating institutions. The Documentation Centre of the Higher School of Nursing of Porto has the smallest collections of monographs and print journals, whereas the Mathematics Libraries of the FCUP have the largest monographs collection and the Abel Salazar Institute of Biomedical Sciences of the University of Porto has the highest number of print journals. It should be noted that in recent years, with the appearance of online editions, many institutions have gradually suspended the acquisition of the print editions of journals. This explains why some libraries (such as the Mathematics Libraries of the FCUP) have relatively small print journals collections but a relatively good performance in terms of academic publications per capita.

### *Management of Internal Processes*

Regarding the efficiency of the internal processes the institutions are quite similar in terms of the average time to provide a document that does not exist in the library (which varies between 3 and 4 weeks) and the average time to retrieve a free access document.

In terms of the overall use of electronic resources the Azores University is at the forefront. In fact, if we compute a weighted average of the percentage use of electronic resources taking into account the weight of each group in the institution population, the percentage use in Azores University is 66 percent whereas Lusíada University is the one with the lowest use (45 percent).

### *The Clients*

With respect to the number of library visits and loans per capita there exist wide differences across institutions. The Documentation Centre of the Higher School of Nursing of Porto has, by

far, the best performance in these two indicators. From the interviews with the librarians and also from site visits, we believe this is due to the more practical nature of the course taught in this school, which requires students to do many group projects. The students use the Documentation Centre both as a place of group meetings and to do bibliographic searches.

Table 8 shows the point estimate of the average user satisfaction in each institution. In addition, it also shows the confidence interval for that parameter, with a confidence level of 95 percent. One can infer that, with a confidence level of 95 percent, the average satisfaction of the populations of each institution fall within the intervals observed in Table 8. As expected our estimative is less accurate for the University of Azores, due to the smaller sample size. As described in the previous subsection the overall user satisfaction is relatively good in all the institutions. The best performing partner is the Documentation Centre of the Higher School of Nursing of Porto.

The quality of the services provided by a library or documentation centre does not depend on the size of the document collection but rather the degree to which the user's expectations are satisfied. This fact is well illustrated in our results. The Documentation Centre of the Higher School of Nursing of Porto – S. João has the highest User Satisfaction, 3.83 with a 95 percent confidence interval of [3.73;3.93] even though its collection is the smallest.

### *The Staff*

With respect to the staff satisfaction level (obtained through the staff questionnaire) all institutions have the same value (3). From the open questions comments we can conclude that the satisfactory level of satisfaction is more related to factors such as the lack of job security and the level of salaries than the specific work environment.

### *The Impact on Society*

Regarding the impact on society criterion, the Mathematics Libraries stand out as a consequence of the level of scientific production (amount of scientific publications *per capita* 2005 both for academic and library staff)

All the institutions have realized formal training sessions for library users, except the ICBAS



Library (however users are helped whenever they need it). As a result of our benchmarking exercise, the librarians in this institution are already planning to do formal training sessions.

Regarding the adoption of sustainable development principles, it should be noted that libraries and documentation services have adopted procedures in that direction, although there is still room for improvement in some institutions. The following good practices were identified during this project: the provision of separate containers for the disposal of materials such as paper, cardboard, plastics and batteries; the use of recycled toners and ink cartridges in copying for library users, so that support material can be returned and reused; and, the use of fluorescent light bulbs.

The Arithmetic Averages in the last row of Table 8 represent the average of the scores of the various CAF criteria (the shaded cells).

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### Conclusions

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Academic documentation and information services should strive incessantly to revitalize themselves for the benefit of internal users and the academic community, in harmony with the institution they have to serve. It is essential to take on a creative, dynamic, renovating position to better provide for the needs of a constantly changing society.

In this article we presented a methodology that can be used to identify best practices in order to improve the quality of services in higher education libraries. Our methodology is based on the idea of benchmarking and it requires the cooperation of all benchmarking partners. Through the systematic measurement of several performance indicators and their comparison between participating institutions one can identify the best performing institution in the various performance dimensions. Identifying the reasons why an institution performs better than others will allow the remaining institutions to adopt such best practices so as to improve the quality of their services.

In our ongoing benchmarking process we already obtained some interesting results. The first is related to the fact that the best performing institutions in terms of user satisfaction are not the ones with the largest collections. Users seem

to value the existence of spacious and comfortable installations, up-to-date information and smooth loan services. Our results also show that the use of electronic resources is still low among students, which suggests the need of marketing strategies directed to students. The participating institutions show a good performance in terms of leadership, planning and strategy, which is partly due to the ongoing partnership which has encouraged these type of procedures.

Our benchmarking team involves libraries with very different characteristics and dealing with different areas of knowledge. However, for some performance indicators (such as academic publications and library visits per capita) it would be preferable to compare institutions in the same area of knowledge (Sciences, Medicine, Social Sciences, Human Sciences, Arts). In spite of this, we believe that our exercise has been worthwhile.

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### ANNEX A – User Survey

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#### Library or Documentation Center

1. Indicate your position in the Institution.  
Student  Teacher  Staff  Other
  2. Have you used the Library or Documentation Center during the previous 12 months ?  
Yes  No
  3. The Library or Documentation Center offers several services. Indicate your satisfaction degree, in a scale from Bad to Very Good:
    - 3.1. Comfort of the installations  
Bad  Mediocre  Satisfactory  Good  Very Good
    - 3.2. Updated Documentation  
Bad  Mediocre  Satisfactory  Good  Very Good
    - 3.3. Available computer equipment  
Bad  Mediocre  Satisfactory  Good  Very Good
    - 3.4. Loan Services  
Bad  Mediocre  Satisfactory  Good  Very Good
    - 3.5. Photocopying/Printing Services  
Bad  Mediocre  Satisfactory  Good  Very Good
  4. The Library or Documentation Center has an Open Access Catalogue, which contains the description of the information that one can find in this service. Do you use this catalogue to search the documents you are looking for?  
Yes  No 
    - 4.1 Indicate the degree of satisfaction relatively to the Open Access Catalogue.  
Bad  Mediocre  Satisfactory  Good  Very Good
  5. Do you use the electronic resources such as Web of Knowledge, SCOPUS, B-on (Library of Knowledge Online Portuguese Consortium)), e-books, e-journals available in the Institution net?  
Yes  No 
    - 5.1. If you answered Yes, in what location?  
In the Library  Other places in the Institution  Other places
    - 5.2. What type of information resources do you use?  
Bibliographic Data Bases (such as Web of Knowledge, SCOPUS and B-on (Library of Knowledge Online Portuguese Consortium)  e-books  Full text journals
  6. In a scale from Bad to Very Good give an overall grade to the Library or Documentation Center services.  
Bad  Mediocre  Satisfactory  Good  Very Good
  7. Suggestions. Indicate any suggestion you may have to improve the quality of the existing services. If you have suggestion regarding other services that the Library or Documentation Center could offer to improve its performance, indicate them too.
- 
- 

Thank you!

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ANNEX B – Librarians’ Questionnaire

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**Library or Documentation Center**

1 – The size of the population under study is represented by the potential users of the Library or Documentation Center.

Total number of students (undergraduate, master and PhD students)

Number of Professors and Teaching Assistants

Number of Researchers

Number of Non-Teaching Staff

Number of potential users (equal to a)+b)+c)+d))?

2 – Based on the *CAF-Balanced Scorecard* mixed model the following criteria will be evaluated: leadership; planning and strategy; management of resources and partnerships; management of internal processes; the client; the staff; and, the impact on society. These criteria are associated with performance indicators defined by ISO11620 and ISO2789.

2.1 – Leadership

Do you define and divulge the concepts of mission and vision of the Library or Documentation Center?

Yes  No

b) If Yes, in what form?

In a brochure of the Library.

In the Internet page of the Library.

Other. Which one?

If No, why?

Do you have a management system of the Library based on the knowledge of the users needs and the degree of satisfaction of the users and the staff of the library? Yes  No

If Yes, in which way?

Creation of new services following the users suggestions.

Promoting the dialogue with the staff so as to obtain suggestions to improve the service

processes and quality.

Other. Which one?

If No, why?

Do you promote learning activities to improve the performance of the Library services?

Yes  No

If Yes, how?

Participate in Training Programs

Incentive the other staff to participate in Training Programs

Other. Which one?

If No, why?

2.2 – Planning and Strategy

Do you perform surveys to the users of the Library or Documentation Center?

Yes  No

Do you do Activity Reports based on the needs of the users and the staff?

Yes  No

If No, why?

Do you collect data regarding performance to be used for the purpose of *benchmarking* ?

Yes  No

### 2.3- Management of Resources and Partnerships

#### a) Dimension of the collection

Number of monographs?

Number of journals (print version)?

Number of e-books?

Number of bibliographic data bases?

Number of electronic subscriptions?

#### b) The Library has a computerized open access catalogue? Yes No

#### c) Number of seating places in the Library

Do you establish partnerships so as to maximize benefits and minimize costs?

Yes  No

If Yes, which ones?

Participation in closed consortiums, for example B-on (Library of Knowledge Online Portuguese Consortium).

Participation in open consortiums, Which?

Other. Which?

### 2.4 – Management of Internal Processes

What is the average time to provide a document that does not exist in the Library or Documentation Center (acquisition of monographs or scientific articles)?

3 weeks

1 month

2 months

Other. Which?

What is the average time to retrieve a free access document (for a sample of 30 tests)

What is the percentage use of the bibliographic electronic resources available in the Library or Documentation Center (based on question 5 of the user questionnaire)

### 2.5 – Client

Number of visits *per capita* in the period from October 15 to November 15.

Number of loans *per capita during 2005*.

Indicate the average of the overall degree of satisfaction obtained in the users survey.

Number of the library staff

Indicate the average of the staff satisfaction degree, obtained in the staff questionnaire.

### 2.6 – Impact on Society

Number of scientific articles published by the users of the Library or Documentation Center during 2005?

Number of articles or communications of the Library or Documentation Center staff during 2005?

Number of Training Programs directed to the users during the academic year 2005/2006?

In your activities do you follow sustained development principles?

Yes  No

If Yes, which ones?

Provision of separate containers for material disposal

Utilization of recycled paper

Utilization of toners and ink cartridges which can be recycled

Utilization of fluorescent light bulbs.

Others. Which?

Thank you!

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**ANNEX C - Other Staff Questionnaire**

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**Library or Documentation Center**

- 1 - In a scale from Bad to Very Good classify the degree of satisfaction relatively to the functions/ activities that you perform in the Library or Documentation Center.  
Bad  Mediocre  Satisfactory  Good  Very Good
- 2 - Would you like to participate in a Training Program?  
Yes  No   
If Yes, which one?
- 3 - Do you have any suggestion to improve the quality of the services provided to the users?  
Yes  No   
If Yes, which one?
- 4 - Suggestions. Indicate any suggestion you may have to improve the quality of the existing services.

Thank you!

# The Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment: embedding information literacy into student learning through an online environment

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About the Authors: page 70

## Abstract

The Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment is an e-learning tool that fosters the development of student skill and knowledge in online searching. It was developed with the support of Faculty of Information Technology and the Teaching and Learning Support Services at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). In 2007 ROSS is being developed for use within the first year curriculum of other faculties within QUT. This paper will provide a demonstration of the ROSS environment and how it was embedded within the curriculum of two contrasting disciplines: IT and Science. Many online information literacy tools are static, modular, linear and heavily text based, and have failed to incorporate an interactive approach to the learning process. This paper will demonstrate that ROSS pushes the boundary of online information literacy programs by guiding learners to know, reflect, and practice information literacy concepts through the use of case studies or problem based learning.

**Keywords:** Information literacy; e-learning; online searching; university students; Australia

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## Introduction

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In recent years information literacy has become a topic of considerable discussion within higher education. The current literature suggests that information literacy is an important skill for undergraduate students. For example, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2000) state in their Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education that “developing lifelong learners is central to the mission of higher education institutions” (para 10), and that by ensuring “individuals have the intellectual abilities of reasoning and critical thinking, and by helping them construct a framework for learning how to learn, colleges and universities provide the foundation for continued growth throughout their careers, as well as in their roles as informed citizens and members of communities” (para. 10). According to the ACRL Standards, IL is a “key component of, and contributor to, lifelong learning” (para. 10). The response of the higher education sector to the need for development of information literacy skills in students is perhaps best reflected in the view of Johnston and Webber (2003) who point out that information literacy is a social response to the need for effective use of the huge amount of information accessible in today’s information society. As interest in information literacy continues to build, the scholarly discussion has begun to consider how information literacy can be developed using the latest technology to adapt to the diverse student learning styles.

This paper will report on an ongoing project to build an e-learning environment that can be used by to help support students – in any

discipline – develop their skill and knowledge in online searching. The paper will discuss the challenges in developing a generic tool that can be used within the curriculum of different disciplines where those disciplines have very different student cohorts. The paper will reflect upon what the two contrasting student cohorts liked and disliked and what they found inspiring, boring or simply confusing with the online environment. The paper is divided into two parts. Part one will provide a brief discussion on information literacy within higher education and the growing interest in e-learning as a vehicle for information literacy development. The approach to information literacy at QUT is highlighted. Part two will provide a brief overview of ROSS, including the theoretical framework that informed its development. This part will also discuss two case studies that illustrate how ROSS can be used in two contrasting learning contexts.

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### Information Literacy and Higher Education: A Brief Overview

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#### A Definition

Recent research indicates a diverse range of understandings of information literacy in higher education, including information literacy as a set of information seeking behaviours; as a skill involving technical expertise and as a discipline in itself. Information literacy is also recognized as being an important generic skill or student attribute (S.L. Edwards, Bruce and McAllister 2005). Alternatively, the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) (2001a) considers information literacy in terms of “an intellectual framework for recognising the need for, understanding, finding, evaluating, and using information”, and Lupton (2004) found that information literacy may be understood as a “learning approach”. Bruce (1997) noted that information literacy includes aspects of computer literacy, learning to learn, information skills, IT literacy, and library skills. It is important to note, that Bruce’s broader meaning of information literacy incorporates an understanding that some of these aspects overlap, that information literacy may in fact be a series of “seven faces” that may be used as a repertoire of the ways of experiencing information literacy. Bruce’s study highlighted aspects of information literacy which are especially pertinent for the university student. For the purposes of the present paper, we adhere to the view that information literacy is the set of

skills and attitudes which enables the individual to “recognize when information is needed and have the capacity to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (American Library Association, 1989).

#### Models of Information Literacy

As Lupton (2004) notes, information literacy is currently an important curricular focus in all educational sectors. She identifies three classes of models developed to conceptualize information literacy in educational terms: standards based, process based, and relational models. The standards based models include the CAUL standards (CAUL 2001b) which underpin information literacy at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). The Big Six Process Model (Eisenberg and Berkowitz, 1988) and the Information Search Process (Kuhlthau, 1993) both reflect the staged understanding of information use. The process models are most frequently used in primary and secondary education and stress information literacy as a series of steps. The relational model of information literacy proposed by Bruce (1997), focuses on the unique experience of the individual in the information transaction and has informed many recent studies in information literacy in the higher education sector.

#### Information Literacy and E-learning

Information literacy learning opportunities in higher education settings are commonly delivered by librarians or through collaborative programs between librarians and faculty in both face-to-face situations and via online tutorials. There is an apparent emphasis on information literacy teaching for undergraduates, particularly first-year students (Abbott and Peach, 2000; de Bruyn and Prior, 2001) and effort is now centred on embedding these information literacy sessions within specific disciplines.

Kasowitz-Scheer and Pasqualoni (2002) note that information literacy is more frequently being offered online, and that this is in response to an increased demand for rapid sharing of information and access to online resources. Of interest then, is the finding by Gutierrez and Wang (2001) that undergraduates entering university from school prefer the electronic medium for library instruction. In terms of the current research, the study by Gutierrez and Wang is interesting because they took into account the findings of



Chamlongsupalak (1997, as quoted in Gutierrez and Wang 2001) that students believe they learn best when there is a human interface. Gutierrez and Wang found that online learning in library literacy can be enhanced by having it embedded within a lecture structure so students have human intervention. Their study also supported the notion that research skills require the opportunity for repeated practice, which is a feature encouraged and supported within the ROSS Environment.

In response to the increase in the online or e-learning delivery of higher education courses, many information literacy modules/tutorials/packages have been developed for this sector. Packages such as QUT – Pilot (Queensland University of Technology Library, 2003) or Kent State University’s SAILS (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills) (2002) are just a couple of the packages currently in use. Many of these packages are designed and made available through the library, often in collaboration with faculty or teaching and learning support staff and technical support staff. Commonly, these packages possess a modular, linear and heavily text-based structure. The level of interaction encouraged through use of Flash (used in the Texas University TILT program (The University of Texas System Digital Library, 2004) and similar technologies is at best only moderately interactive.

Overall, these information literacy programmes may actually have even further potential if we view them as a form of learning object. Learning objects are considered by some people to be mere “granules of knowledge”, able to be shared throughout an organization. However Clark (1998: 60) points out that in educational contexts, learning objects may be viewed as instructional. These objects can be stored, revised, and even mixed and matched to create new learning experiences for our students (Veronikas and Shaughnessy, 2004); this way of viewing learning objects is interesting when information literacy packages that are used throughout an educational institution are considered.

### Information Literacy at QUT

The learning and teaching of information literacy at QUT is underpinned by the Australia and New Zealand Information Literacy Standards (CAUL, 2001b). Information literacy is recognized as a generic skills requirement of QUT graduates. Each faculty has been given the responsibility of

identifying and promoting generic capabilities and of encouraging students to reflect on their development of generic skills at QUT (Queensland University of Technology, 2004a). Embedding of information literacy skills across all programs/courses is a current challenge of information literacy learning and teaching at QUT. This is occurring within a learning and teaching environment also demanding an increasingly flexible, inclusive and student-centred approach (Queensland University of Technology, 2004b).

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## The Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment

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### Introducing the ROSS Environment

ROSS was developed as a means of fostering students’ skills and knowledge of online searching and is based on qualitative research into how students learn online information searching (S.L. Edwards, 2006). ROSS was developed with financial support from the School of Information Systems, and with technical support from the university Teaching and Learning Support Services. Students complete a series of eight interrelated modules that requires them to use the online information searching process to meet an information need. Each of the modules is interactive, requiring students to answer questions, make observations, and complete exercises. Each subsequent module builds on the learning in the previous module. On completion of the ROSS modules, the student will have experienced first hand the process of online searching to meet a specific information need. In addition to working on the ROSS scenario the student can apply what they are learning in ROSS to their own assignment via a Reflective Workspace. The students are also provided ample opportunity to critically reflect upon the development of their own online searching skill and knowledge.

### The Theoretical Framework

Teaching and learning research to date has found that the *best way to learn something* (be it a skill or a concept) is to experience what you are learning in qualitatively changed ways (Marton and Booth, 1997; Shulman, 1986). By experiencing a skill or concept in different ways, individuals are able to compare their original (or old) experience of that skill or concept to their new experience of the skill or concept. The individual therefore, is given the

opportunity to discern the variation between the old and the new experiences, and according to Runesson (1999), it is this process of discernment that is a significant attribute of learning.

S.L. Edwards (2006) has applied this view of learning to information searching. Using the phenomenographic method, Edwards identified variation in the experience of information searching in the online environment. Participants in the study were 32 students from six of the eight QUT academic faculties, with a total of 44 interview transcripts. Different cultures, ages and genders were represented. Four categories that captured the variation in the students' different ways of searching and learning to search for information were identified. The categories include:

- Category 1: Information searching is seen as looking for a needle in a haystack
- Category 2: Information searching is seen as finding a way through a maze
- Category 3: Information searching is seen as using the tools as a filter
- Category 4: Information searching is seen as panning for gold.

A detailed summary and discussion on each category and the different meanings assigned to each search experience can be found in S.L. Edwards (2006). In short, Edwards concluded that for students to successfully develop information searching skills the teaching and learning environment needs to be designed to encourage “students ... to see things happening differently to what they have previously experienced in order to discern a difference” (S.L. Edwards, 2004, p. 112). That is, students need to experience the wide variation of online searching experiences so they may compare and contrast these different experiences to their own. Edwards contends that “if we can do this, we will move our students into a deeper understanding of the searching experience, we will provide them the opportunity to discern a variation in what they have previously experienced, and, hopefully, we may encourage learning” (S.L. Edwards, 2004, p. 112). Edwards provides four guiding principles when designing a learning experience that will allow students to experience variation: provide students with opportunities for reflection; improve assessment to make it both authentic and to encourage students to see the variation; use online tools to further enhance the learning experience; and finally, encourage staff development to enable understanding and application of the findings.

The principles outlined by Edwards were used to guide the design and development of the ROSS environment.

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### **Case Study One: The Bachelor of Information Technology**

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The Bachelor of Information Technology (BIT) is the primary course offered within the QUT Faculty of Information Technology. The course is completed in 3 years full time or 6 years part time. All students complete a common first year of eight introductory units. From this base, students choose a major in areas such as data communications, information systems, software engineering, electronic commerce, or emerging technologies. The BIT is aimed at providing students with the theoretical skills and practical knowledge required to become successful practitioners in the ever-changing IT industry. Graduates from the BIT can enter a diverse range of careers, including: systems programmer, computer scientist, systems analyst, information manager, games developer, multimedia specialist, data base manager and web developer.

#### **ITB322 Information Resources**

ITB322 Information Resources is an elective unit offered within the QUT Faculty of Information Technology. The unit introduces students to the value of information both personally and professionally by encouraging them to explore the wide variety of information resources available, independent of the resources format. There is a major focus on the identification of user needs and the development of information searching skills across a wide variety of online resources, including bibliographic databases, the Internet and traditional print materials such as grey literature books, journals and conference proceedings. The unit can be taken by any undergraduate enrolled at QUT, and has an average enrolment of 50 students per semester.

#### **The Teaching and Learning Approach**

Students enrolled in ITB322 are required to attend three hours of classes (lectures and computer based practicals) per week for 13 weeks. During the course of the semester students complete three assessment items. Table 1 provides a brief description of the three items. The assignments provide the students the opportunity to reflect

## The Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment

<b>Assessment 1:</b> Resource Guide	<b>Conducted:</b> In small groups	<b>Weighting:</b> 40%
<b>Summary:</b> Students are required in teams to develop a resource guide on a topic of their own choosing. The resource guide should provide only the best quality resources on the topic and should be able to guide anyone interested in the topic (i.e. a business in that area) to find answers to any questions they may have.		
<b>Assessment 2:</b> Information Consultant's Report	<b>Conducted:</b> Individually	<b>Weighting:</b> 40%
<b>Summary:</b> Students are asked to pretend they have recently been appointed as an Information Consultant for a large information service. They have been approached by their first client and are required to meet their specific information need (i.e. they are to select from 3 possible scenarios provided to them by the unit coordinator). To meet this need students are required to design and conduct a sophisticated search of online resources (i.e. bibliographic databases or Internet search tools) that will produce high quality results. Students are asked to recommend only the top 20–25 results.		
<b>Assessment 3:</b> Reflective Learning Journal	<b>Conducted:</b> Individually	<b>Weighting:</b> 20%
<b>Summary:</b> Each student is required to write and submit six journal entries over the course of the semester. Entries are submitted fortnightly. Students are asked to write their critical and reflective thoughts on what they are doing, seeing, reading, hearing and learning.		

Table 1. ITB322 assessment items.

upon, develop and practice their information searching skills. The assignments are designed to provide authentic learning experiences based upon 'real life' practices of industry professionals.

### Using ROSS in ITB322

The ROSS environment was used to directly support the third assignment – the Information Consultant's Report. A link to ROSS is provided from the unit's blackboard site (see Figure 1). ROSS was incorporated into the learning environment during Weeks 7 through to 13. Each week during this period students attended a three-hour computer laboratory based class.

ROSS requires the students to take on the role of an information consultant who has been approached by a client with a specific information need. Figure 2 shows the role play synopsis of the client and the information need.

The student is required to locate information to meet the client's information need by selecting and searching online resources (i.e. Internet search tools or bibliographic databases). The Reflective Online Searching Model guides the student through this process and consequently forms the

basis for the ROSS environment. Students are introduced to the overall structure and purpose of the environment in the *Introduction to the ROSS Environment* page, which is presented in Figure 3.

ROSS consists of eight modules. The modules are inter-related, with subsequent modules building upon the former. A brief summary of the eight modules can be found in Figure 4. A short video introduces the students to each module, explaining the purpose of the module and the activities to be completed. Although the students complete the modules in class time, they are also encouraged to use the ROSS environment as a self-paced learning tool that they can access at any time during the course of the unit.

Each module is interactive, requiring the students to answer questions, make observations and complete exercises. For example, in Module 2, students are introduced to the steps involved in planning and preparing the online search. Students are invited to view a short video introducing the Module and its learning objectives. After watching the video, students are asked to complete Activity 1 by selecting the appropriate link on the menu on the left-hand side of the screen. Students are

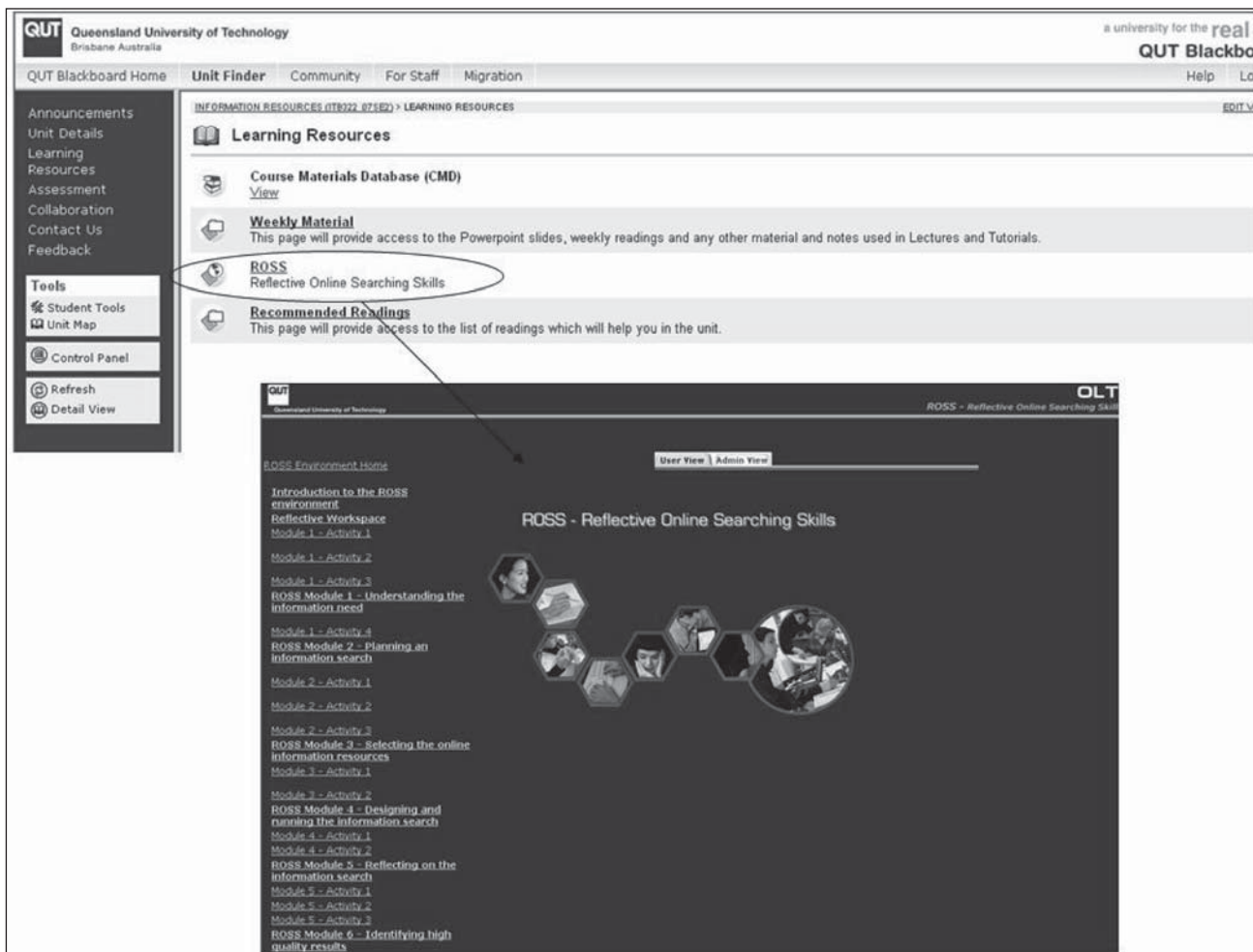


Figure 1. ROSS within the ITB322 Blackboard site.

TO: Jane, Information Broker <info@info.com.au>  
 FROM: Mr E. Jones (Secretary to Dr Jonas Faultless) <e.jones@promhospital.com.au>  
 SUBJECT: Request for Information

Dr Jonas Faultless is a world class medical scientist working for a prominent Australian hospital. Dr Faultless has just been informed that due to a colleague's severe illness he will have to give a speech at this year's annual national medical convention. The topic of the presentation is the use of nanotechnology in medicine - this unfortunately is not Dr Faultless' area of expertise. The Doctor would like to obtain information on nanotechnology and its application in medicine. The Doctor is also interested in obtaining some data on who is currently using nanotechnology to aid medical practice. As the presentation is for an Australian conference, Dr Faultless is particularly interested in current use of nanotechnology in the Australian medical context. The Doctor is interested in obtaining the views of experts and researchers in the area and any key organizations. Case studies of the use of nanotechnology in medical practice would be helpful.

Figure 2. ROSS Client information need synopsis.

required in Activity 1 to respond to a series of questions which encourage the student to engage with, and reflect upon, the video content. Responses to each of the questions are recorded in the notepads provided. By selecting the Save Button, the students' answers are permanently

recorded for them to return to at a later date. After completing Activity 1 students are invited to commence Activity 2 by selecting the appropriate link on the menu on the left-hand side of the screen. Figure 5 shows an excerpt from Module 2 Activity 1.

**Introduction to the ROSS environment**

ROSS = *Reflective Online Searching Skills*

ROSS is an online tool designed to help you improve your skills in online searching. There are 8 modules that can be completed.

**Module 1: Understanding the information need** - will introduce you to process of obtaining information from a client so that you can successfully understand a clients information need.

**Module 2: Preparing for the information search** - will introduce you to the steps you should follow when preparing to conduct an online search.

**Module 3: Selecting the online information resources** - will introduce you to the process of selecting online information resources relevant to the information need.

**Module 4: Designing and running the information search** - will introduce you to the process of develop search strategies specific to the online resources you have selected.

**Module 5: Reflecting on the information search** - will introduce you to the process of reflecting on your search results and refining and running a revised search.

**Module 6: Identifying high quality results** - will introduce you to the process of selecting high quality results from the many results you will have obtained from your searches.

**Module 7: Creating an alert** - will provide you the opportunity to learn how to keep up to date on the information need by creating and running an alert.

**Module 8: Critical reflection** - will provide you the opportunity to critically reflect upon the new skills you have been developing.

Each module builds upon the previous one. By working though the modules during class time you will develop your searching skills. Feel free however, to explore the ROSS environment in your own time. To access the modules use the menu bar on the left hand side of the screen. The **Information Searching Process Model** (see image) is used in ROSS. In each module you will be given the opportunity to explore the components of this model. At the beginning of each Module the components you will be exploring in the Module will be highlighted.

In using ROSS you will need to read the screen carefully and follow instructions, and at the same time think about the things you are doing. Don't forget, whenever you want to, you can record a few notes in your **Reflective Workspace**. The Workspace is there for you to apply what you are learning in ROSS on any assignment you might have.

Also, your Tutor may have some supplementary materials to be completed each as you work through the ROSS modules.

**To start simply select the Introduction to ROSS media file below this text**, and view it. It will explain the model to you, then tell you a little more about the ROSS, and outline the next steps to follow.

As you progress through each of the 8 Modules in ROSS please feel free to provide any constructive comments and feedback on how ROSS can be improved.

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    graph TD
      A[Understand Information Need] --> B[Formulate Search Objectives]
      B --> C[Identify Key Concepts]
      C --> D[Identify Concept Synonyms]
      D --> E[Select appropriate Search Tools]
      E --> F[Structure Search Strategies]
      F --> G[Run Search]
      G --> H[Evaluate Results]
      H --> I{Expected Results NO}
      H --> J{Expected Results YES}
      I --> K{Why Not?}
      J --> L{Critical Reflex}
      K --> L
      L --> M{High Quality Results NO}
      L --> N{High Quality Results YES}
      M --> O{Why Not?}
      N --> O
      O --> A
  
```

ROSS Information Searching Process Model  
Edwards, G. and Partridge, G. 2002a

Figure 3. The introduction to ROSS page.

- Module 1: Understanding the information need** – introduces the process of obtaining information from a client to successfully understand a client’s information need.
- Module 2: Preparing for the information search** – introduces the steps to follow when preparing to conduct an online search.
- Module 3: Selecting the online information resources** – introduces the process of selecting online information resources relevant to the information need.
- Module 4: Designing and running the information search** – introduces the process of developing search strategies specific to the online resources selected.
- Module 5: Reflecting on the information search** – introduces the process of reflecting on search results and refining and running a revised search.
- Module 6: Identifying high quality results** – introduces the process of selecting high quality results from the many results obtained from the searches.
- Module 7: Creating an alert** – introduces how to keep up to date on the information need by creating and running an alert.
- Module 8: Critical reflection** – provides the opportunity to critically reflect upon the new skills developed.

Figure 4. The eight modules of ROSS.

A Reflective Workspace is provided for the students (Figure 6). The Workspace acts as a ‘sandpit site’ where students can apply what they are doing within the ROSS Modules (such as Module 2 above) to their own assignment.

## The Evaluation of ROSS in ITB322

The ROSS Environment has been used in the unit for 4 years. According to J. Edwards (1991), evaluation seeks to “describe and explain experiences of students and teachers and to make judgements

# Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment

User View | Admin View

## Module 2 - Activity 1

In Module 1 you recorded some notes on the main topic and possible sub-topics for the clients information need. Using your notes from this exercise complete the following exercises:

**Record your assumptions about the client and their information need:**  
That is, what do you assume about the skills and knowledge of the client, what do you assume is meant by the topic, or what do you assume is important?

Save

**Record Search Objectives**  
Based on your understanding of your information need, what are the information areas to be searched? What does the client, the doctor, actually want?

Save

**Key Concept selection**  
Based on your search objectives, record the topic 'Key concepts' (or keywords).

Save

**Record your Synonyms**  
Can you think of any synonyms for these key concept terms, or any variations in the spelling that you might need to consider when searching?  
*For ideas have a look at [The Visual Thesaurus](#), [Synonym Dictionary](#), [Antonym.com - Synonym.com](#), or [SpellCheck.net](#)*

Save

To continue select Module 2 - Activity 2 from the side menu.

**Weekly Material**

- Week 1: Introduction to Information and Information Literacy
- Week 2: Introduction to Databases and to Reflective Journal Writing
- Week 3: Introduction to Dialog
- Week 4: Introduction to Internet Searching
- Week 5: Introduction to Print Resources & The Power of Information for Business
- Week 6: People as Sources of Information & Introduction to Grey Literature
- Week 7: Assignment 1 Major Presentations
- Week 8 - 12 Session Materials

**Introduction to the ROSS Environment**

- Reflective Workspace
- ROSS Module 1 - Understanding the Client Interview
  - Module 1 - Activity 1
  - Module 1 - Activity 1 Subscription
  - Module 1 - Activity 2
  - Module 1 - Activity 3
  - Module 1 - Activity 4
- ROSS Module 2 - Planning an Information Search
  - Module 2 - Activity 1
  - Module 2 - Activity 2
  - Module 2 - Activity 3
  - Module 2 - Activity 4
- ROSS Module 3 - Search Strategy Preparation
  - Module 3 - Activity 1
  - Module 3 - Activity 2
  - Module 3 - Activity 3
- ROSS Module 4 - Introduction to SDIs
  - Module 4 - Activity 1
  - Module 4 - Activity 2
  - Module 4 - Activity 3
- ROSS Module 5 - Critical Reflection
  - Module 5 - Activity 1
  - Module 5 - Activity 2
  - Module 5 - Activity 3

Figure 5. ROSS Module 2 Activity 1.

**Weekly Material**

[Week 1: Introduction to Information and Information Literacy](#)

[Week 2: Introduction to Databases and to Reflective Journal Writing](#)

[Week 3: Introduction to Dialog & Brushing up on Teamwork](#)

[Week 4: Introduction to Internet Searching, Print Resources & Resource Evaluation](#)

[Week 5: Assignment 1 - Student Presentations](#)

[Week 6: Power of Information & Role of Information Professional and Service](#)

[Week 7 - 12 Session Materials](#)

[Introduction to the ROSS environment](#)

[Reflective workspace](#)

[ROSS Module 1 - Understanding the information need](#)

[Module 1 - Activity 1](#)

[Module 1 - Activity 2](#)

[Module 1 - Activity 3](#)

[Module 1 - Activity 4](#)

[ROSS Module 2 - Planning an information search](#)

[Module 2 - Activity 1](#)

[Module 2 - Activity 2](#)

[Module 2 - Activity 3](#)

[ROSS Module 3 - Selecting the online information resources](#)

[Module 3 - Activity 1](#)

[Module 3 - Activity 2](#)

[ROSS Module 4](#)

## Reflective workspace

**The Reflective Workspace**

The *Reflective Workspace* is your place to apply what you have been learning in ROSS to your own assignment. Remember you can access your Reflective Workspace anywhere you have an Internet connection and only you can see what your record in your Reflective Workspace. To help you get the most out of your Workspace a series of exercises have been created based upon the exercises you complete in ROSS. Just like the exercises in ROSS you will be asked to record your notes and observations in a **Notepad**. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about how to use Notepad.

**PLAN your search**

See Modules 1, 2, 3 & 4

*The first phase in online searching requires you, the searcher, to carefully plan your search. You should attempt to consider carefully what are the major topics of the information need, and then plan how to use each of these topics as steps that might be useful in the search which you are about to undertake.*

**What questions do you need to ask to understand the information need?**

**What is the main topic of the information request?**

**What do you identify as the search objectives (ie the subtopics within the information need)?**

Figure 6. The Reflective Workspace.

and [interpret] their effectiveness". With this purpose in mind a number of evaluation strategies were used to obtain data from both stakeholders in the intervention – the teaching staff and the students. Student evaluation was obtained by eliciting comments via the fortnightly Reflective Learning Journal and from self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with students at the end of each semester. The results of the evaluation are available from Partridge and Edwards (2004). In short, both the students and the teaching staff viewed the experience of using ROSS favourably. Student responses clearly indicate that ROSS is an online learning tool of merit, they found the environment “easy to use and understand” and it “increased flexibility in my studies within this unit”, “helped me to understand the unit’s content” “improved the teaching and learning value in the unit”. Comments received from the students included:

“I now realize that there is more to searching online than typing the keyword to be searched in google.com and pressing the search button”

“I really like how...ROSS [has] been developed to directly relate to what you are doing in the assignment, this is a very good way of putting into practice what you have learnt in class”

Students however did indicate areas for further improvements, with comments such as the following being provided: “some modules were too large and could be broken into small modules” and “it is time consuming”. The majority of comments focused on the time-consuming nature of the modules and the repetitive questions and activities between the modules. Students frequently commented that the need to “do the assignment” stopped them from working through all the modules and activities. Students also indicated that whilst they valued the self-paced instructional aspect to ROSS they felt it was equally important to attend classes to ensure a rich and well-rounded learning experience. These comments are being used to make refinements to the ROSS environment and its application with ITB322.

From the teaching perspective, ROSS provided a wonderful means of introducing new energy into the unit. However, it also posed challenges in how best to integrate the technology into the curriculum in a manner that balanced the virtues

of self-paced instruction alongside the benefits of maintaining a collaborative learning community in which peer discussion and small group work play central roles. It was noted by the teaching staff that whilst students worked on the modules during class time, the different student working styles and paces directly impacted on the extent to which the learning environment could be designed to provide students the opportunity to actively engage in peer discussion on the work being undertaken. The most significant observation noted by the teaching staff was the impact of ROSS upon student learning. Anecdotally, the overall quality of Assignment 2 had improved, with many of the students showing a sound understanding of the online searching model and being able to effectively apply the model to the information need outlined in the assignment guidelines. It is, however, acknowledged that the small class size for the unit may have allowed the development of a learning context in which a more individualized, and consequently more effective learning environment arose.

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### **Case Study 2: The Bachelor of Applied Science**

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The Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) is the primary course offered within the QUT Faculty of Science. The course is completed in 3 years full time or 6 years part time. Students choose a major specialization from the ten discipline areas: biochemistry; biotechnology; chemistry; ecology; environmental science; forensic science; geoscience; mathematics; microbiology; and physics. The BAS is aimed at providing students with the theoretical skills and practical knowledge required to become successful practitioners in the broad and ever-changing domain of science. Graduates from the BAS can enter a diverse range of careers including forensic scientist, geologist, chemist, physicist, microbiologist or environmental scientist.

#### **NRB100 Environmental Science**

NRB100 is a first year core unit offered within the Faculty of Science. The unit introduces students to the broad field of environmental science, the concept of the environment, and its component parts and the influence of human activities. It is a foundation unit to further studies in science, and develops from a basic knowledge of science at secondary level. The unit also has a focus on



generic capabilities such as communication, teamwork and the ability to search for, and critically evaluate, information from a variety of sources. The unit is a core unit taken by BAS students in the ecology, environmental science and geoscience specializations and is one of several elective students can take in the other specializations. The unit has an average enrolment of 220 students per semester and is taught concurrently at two campuses (Gardens Point and Carseldine). The BAS first year curriculum is currently being reviewed and it is expected that NRB100 will become one of four core units that all BAS students will complete. This will lead to an average enrolment of 300 (or more) students in next year's offering of the unit.

### Teaching and Learning Approach

Students enrolled in NRB100 are required to attend a three-hour lecture each week, one-hour

practicals and tutorials and three-hour practicals at various stages throughout the semester. The unit is team taught with three lecturers sharing the teaching load. During the course of the semester students complete five assessment items. Table 2 provides a brief description of the five items. The assessments provide the students the opportunity to develop not only their discipline knowledge but to also reflect upon and develop practical skills and knowledge in regards to the science method.

### Using ROSS in NRB100

The ROSS environment was used to directly support the fourth assessment item – Fish Kill. The Fish Kill assignment has been designed to provide an authentic learning experience based upon 'real life' practices of science professionals. Using problem based learning the students are presented with a hypothetical environmental incident (outlined in Figure 7). The students are

<b>Assessment 1:</b> Mid semester examination	<b>Conducted:</b> Individually	<b>Weighting:</b> 10%
<b>Summary:</b> A mid semester multiple choice examination of all theory covered during the first half of the unit (i.e. weeks 1 to 5 approximately).		
<b>Assessment 2:</b> Practical log book	<b>Conducted:</b> Individually	<b>Weighting:</b> 15%
<b>Summary:</b> Students complete exercises during the practical sessions. Feedback will be provided from a lab demonstrator at the close of each practical. Upon the mark of "satisfactory" being awarded for your annotated results and rough, interpretive discussion at the close of the practical session, you will be given the opportunity of modifying your work in your own time and presenting a more detailed write-up in your practical log book, which will be submitted at the close of the semester.		
<b>Assessment 3:</b> Tutorial participation	<b>Conducted:</b> Individually	<b>Weighting:</b> 10%
<b>Summary:</b> You will participate in a series of tutorials throughout the semester. These tutorials will draw and expand on material presented in the lectures. Your level of participation in each tutorial will be assessed.		
<b>Assessment 4:</b> Fish Kill	<b>Conducted:</b> Individually	<b>Weighting:</b> 20%
<b>Summary:</b> You will use web-based resources to investigate a hypothetical environmental incident and determine its likely cause. This project will enable you to develop skills associated with scientific investigation, problem-solving and information literacy. You will write a detailed scientific report on your findings that will be submitted and assessed at the close of the semester.		
<b>Assessment 5:</b> Final Examination	<b>Conducted:</b> Individually	<b>Weighting:</b> 45%
<b>Summary:</b> Cumulative examination which assesses both your surface and deep learning through the use of multiple choice, short answer and problem-solving essay questions.		

Table 2. NRB100 assessment items.

It is the year 2013. Computer technology has evolved to a remarkable degree - video conferencing, internet newspapers and internet radio broadcasts are now commonplace. But at the same time environmental problems have become more frequent and more serious.

You have recently started work with the newly formed “Environmental Response Group” (ERG) which has been formed by the State Government to deal with the rising number of serious environmental problems that have been occurring in the south-east corner of the state in 2013.

Overnight, there has been a fish kill incident that has been widely reported in the media. Hundreds of dead fish have been washed up on the river banks. You have been given the responsibility of finding what caused this incident and recommending how similar incidents can be prevented from happening in the future.

Figure 7. The Fish Kill hypothetical environmental incident.

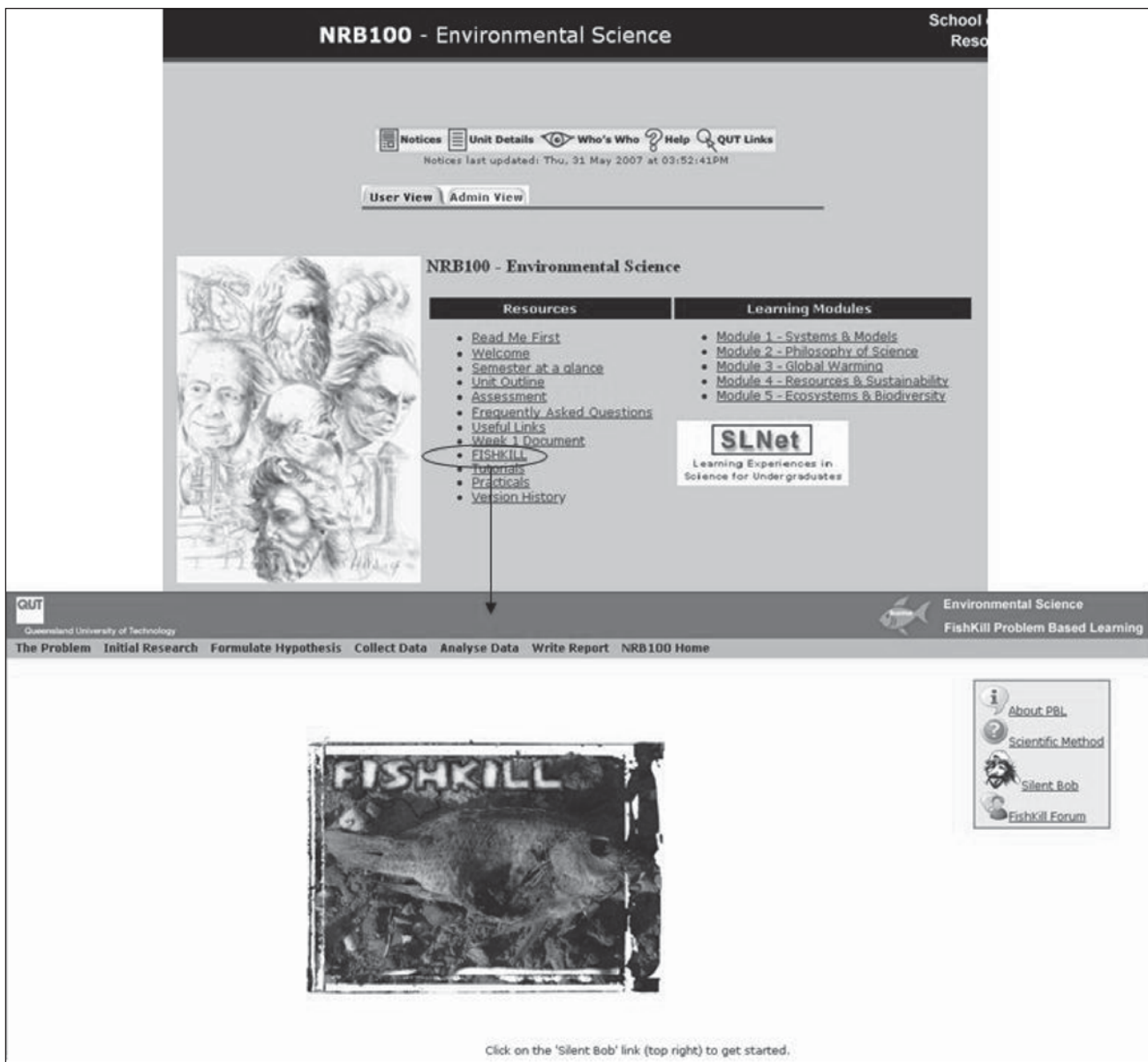


Figure 8. The Fish Kill Environment.

charged with the task of determining the most likely cause of the incident by using the scientific method.

Students are introduced to the environmental incident and work through the assignment requirements via an online environment that is available from the unit's online teaching site (see Figure 8). The environment was developed to be an interactive, visual and authentic learning experience for the students. The Fish Kill environment was funded by two QUT Large Teaching and Learning Grants (1998–1999 and 2005–2007).

Students are introduced to the Fish Kill assignment (and the online learning environment) in week 8 of semester. ROSS is embedded within the Fish Kill environment (see Figure 9). ROSS is introduced to students as a stand alone, self-paced learning tool that they can use to support their development of online searching skill and knowledge. Students do not use the ROSS environment within their classroom learning.

Several modifications were made to the ROSS environment to establish a better learning fit with the Fish Kill assignment specifically, and the science context generally. Firstly, the content was revised. This included removing one of the modules (on Selective Dissemination of Information or Alerts) and reworking the *Introduction to ROSS* page to include a targeted discussion on the role of ROSS in the Fish Kill assignment specifically and online searching within the scientific method generally (see Figure 10). The Reflective Workspace was also removed. Secondly, the 'look and feel' of ROSS was modified to establish a seamless fit within the Fish Kill environment. This included removing the main page (see Figure 10), altering the background colours and introducing the Fish Kill 'guide' "Silent Bob" within each of the modules.

### The Evaluation of ROSS in NRB100

The Fishkill assignment has been used as an assessment task within NRB100 for 5 years, with the ROSS component for the last 2 years. Although

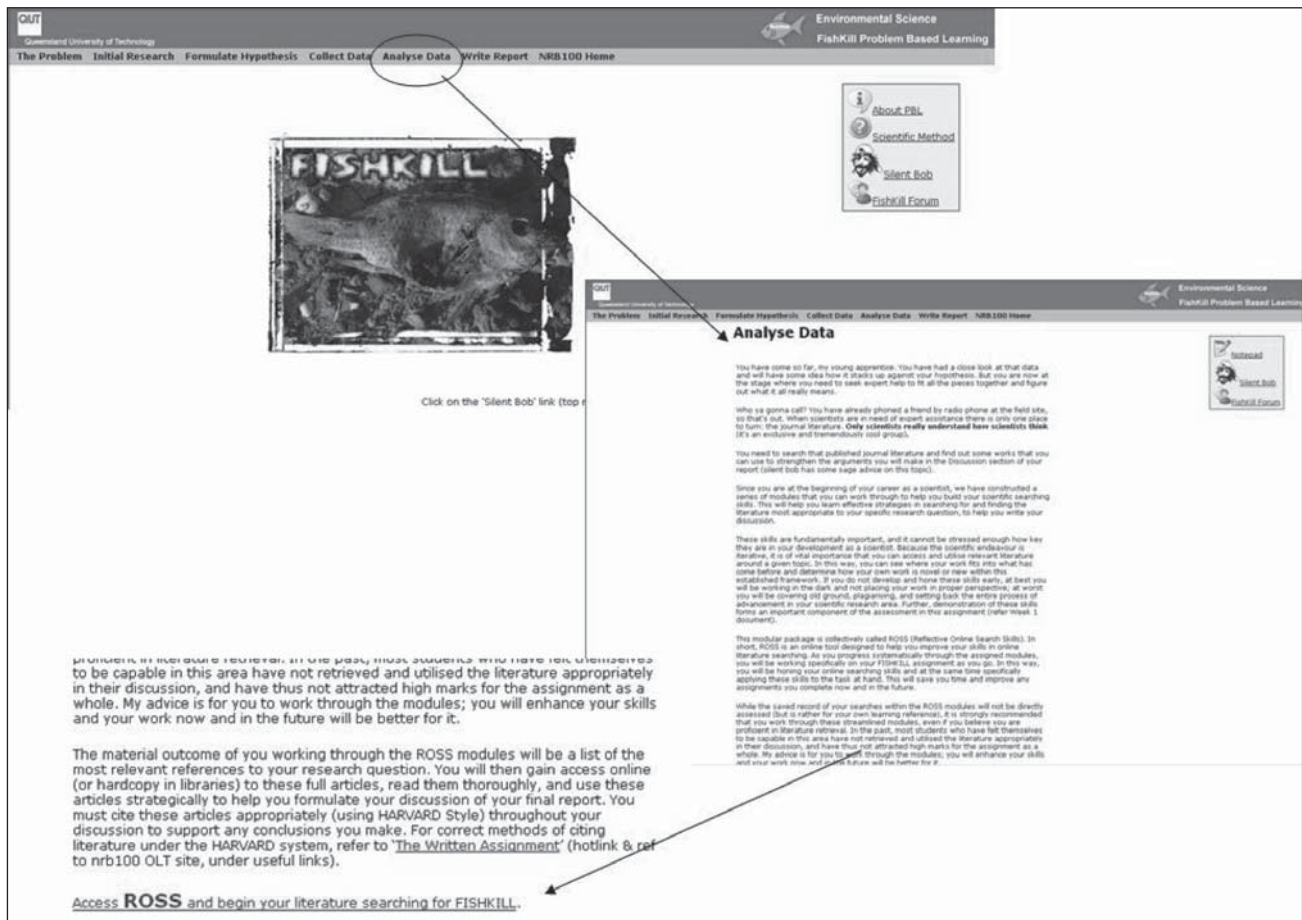


Figure 9. ROSS within the Fish Kill environment.

The screenshot shows the ROSS (Reflective Online Search Strategy) interface. On the left is a navigation menu for 'ROSS Version 2' with modules 1 through 7. The main content area is titled 'ROSS Modules for Fishkill Scientific Report - NRB100' and includes a sub-header 'Finding information to support the FISHKILL scientific report'. Below this is a flowchart titled 'ROSS - Your search process tool' which outlines the search process: 'Understand Information Need' leads to 'Formulate Search Objectives', 'Identify Key Concepts', 'Identify Concept Synonyms', 'Select appropriate Search Tools', 'Structure Search Strategies', and 'Run Search'. From 'Run Search', the process goes to 'Evaluate Results'. A decision diamond asks 'Expected Results?'. If 'NO', it leads to 'Why Not?' and back to 'Formulate Search Objectives'. If 'YES', it leads to 'Critical Reflection'. Another decision diamond asks 'High Quality Results?'. If 'NO', it leads to 'Why Not?' and back to 'Evaluate Results'. If 'YES', it leads to 'Search Ends'. A 'Printed Out Results' box is shown at the end of the process. The text on the page emphasizes using published scientific journal literature and provides a list of modules.

Figure 10. The revised Introduction to ROSS page.

a number of improvements have been made to Fishkill over its lifetime (not least transferral online), it is nonetheless possible to make a few preliminary observations about the influence of ROSS on student learning outcomes in the unit. Anecdotally, the teaching staff has noted that the quality of Fishkill reports submitted has improved over the past years. There are a number of attributes to submitted assignments that are generally of higher quality: hypothesis development, correct use of Popperian falsification and the scientific method; presentation/analysis of collected data and scientific language; quality and quantity of literature used strategically in the assignment discussion to place the current study in context. The first two of these improvements (and skills in contextualization in the third) have arisen, at least in part, from the introduction in the last year of online exemplar assignments. Incorporation of exemplars necessitated the introduction of a wholly novel environmental problem, analogous to, but distinct from, Fishkill. Both good and bad exemplar assignments have been introduced into the Fishkill environment. These exemplars are supplemented with thorough critiques, aligned with assessment criteria. Students have used

these exemplars successfully as a reference point and gauge for their own work; they learn what makes a good assignment and what pitfalls to avoid submitting below par work. The third area of improvement, quality and quantity of sourced literature, has been positively affected by merging and contextualizing ROSS within Fishkill. A key element of scientific research lies in the investigator making specific reference to relevant, published journal literature. This is because it represents a formal and critical component of the iterative modern scientific method, namely interpretation of data in light of previous, peer-reviewed, anonymously critiqued research; this for subsequent modification of theories under models of future testing. The improvements in this component of the students' submitted work are striking; very few students are now using inappropriate web sources (a major problem in pre-ROSS iterations of Fishkill); the vast majority of students are now accessing not only journal articles and published government reports of high quality and relevance, but the relative quantity of appropriate literature has increased and it is used more strategically for interpretation of their data.

Unlike the IT case study ROSS in this instance was used as an optional self-paced learning tool that students could choose to engage with during their studies. Initial data suggests that approximately half of the NRB101 students chose to use ROSS. Comments received from the students indicated they found ROSS a valuable learning aid: “*it outlined every part of the process*”; “*it guaranteed good sources*”; “*has taken me to a right track approach*”. It is also important to note that students indicated areas for further improvement with comments such as the following being provided: “*asked too many questions*”; “*when it asks you to write down sentences that’s too time consuming*”; “*it was a long drawn out process*”. Like the IT students the majority of comments provided focused on the time-consuming nature of the modules. The Science students however raised a second area of concern – the extent of reading required. It should be noted here that many of the comments in regards to this latter point were made in reference to the Fish Kill/ROSS online environment generally. This is an interesting observation as it suggests that the students were viewing and experiencing ROSS and the Fish Kill environment as one online learning environment. Thus, suggesting that the efforts made to streamline the two systems into one were successful.

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### The Significance of ROSS

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Many online information literacy tools are static, modular, linear and heavily text-based, and have failed to incorporate an interactive approach to the learning process. While allowing the flexibility inherent in online learning, they do not involve the students in an interactive and dynamic way to reflect on their own unique experience. The development of ROSS may be seen as a significant response to the need for student-centred learning environments which promote the development of generic online searching skills acquisition through reflective practice. It can also be viewed in terms of the evolution of an online learning tool as a dynamic and valuable learning object which facilitates information literacy development for students, across the full range of university and higher education courses.

ROSS enables students to focus on the process of information seeking, an important activity supporting the need for “critical discernment and reasoning” which has been stressed as the most important aspect of information literacy (CAUL,

2001a). The ROSS environment also pushes the boundaries of online information literacy programs by guiding learners to know, reflect, and practice information literacy concepts through the use of case studies or problem based learning. The ROSS Environment also lends itself well to being customized for use across all programs/courses; a necessary feature of valuable learning objects.

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### Conclusion

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The development of the ROSS Environment has occurred within a higher education environment currently demanding increased focus on student-centred and flexible learning opportunities. This demand stems from increased moves towards e-learning, based on benefits which have been widely discussed in recent literature (Imel, 2002). In conclusion, to date this research has seen ROSS evolve from an embedded delivery learning environment to now be considered as a learning object that may be used in other contexts within the university to enhance the development of generic information literacy skills. While the project is ongoing, ultimately the development of these skills will enhance the graduate capabilities of any QUT student who uses the ROSS environment.

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# Library Personalization Systems: an Indian experience

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About the Author continued on  
page 83

## Abstract

Personalization of library resources is projected as a viable alternative to tide over the information explosion and to conserve the time of users for more productive intellectual tasks. Personalization needs sufficient electronic content at one's site as well as suitable mechanisms to identify the user through his or her profile, selectively search the content that matches the user profile, and arrange and present it to the user in an appealing fashion. The different components of a content personalization system include: 'Content Serving System' to host electronic content beyond a critical mass, 'User Interest Management System' to manage dynamic user profiles, 'Search Engine' to automatically match content with profiles and 'Personalized Content Delivery' mechanisms for delivering matched results to the user. Technological advancements made by web enabled computing coupled with continued user interest to gather information resources available on the web led many popular portals to bring in the concept of content personalization suiting varied user interests. A few such initiatives are explained. Library personalization projects like MyLibrary in different university libraries in advanced countries are discussed. To explore the efficacy of library personalization systems in a developing country, the SAI personalization prototype developed in the Central Library of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur is described in detail.

**Keywords:** library websites; library personalization systems; Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur; India

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## Introduction

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Libraries since time immemorial have attempted to collect, organize and disseminate information resources of interest to their clients. They use a variety of tools and techniques to effectively conduct these tasks and devise a host of services to support the varied requirements of their users. There were difficulties in achieving one-to-one mapping of information resources and users in the print environment since options to connect the two basically needed surrogates like card, indexes, documentation lists etc. The onset of computer and information technology enabled this mapping to be more efficient, especially because of the ease with which a document can be indexed and represented using multiple terms. The same functionality emerged for representing a user's interests, and in most cases having both in the same computerized system facilitated the easy linking of relevant sources with prospective users. With widespread availability of full text information resources such as electronic books, electronic journals and Internet resources, the significance of computer based linking of sources and users has become more pronounced. The accessibility of electronic resources also tempted users to satisfy their information needs beyond the four walls of the library. These two virtues of electronic information and the presence of information technology tools prompted libraries in the advanced countries to opt for personalization of



library resources for maximizing user benefit. Personalization of library resources is projected as a viable alternative to tide over the information explosion and to conserve the time of users for more productive intellectual tasks. It is thus a natural corollary of the large quantum of e-information available and of functional web technologies to efficiently manipulate them in accordance with individual user needs. In short, personalization provides the library with a viable mechanism to manipulate the information base using available technologies so that the library appears as a set of separate smaller libraries to individual users, who find it more effective and convenient to use these small personal libraries which cater to their specific needs.

The easy search and access features associated with electronic information made it possible for many service providers to profile and select contents based on various attributes of the service seekers. The technological advances characterizing web-based computing and the continued interest of users in gathering information resources on the web enabled many popular portals to personalize their contents to suit varied user interests. Apart from libraries, other service providers also resort to personalization to attract more users and site visitors. Electronic commerce and related applications are also increasingly focusing on identifying and attracting individual users. This enables services to be provided to potential clients in a targeted manner at frequent intervals, leading to a substantial increase in both the volume of use and the number of satisfied customers. Apart from selecting content, some services also provide options for selecting the appearance of web pages like background colours, fonts, order of menus, etc. In the perspective of a modern library setting, content personalization involves dynamically scanning and delivering electronic content (especially newly added content, at regular intervals) in accordance with individual user interests as determined through their expressed and observed needs. This may seem to be very similar to typical library services such as current awareness services (CAS) or selective dissemination of information (SDI) services. However, the major difference lies in the attempt to map and provide full text information rather than mere surrogates like indexes or abstracts, increased application of web technology to gather user interests, and selective search and delivery of information ahead of user demand in keeping with specific user requirements.

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### Personalization

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Kramer, Noronha and Vergo (2000) define personalization as 'a toolbox of technologies and application features; from simple display of the end-user's name on a Web page, to complex catalogue navigation and product customization based on deep models of users' needs and behaviours; used in the design of an end-user experience'. Perugini and Ramakrishnan (2003) define personalization as the automatic adjustment of information content, structure and presentation tailored to an individual user. Personalization chooses content for the user automatically, without direct user request, the process of choosing content remaining hidden. As the system becomes more familiar with user habits by observing behaviour, it achieves increased accuracy in predicting future behaviour and interests. Personalization is a process of gathering and storing information about site visitors, analyzing the stored information and, based on the analysis, delivering the right information to each visitor at the right time. Personalization in the perspective of a library aims at dynamically selecting and delivering electronic content as per the expressed as well as observed needs of individual users. This is different from customization, where the focus of the content does not change until the user changes it explicitly. Personalization thus uses a complex and dynamic set of features for implicit content selection, unlike customization, which requires explicit user involvement through relatively static and simpler web site mechanisms. However, the success of a personalization system ultimately depends on its efficacy in mapping user interests and feedback, continuous interactive support received from beneficiaries to sustain and improve its performance, and a large electronic resource base to work with.

#### Information Sources for Personalization

Some of the personalized services offered, such as details about books issued, renewed, and reserved by users through the library automation system, electronic notice boards to discuss events and academic activities in the institution etc., need not require subject specialization from the users. Hence, these can be offered without any direct user input, unlike services like online public access catalogues (OPACs) of library holdings, e-mail contacts of librarians and other staff, recommendations for book and journal purchases,

requests for interlibrary loan or document delivery (ILL/DD) services, etc. Services utilizing a semi-manual or manual approach need to be automated in the first place for interfacing them with the personalization system. The availability of electronic databases, web access to subscribed and consortia journals and intranet serving of several electronic components have promoted a sufficient quantity of electronic resources in many libraries. Further, coupled with the rapid advances and interest in digital libraries, there is an increasing presence of an institutional digital library facility on the intranet to encompass in one place in-house teaching and research information such as lecture notes, question papers, preprints of publications, theses and dissertations, proceedings of conference hosted by the institution, reports of research and development (R&D) and consultancy projects undertaken, etc. The only requirement in the emerging context is to properly frame patron interests and connect them with internally and externally procured and accessed electronic information to generate personalized alerting and selective retrieval.

Among the various services offered by personalization projects in libraries in advanced countries, libraries attached to premier research and higher education institutions already have the following:

- patron information regarding books issued, renewed and reserved by users from an OPAC of library holdings, aided by the library automation system
- e-journal access to subscribed and consortia journals from publishers' websites, facilitated through links from the library website or managed through portals like j-gate/Ingenta
- standalone and networked access to bibliographic and full text CD-ROM databases
- e-mail contacts with librarians and other staff regarding queries about various activities
- ILL/DDS services handled in a manual or semi-electronic form, largely for printed sources
- recommendations for book and journal purchases through signed manual forms due to purchase formalities
- electronic notice boards to discuss events and academic activities taking place in the Institution
- information regarding courses, lecture notes, etc., put up by faculty members on their personal websites

- electronic submission of theses and research publications

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### Components of a Personalization System

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Personalization needs sufficient electronic content at one's site as well as suitable mechanisms to identify the users through profiles, selectively search the content that matches the user profiles, and arrange and present it to the user in an appealing fashion. The different components of a content personalization system include:

- Content Serving System to host electronic content
- User Interest Management System to manage dynamic user profiles
- Search Engine to automatically match content over profiles
- Personalized Content Delivery mechanisms for delivering matched results to the user

#### Content Serving System

Libraries attached to academic and research institutions in general and technical libraries in particular are experiencing the virtues of electronic information in the form of e-journals, e-books, bibliographic or full text electronic databases on CD-ROM or through web access, and so on. The Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Science and Technology (INDEST) consortium enabled many of its members to register a ten-fold growth in access to e-journals from 100 to 500 to more than 4,000. Similar progress is also happening in many universities of India with the help of the University Grants Commission's InfoNet consortium, operational through INFLIBNET Centre.

#### User Interest Management System

Library science works on the principle of classifying and arranging information resources of interest to users and devising effective and efficient techniques for their selective retrieval. Thus profiling users to manage user interests is as important as collection development and access management activities. In a library, apart from collections and staff, the user is the vital link in the information consumption chain, the other two existing only for the user.

So far, user interest management in libraries has not been taken up in an integrated manner due to the diversity of electronic systems used, forcing the captured or recorded user interests to remain scattered. The library automation system holds a complete inventory of books issued, returned, renewed and reserved by a user, as well as user or department profiles for CAS/SDI of current books. CAS/SDI services for journal articles are operated with the help of an electronic bibliographic database using detailed user profiles or user groups. Recommendations from individual users are seriously sought and considered for procuring books, and such recommendations on a departmental or group of departments basis definitely influence addition or deletion of journals. However, since user recommendations and preferences are recorded only in the software of the automation systems in use, or in native software systems, they fail to give an integrated picture of user interests. While constructing user profiles, apart from expressed needs, many do not consider usage statistics and use behaviour observable from library databases, the records of the ILL/Resource Sharing unit or the Reprography Section, etc., to be important – most likely due to difficulties in recording.

### Search Engine

A search engine is vital as better results could be mined from the content servers using profile terms, depending on the efficacy of the search facility. Technical obstacles concerning searching from proprietary systems only using native search engines may impede library-centred solutions for concurrent searching of multiple databases. Currently, a modern technical library has to work with different proprietary search engines of individual electronic resources such as ScienceDirect of Elsevier Science, Digital Library of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the IEEE/IET Electronic Library (IEL) of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), etc., as per the existing licenses. Copying bibliographic data of interest to local users with the full text link from the different services in a local database system could be another option. The same database can also hold metadata and even the full text of internal digital resources so that concrete coverage of resources is possible.

### Personalized Content Delivery

In a wired campus where everyone is comfortably familiar with information technology (IT), content delivery in electronic form is the obvious choice. However, sending content by e-mail, though easy, is also discouraging in the present day spam-dominated e-mail scenario. Creating personal pages for researchers on the personalization server and alerting them about new postings (obviously through e-mail as and when required) would be the ideal option.

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### Personalization by Web Portals

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Technological advances in web-enabled computing coupled with continued user interest to gather information resources available on the web led many popular portals to bring in the concept of content personalization to suit varied user interests. Apart from selecting content, some services also provide options like choice of background colours, fonts, order of menus etc. to select the appearance of pages. Bradley (1999) discusses the currently popular trend of many leading search engines offering personalized content in the form of 'My XYZ' (for example *My AltaVista*, *My Yahoo!* *My Excite* and *My Lycos*), in which subject content is arranged under broad headings like business, technology, world news, sports, etc.

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### Library Personalization Projects

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In the context of libraries, through personalization, users start with a generic library and by making selections and choices create a personal library with pre-selected and relevant e-journals, e-books, databases, reference works, websites and other information resources. Also, they can view the different services offered by the library through a single window implementation strategy (there may be different systems for in-house resources and network accessed information, however, they appear as a single system to the user using the facilities) with provision for configuring alerts and automatic updates, enabling users to add/remove resources of their choice. Since many projects have been undertaken by different libraries, only a few important ones are listed as an illustration to reflect what is possible.

MyLibrary@Notre Dame University allows patrons to personalize and customize their view of the Libraries' website by cultivating more person-to-person relationships between patrons and librarians (Morgan and Fox, 2007). At North Carolina State University, MyLibrary@NCState (<http://my.lib.ncsu.edu/>) is a user-driven, customizable information service that allows creating a portable Web page, listing the available information resources by providing a little information about users. The BUILDER Hybrid Library Demonstrator at the University of Birmingham (UK) aimed to demonstrate 'seamlessness', where all resources are accessible through the same interface and 'profiling', where the resources offered are relevant to individual user needs. (Pinfield, 1998). The Open Library 2.0 Project of the Open University (UK) (<http://library.open.ac.uk/about/libprojects/current/index.cfm?id=6434>) aims to develop a new Library website for the OU community which will provide a database driven platform for further delivery of Library 2.0 services. The MyLibrary@LANL service at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (USA) allows users to collect and organize general web resources or other selected information contained at the Library's website (Di Giacomo et al., n.d.). Other MyLibrary projects to personalize contents are currently operational at the libraries of Cornell University (Cohen et al., 2000) and Virginia Commonwealth University (Ghaphery, 2002). As the use of digital libraries increases, users expect more than simply being able to filter, retrieve and refer to library materials, preferring instead to gain personalized access to library materials according to their personal requirements and interests.

NewsAgent for Libraries, one of the projects funded by the Electronic Libraries Programme (eLib) in the UK (<http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/metadata/newsagent/>) aimed to create for library and information professionals a user configurable electronic news and current awareness service characterized by a mixture of content streams including metadata (Tedd and Yeates, 1998). The Personal Digital Library (PDL) under the ELINOR Electronic Library Project at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK, attempted to develop a personal information system which acts as a front end to other electronic library systems and manages users' total information requirements (Zhao, 1998). The Hybrid Electronic Access and Delivery in the Library Networked Environment (Headline) (<http://www.headline.ac.uk/>) project under the Electronic Libraries

(eLib) programme explored the possibilities of providing personalized content to its users (this project is now completed and the website is no longer updated). The Digital Portfolio Archives (DPAs) project at the University of California at Los Angeles concentrates on developing process models that transform primary sources into digital library content; allow teachers to build a personalized information system or DPAs containing the content and descriptions; and enable students to incorporate components of the teachers' DPA and additional project-related materials into their own DPAs (Gilliland-Swetland, Kafai and Maddox, n.d.).

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### **The Personalized Selective Access Information System in Kharagpur**

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#### **The Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur**

The Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, set up in 1950 as the first in the chain of seven such Institutes, is a premier centre for education and research in engineering, technology and sciences in India. The alumni of the Institute occupy prestigious positions in the country and abroad and the contributions of the Institute and its alumni to the application and growth of technology are well known. The Institute now has 31 academic departments, centres or schools of excellence with a vast tree-laden campus spreading over 2,100 acres, located almost 120 km. south west of Kolkata. Currently the Institute has about 450 faculty, 2,200 employees and 5,000 students on the campus. The Institute offers undergraduate courses in 17 disciplines, and postgraduate courses in 60 disciplines, apart from PhD programmes in most of the departments, centres or schools. It also offers higher education programmes in management, medical sciences and law with an emphasis on the application of technology in these fields. More details of the Institute are available at the website [www.iitkgp.ac.in](http://www.iitkgp.ac.in)

#### **The Central Library, IIT Kharagpur**

The Central Library, IIT Kharagpur began its existence in 1951. Since then, it has grown in size and content along with the Indian Institute of Technology to take its present shape. The Library collection stands at about 350,000 volumes including books, back volumes of periodicals, microforms, video forms, theses, patents and standards. The journal subscription exceeds 1,000

and the Library has electronic access rights to over 7,000 journals either through its own subscriptions or through consortia. The Central Library has been among the pioneers in adopting the latest computer and information technology tools for providing client-centred electronic information services in the country, aided as it is by an extremely rich and unique collection of e-journals, e-books, and bibliographic and full text electronic databases, either in standalone format or via networked CD-ROMS, through web access and so on. The website of the Library ([www.library.iitkgp.ernet.in](http://www.library.iitkgp.ernet.in)) provides more information about the facility.

### The Central Library's Personalization System

Apart from providing a few important bibliographic and full text databases in standalone and networked modes in its Electronic Library (now renamed as Digital Library), the Central Library has also offered an Electronic Selective Dissemination of Information (E-SDI) service for faculty members, using some of the frequently updated bibliographic electronic databases. The strategy consists of preparing profiles of faculty members based on their subject specializations, searching these profiles vis-à-vis latest updates of the database, and sending the bibliographic information to the concerned faculty members through e-mail. The difficulty in automating the E-SDI service due to the proprietary software used, the constraints in offering the full texts of retrieved references since many journals were not subscribed to by the Library or by other libraries with which it had collaborative interlibrary loan or document delivery arrangements, and the spread of web access to journals, etc., forced the Library to modify this service and transform it into a personalization service, utilizing the current proliferation of electronic resources and emerging web technology. Support from the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2003 for a research project, 'A Personalized Selective Access Information System (SAI)', with a grant of INR 800,000 (approximately USD 17,000) has helped the library to concentrate more productively on implementing a suitable personalization system for IIT Kharagpur with provision for possible extension to other libraries.

The system developed for personalizing electronic resources for the faculty and researchers of the Institute consists of the following basic components:

- web server to host service using web tools
- database engine MySQL to collect and manipulate user interests
- php/Java scripts to communicate between the database engine and the web server (client request)
- web browser for client access

### Steps in SAI Personalization

**Step 1:** Configuring a Linux based web server for content personalization with local hosting of INDEST contents would be the first step in proceeding with this initiative. Since local hosting is not considered in the first step of INDEST activity, the personalization server should work with or without locally hosted bibliographic or table of contents data and seek contents as and when needed from the distributed publishers' web servers. This requires the incorporation of a personalization server as an intermediary before interaction between the Institute's gateway and publishers' sites. The performance of the personalization system depends on many technical and operational overheads.

**Step 2:** Web pages incorporating user details and their fields of interest are to be created for the Institute's faculty, scientific and research staff. These pages should be created with the active participation of the users so that they feel sufficiently involved in the process. This may also help to correctly map the crucial area of subject specialization of the individual concerned. The personalization server will be intelligent and capable enough to continuously monitor the use patterns at an individual user level. It may start with user profiles entered and modified by the user or an information intermediary using web forms. The server must also use the content caching and cookies stored in the Institute gateway to monitor the status of information usage and to identify frequently used contents. Personalization identifies the visitor using a cookie or session logon and dynamically generates a page specific to the visitor, which is not cached at proxy servers and most server caches.

**Step 3:** The search engine performs the task of matching and generating the matched contents. The matched contents with links to full text are hosted in their web pages in the personalization server or sent as e-mail alerts. Since the IITs make use of fibre optic ATM Intranet, the links can be easily downloaded by users after perusing the

results sent through e-mail or from the personalization site.

**Step 4:** The Feedback and Profile Modification step is vital as it would provide inputs about the utility of the results generated by the personalization system and constructively guide the system to modify the user profiles. This step may also act as an indirect evaluation of the personalized information service.

## System Components

### *Content Serving System*

Electronic resources are made accessible through the campus LAN from publishers' or providers' servers as part of subscriptions to the printed counterparts and through the INDEST consortium. Apart from this, electronic resources, databases, electronic supplements of printed books available in local LAN, higher education resources available on the Internet and portals as well as search engines on the web are also incorporated as pools of content to serve the immediate information requirements of Institute researchers and faculty members.

### *User Interest Management System*

The profiles developed earlier for the Electronic SDI are suitably modified and augmented with additional information from the home pages of faculty members, websites of the Institute and other sources available in the Institute (*Annual Report, 1997–2003, A Profile of Research and Development at IIT Kharagpur, 2003, Research and Development Handbook-1996, 1996*).

### *Search Engine*

Since most of the resources are provided with native search engines, it is extremely difficult to bypass these due to restrictions imposed by the database providers because of the commercial interests involved. Licensing rights as part of consortium and access rights through subscriptions permit only selective search and access of a few records and hence it is beyond the permissible rights of the Library to copy complete records into the local servers for working with the search engine developed locally. To work with these constraints, the search engine presently developed contains the following features:

1. Users need not retype search parameters in the different search interfaces offered by web links of different service providers.
2. Search terms entered may be redirected automatically to the native search engine of the selected resource, saving user time and effort.

### *Personalized Content Delivery*

Being aware of the benefits and limitations of the 'push' technology of e-mail while operating the Electronic SDI, it was decided to go for the 'pull' approach of keeping retrieved results with their web links in the personalized pages of faculty members. However, whenever a page is refreshed with new records, a general alert can be sent through e-mail, stating the updating of their personalized page. Resources can be selected by the user as required using tick boxes. Users also can customize page layouts as well as the order and arrangement of personal links. The client browser must support cookies and must be configured to not look for content in its cache.

## Working of the System

The user needs to login to the system with a password (encrypted and stored in the database for online validation) to access his or her personalized page. The system has provisions to gather the subject interests of researchers from their websites and their ongoing interactions with the Library as well as the personalization system. There is further provision for the user to add or remove subject terms and access appropriate virtual links to the different services offered. These terms automatically scan the different online services and e-journals available to flash a list of information resources matching the search term. There is added provision for the user to select a term for a particular service (such as IEL online or ScienceDirect) or use more than one term on one service or a group of services. Apart from interfacing the locally available (full text and bibliographic databases, e-books) and network accessible electronic resources (e-journals and bibliographic or full text databases), the system also provides virtual links to the following:

- free electronic journals available on the Internet
- free e-books on the web
- news sites covering science and technology as well as general information

- academic information on the Internet such as the websites of research and educational institutions
- search engines and portals on the web

The user needs simply to configure the choices on the personalization page to achieve suitable results. Apart from the mere add or remove option, the user can also create fresh links and sub-links reflecting his or her requirements. The system also provides options for searching the library online public access catalogue (OPAC) for information regarding the borrowing details and a web form to address queries to the librarian.

### System Features

The system allows users to search, collect and organize general web resources relating to their specific interests. It is thus a combination of a manual decision rule system and a content-based system. The system incorporates features enabling users to search the library database as well as the World Wide Web with more functionality, without expending much time and effort getting familiar with the intricacies of the various native search interfaces developed by different publishers and database providers. Another advantage of the system is that it offers users the ability to create personal web links, interact with the library, use a protection mechanism to access their data and have the web links checked and updated when they are not functioning. This feature, when used efficiently, may lead to a single window system to collect, manipulate, use and manage electronic resources of interest to them, to disseminate information regarding their publications and also to participate in virtual research communities.

As an initial step, the contact details of faculty members in different departments of the Institute and their research interests are collected and stored in the database. URLs and subject specializations of e-journals, e-books and other research materials available on the web are also collected and stored in the database. When a particular user connects to the personalization web server through user login and password, the PHP (Hyper-text Pre-processor) embedded in the HTML connects to the user database and retrieves her or his personal information from the personal details table; areas of interests from the subject terms table; journal links from the journal table; books links from the books table and news links from the news table. Search engines like Google, AltaVista, IEL, ACM

Portal, Elsevier ScienceDirect etc. are placed in a drop down box, so that the user can quickly and easily retrieve the required information using any database or search engine from one window.

After the initial login, the user is presented with a personal page (see Figure 1), the contents and links of which are based on his or her subject specialization.

The contents include

- **Welcome message** with his address, e-mail and phone number.
- **Search:** The user is provided with his areas of interest and multiple search engines. Just by clicking on his area of interest he can connect to the search engine of his choice and get quick results without explicitly typing the keyword(s).
- **Library Links:** A link to the library is provided to check information regarding books borrowed, corresponding due dates, overdue charged and any other person-centric queries from the Library housekeeping database system.
- **E-journals and E-books:** The user is provided with links to e-journals and e-books related to his areas of interest. He or she can also add any additional links related to e-journals and e-books of his choice in the add page. Further, a checkbox option is provided to delete links if a particular link is found to be irrelevant in satisfying the impending information needs.
- **News Links:** The SAI design includes news links for users, which provide further links regarding upcoming worldwide conferences, science and technology magazines, etc.
- **Personal Links:** Facilitate the addition of links of users' personal interests.
- **Ask a Librarian:** This link provides a facility to use the suggestion form for the library and to contact the Library Head or Section-in-charges.
- **Protect Mechanism:** SAI utilizes a unique protection mechanism based on username and encrypted password through which only a registered user can login to view the personalized page.

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### Problems and Prospects

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Some of the problems identified and their possible solutions for stabilizing library personalization systems are:

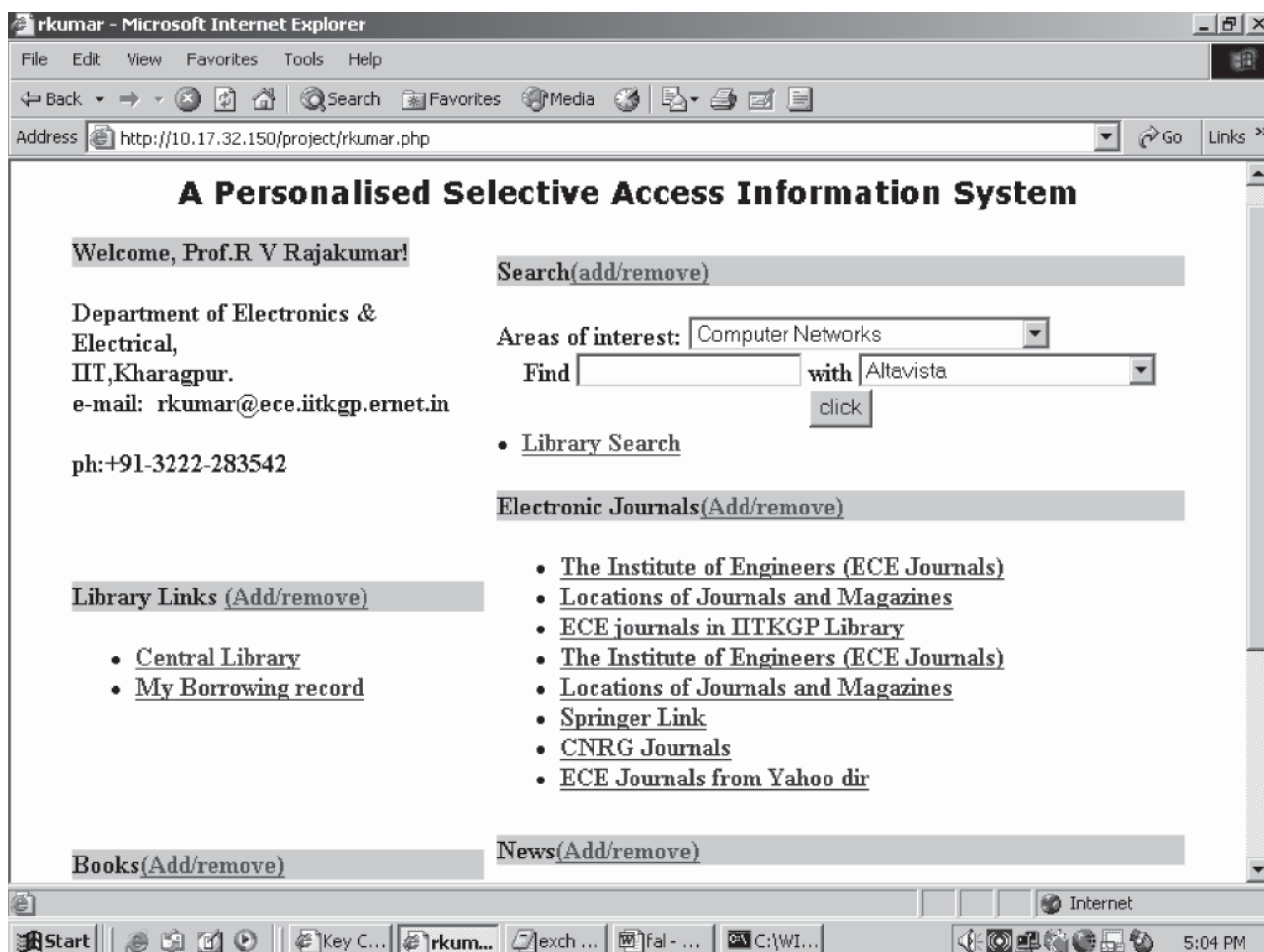


Figure 1. Screenshot of a researcher's personalized page.

## Multiple Systems

Since libraries are equipped with many of the contents and solutions essential for a personalization system among a multitude of systems, what is required is to focus on a single system to deal with all the library operations and services. Since most of these libraries use commercial library automation systems, customization is required to provide an open source interface to access these proprietary solutions or a library personalization system's interface to access the backend of the library database system. Similarly, the conditions for web and consortia access to journals always constrain libraries to do this only through publishers' website links. When cumulation and management of these journals is required, the solution of redirecting to links in distributed servers is not considered a very intelligent approach. What is required is to create and develop a proprietary system that may appear like a single system aggregating the individual systems to work in the background with the personalized system to search and access the

different e-resources so that users do not have to bother about the formalities of the solution providers and access passwords, etc. Though many libraries in India are equipped with a good set of external resources, the internal digital library component is still not very substantial and for this, libraries have to concentrate on various fronts like digitizing locally owned resources, hosting institution-generated academic and research information, etc., along with creating a single window information facility for external resources.

## Personnel Problems

There are doubts, not only on the part of users, but also among library professionals regarding the utility and benefits of personalization, customization, personal links, quick searches, etc. Users have reservations about library professionals' ability to understand and map their complex specializations into personalization systems. Library professionals are busily engaged in their routine professional tasks and essential IT



applications of database creation and support, leaving very little time to think, plan and execute fresh services. Continuing education programmes for library and information professionals enable them to get acquainted with the latest technology tools and techniques, leading to their pragmatic application for better information organization and effective information services. Such applications would often find more takers from the user community and may also provide better cooperation in planning, implementing and operating such services.

### Standards

In the current scenario, there exists a lack of standards for describing resources and profiling users as well as the modalities of setting up the personalization system and operating the services. Since many personalization projects give strong importance to database and web-related tools for their implementation, standardization is indirectly followed to certain extent. Standardization may gain prominence only with the implementation of many personalization projects and their successful operation for a certain period.

### Managing User Interests

The central issue is how effectively and intelligently the personalization system can capture and represent the users' preferences based on books issued, books requested, articles referred or cited, etc. The personalization mechanism and the user interest gathering tools it utilizes should be able to employ input from users as well as capture information based on self-learning from observable use patterns. In many cases, the feedback mechanism fails to work as interactively as desired because of the library professionals' focus on 'recall' compared to users' preference for 'precision'. Several use- and user-centred attributes reside in the client machines; hence the success of personalization tasks depends to a large extent on collecting this data. Specific responses received from users as a result of conducting this service could be broadly classified into the following categories:

- suggestions for profile modification, like adding or deleting subject terms
- appreciation of the utility of the service, such as 'good', 'useful', 'interested in receiving further outputs'; illustrative examples highlighting

the receipt of useful references; general comments such as 'helpful in obtaining current information', etc.

- critical comments and suggestions regarding the improvement of the service such as the inclusion of additional databases to improve journal coverage, linking with ILL/DDS services to provide the full text of those journals currently available only in contents/abstract form, etc.
- critical comments regarding the extension of the content and style of service
- users' interest to have a single interface for search and retrieval of useful references from all resources subscribed by and accessed in the library
- users being critical about the utility of some of the references provided by the system

Some of the improvements currently under implementation or in the planning stage as a result of these user feedbacks include:

- increasing use of web mining techniques to refine the user profiles based on the use of retrieved results
- identifying the increasing number of free web resources and merging them in a classified order with the existing system resources
- using different options for retrieving personalized search results (through the personalized pages of individual faculty, by click and access mode from a hierarchical term listing, etc.)
- using standardized subject terms available in the discipline concerned to enhance the retrieval efficiency of users' terms
- using clustering techniques for mapping the relations between terms, thus aiding context-based retrieval
- properly marking newly retrieved results by different search engines so that users need not refer to old results while scanning new ones
- carrying on testing of searching in the background to do away with users accessing their pages and clicking on resources or typing terms to be searched

It is difficult to quantify use since the library statistics deal only with explicit use; however, there also exists implicit use (browsing, consulting, etc.), which is too arduous to be quantified. At the same time, there are vital questions about whether merely issuing a book or taking a photocopy of a journal article constitutes use, and this warrants qualitative assessment of use. Even the usage statistics offered by publishers or aggregators for

full text journal access through consortia fail to provide information on the qualitative aspects of use. Merely clicking a link, downloading a page or holding a page in the desktop may not constitute use in real terms. The correct estimation of use needs to follow direct and indirect methods, traditional and modern means, and there exists no single option to gather all the required information because users use resources at their convenience, where libraries have limited options to monitor effectively.

### Subject Terms

Assigning standardized subject terms to the personalization system for greater precision and relevance in retrieval calls for a special keyword assignment system. This requires considerable effort in compiling the subject terms and subsequently grouping them as broader and narrower, with synonyms often requiring the support of a subject expert. Since the system consists of an exhaustive list of subjects of interest to the faculty and research community, it could be effectively utilized for making intelligent decisions regarding other services, like addition of new books, subscription to new journals, etc. It could additionally be used to provide vital inputs about implementing future programmes and services. The system would also help in identifying experts for undertaking impending research and consultancy projects.

Subject heading lists and thesauri are not available for certain disciplines whereas multiple sources of classification exist for certain others. Thus, identification and selection of subject terms often becomes complex, particularly due to their dynamic nature in reflecting current research activity in the discipline concerned as well as aiding and assisting suitable retrieval in current areas. Intelligence and self-learning being integral components of a personalization system, a subject term classification and retrieval system to learn and represent new terms based on a well described heuristics and knowledge representation system needs to be developed.

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### Conclusion

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Rather than merely facilitating access to electronic resources by alerting the user community about the available resources, the evolution of a proactive service for electronic content personalization will definitely improve the library's image,

besides further augmenting the confidence of its clientele. In the current scenario, libraries can discard their image as predominantly passive service organizations only by bringing fresh insight into old services and venturing into new ones with age-old expertise in information consolidation and repackaging. Any personalization service or other user-focused and client response driven service relating to electronic information must at some point or other make constructive efforts towards identifying and mapping user interests, merging these interest profiles in an integrated fashion so as to interface with all aspects of library work like collection development and information services, thus leading to the betterment of each of these activities. Managing users' dynamic subject interests and information requirements involves sprucing up the existing library and information management activities. It is highly required for all concerned to rethink, adapt their time tested skills and interface them with the latest customer care tools and techniques to further improve library services and give users their rightful place in library and information activities. The library personalization systems discussed in this study will undoubtedly motivate many other libraries to devise similar solutions so that library resources are put to optimum use by connecting relevant information with targeted potential users.

### Acknowledgements

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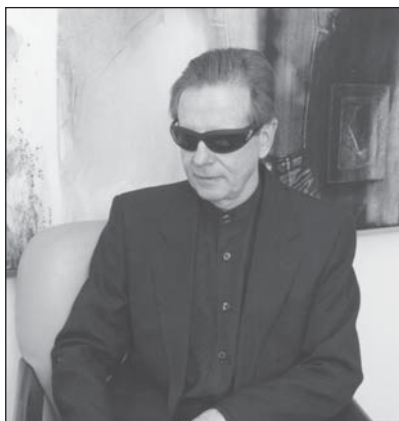
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### About the Author continued

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# Library Services for Blind People: an African perspective

**William Rowland**



William Rowland was educated at the Pioneer School for the Blind in Worcester, South Africa, and possesses philosophy degrees from the University of South Africa and a doctorate from the University of Cape Town. He was for many years the National Executive Director of the South African National Council for the Blind and more recently CEO of the Thabo Mbeki Development Trust for Disabled People, based in Johannesburg. Until late 2007 he was chairperson of the South African Library for the Blind, in which capacity he was host to an IFLA pre-conference held in Grahamstown during August 2007. He may be contacted at: World Blind Union, PO Box 95525, Waterkloof, 0145 Pretoria, South Africa. E-mail: val@sancb.org.za

## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to raise awareness in the IFLA community regarding the situation of blind people in Africa. There are nearly 7 million blind people in Africa; in most African countries, less than 10 percent of blind children receive schooling. This paper is based on information gathered from African delegates to the IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section Conference in Grahamstown, South Africa, in August 2007. No information was available about the Francophone or Lusophone countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The paper briefly outlines the situation of library services for the blind in South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Gambia, and goes on to discuss issues of literacy and education, scarcity of services, standards and expectations, and the technological divide. The author concludes that what we do in the field of education, and what we do about education in each and every country, will change the future prospects of blind people.

**Keywords:** Library services; blind people; Sub-Saharan Africa; South Africa; Kenya; Zambia; Zimbabwe; Nigeria; Sierra Leone; Liberia; Gambia

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## Introduction

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My objective in researching and writing this paper has been to raise awareness in the IFLA community regarding the situation of blind people in Africa and the issues retarding progress in the areas of literacy and library services. The picture is stark, but as the African Century gets under way there is reason for optimism, as I will demonstrate.

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## Africa: Her Neglected Children

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Africa's population is 935 million. The number of Africans who are blind is 6.68 million and the number with low vision is 20 million. In the majority of countries, less than 10 percent of blind children receive schooling, and of those who complete their schooling, no more than 5 percent will find jobs. Only in South Africa do unemployed blind persons receive a social grant of any significance.

Organizations of blind people, who are our chief advocates, exist in nearly all of the 53 African countries, but they are weak and poorly resourced. Increasingly, though, they are being strengthened through the actions of the African Union of the Blind (AFUB) and the World Blind Union (WBU), and of partners in the north.

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## Library Services: an Overview of Very Little

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In what follows, I draw on information gathered by means of a questionnaire distributed amongst African delegates registered for the IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section Conference in Grahamstown

(August 2007). I have contrasted the models of delivery and stages of development. The focus is on the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, where the need is surely the greatest. The outlook in the countries of North Africa is on the whole more favourable, if one is to judge by information received from Tunisia and Morocco. I regret that I have no information from the Francophone or Lusophone countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

### **South Africa – We are the Lucky Ones**

In South Africa, blind readers enjoy comprehensive library services, as provided by two well-resourced organizations. The model of delivery is one of centralized distribution through the freepost, supplemented by so-called minilibs serving particular local communities or institutions.

The South African Library for the Blind in Grahamstown distributes both Braille and audio books and magazines. A personalized information service is available on request. The Library also benefits from exchange agreements with several overseas libraries in English-speaking countries. The membership comprises 2,595 Braille readers and 2,923 audio readers, and the collection includes 12,300 Braille book titles and 10,574 audio book titles. The Library also supports 80 minilibs. The conversion of the audio library to the Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) for talking books is well underway, with over 755 titles in reserve. Blindlib, as it is popularly known, operates under its own Act of Parliament, the South African Library for the Blind Act (Act 91 of 1998), and receives substantial funding from the Department of Arts and Culture.

Tape Aids for the Blind is headquartered in Durban, but its production capacity and service to readers are greatly enhanced by a system of local branches and a corps of 700 volunteers. The 27 recording studios of Tape Aids put out books, magazines, and general information in all eleven official languages. Some 9,300 members have 31,000 book titles to choose from plus 23 audio magazines. The organization also supports 438 minilibs. Tape Aids has one of the most successful fundraising programmes of any organization in the country, enabling it to operate entirely independently of government funding.

Besides these two library services, South Africa has three Braille production houses, while a variety of Braille and audio publications are put out by other institutions and the South African

Government. Such problems as exist in the library services in the main parallel those of industrialized countries, but a low Braille literacy rate does temper the rosy picture I have painted. A growing number of blind people own personal computers and increasingly this group is reading electronic text drawn from a wide variety of sources on the Internet, and this includes books.

Finally, something on education, because of its relevance to the eventual use of libraries. There are 20 schools for the blind in South Africa, but the majority of them are to be converted into resource centres in the transition to inclusive education. Our model of inclusive education is being piloted at 30 ‘full service schools’, of which five of the 20 special schools form part. These full service schools are intended to accommodate any individual with a learning difficulty or social disadvantage. Despite the fact that our provision is relatively good, not all blind children in South Africa can be said to be at school.

### **Kenya: An Integrated Model**

Services to visually impaired persons are delivered via the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS), with its network of 45 branches throughout the country. The KNLS Board is mandated by an Act of Parliament (CAP 225 of the Laws of Kenya) to promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain, and develop libraries for the general population, and, as part of this, KNLS operates three active library services for visually impaired persons in the strategic locations of Nairobi, Thika, and Kisii. Braille and audio books are available and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) and Internet use supported. The attendance is 250 blind and low vision persons per month.

The Kenya Institute for the Blind and the Kenya Society for the Blind also provide limited library services. The Kenyatta University has its own library where students can access academic papers in Braille, Braille and audio textbooks, and three daily newspapers. They also have use of CCTV equipment and computers.

While there are 19 integrated education programmes in Kenya spanning 34 of the 72 districts, 24 schools actively integrate visually impaired learners. Three schools have libraries of their own and there are two Braille production units in the country.

### **Zambia: A Symbiotic Model**

The Zambian National Library and Cultural Centre for the Blind is located in Lusaka. It provides a lending service and carries out Braille transcription and audio production. It offers Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training to newly blinded individuals, as well as a literacy programme plus computer literacy. Around 1,000 blind persons make use of these services.

While inclusive education has been introduced very recently, the Ndola School for the Blind, Magwero School for the Blind, Sefula School for the Blind, St Mary's School, and Mporokoso School for the Blind continue with their tuition. These schools serve as subcentres for the National Library. However, their service is restricted because of a lack of funds.

### **Zimbabwe: Where Faith and Attitude Overcome Obstacles**

The Dorothy Duncan Centre for the Blind in Harare provides materials in Braille, audio formats (tapes, compact discs, and DAISY), large print, and standard print with Braille overlays for children and parents. Materials are supplied in English, Shona, and Ndebele, and, on occasion, needs have even been met in French, German, and Portuguese.

On request books are lent out to schools or individual students, to be returned at the end of the academic year. This includes an increasing number of children who have been taken out of school because parents cannot pay the school fees. Books are transcribed for all levels of education – primary, secondary, and tertiary – and it is estimated that 95 percent of the books in alternative formats in the country come from Dorothy Duncan. The Centre also gives training in the use of Perkins brailers, tape recorders, DAISY players, computers with JAWS (the most popular screen reader for blind people worldwide), and CCTV equipment.

Comparatively speaking, the statistics of the Dorothy Duncan Centre are impressive, with 3,000 students, 300 plus elderly persons using large print, 300 plus readers on audio, and 20 users of DAISY.

There are three schools for the blind and 24 special units in the mainstream, down from a former level of 54 units.

And let it be said that this is done in circumstances of growing chaos. Much of the work is carried out in private homes because people do not have money for fuel. Workers who make it to Dorothy Duncan are hungry and somehow have to be fed. For these achievements, I pay special tribute to my dear and admired friend, Sister Catherine Jackson, and her indomitable co-workers.

### **Nigeria: Uncoordinated Fragmentation**

Nigeria has a population of 120 million. Of the 1 million people estimated to be blind or visually impaired, more than 25,000 are of school-going age. Less than 10 percent of these actually attend school, with the remaining 90 percent confined to houses or roaming the streets as beggars.

Although the numbers are limited, blind and visually impaired students are found at all types of educational institution – primary and secondary schools, polytechnics, universities, and vocational training centres. The production and distribution of information resources in alternative formats to meet the needs of these students is haphazard and uncoordinated.

There are five institutions producing Braille, three in the south and two in the north, and three of them also undertake audio production. The Anglo Nigeria Welfare Association for the Blind (ANWAB), in Lagos, has a collection of some 200 titles in Braille and 200 on tape sorted into subject areas for adults, children, and students at the University of Lagos. Out of the 36 state libraries in the country, only three – those in Oyo, Imo, and Abia – offer library services to blind and visually impaired students. These state libraries do not produce books; they only receive Braille books from donors and make them available in their library collections.

Morayo Ibronke Atinmo of the University of Ibadan has tackled the formidable task of setting up a computerized catalogue and distribution database of alternative format materials for blind and visually impaired persons in Nigeria. For this achievement she received a best practice award from the Ulverscroft Foundation in 2003.

### **Sierra Leone and Liberia: First Building Blocks**

Both Sierra Leone and Liberia have been ravaged by civil wars of the utmost cruelty and barbarity.

This means that both countries are in transition, working off an extremely low economic base.

In Sierra Leone, only some 12 percent of blind people are “in the mainstream of learning”, to quote my correspondent at the Educational Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired. There are five special schools and educational centres in the country, but none of them have libraries, including the Milton Margai School for the Blind, established as long ago as 1956. My correspondent registered for law at the University of Sierra Leone in 1999, but was unable to complete his studies. He attributes this to the lack of a library service. More encouraging is the fact that the Educational Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired does have a Braille printer, thanks to the support of the FORCE Foundation, a charitable organization based in The Netherlands that seeks to improve the lives of visually impaired people through education and training.

Likewise, in Liberia, there is no library service whatsoever. In the past, learners attending school in integrated settings have had to make use of volunteers from the local community, spending long hours in transcribing their own textbooks. A special school is administered by the government, while the Rehab Institute of the Christian Association of the Blind is being transformed into a National Resource Centre with classroom facilities for 300 learners and dormitory accommodation for 110 children and youth. Also, a Braille production unit is under development, thanks to the support of the FORCE Foundation, once again. And now for a piece of particularly good news: At the National Resource Centre, the establishment of a library with Internet access is in prospect through a potential grant from Quick Impact, the United Nations Special Projects Programme in the country.

### **Gambia: Virtually a Zero Base**

The situation in The Gambia, I suspect, parallels that in the majority of least developed countries and poignantly illustrates the need for coordinated international and national effort.

The Gambian Organization for the Visually Impaired operates the only school for the blind in the country, with five classrooms and a resource centre cum library. After Grade 4, learners are admitted to inclusive settings in the mainstream, supported by itinerant teachers. Some of the schools do have library facilities, but for sighted

learners only. The library of the Gambian Organization for the Visually Impaired (GOVI) comprises one room stocked with outdated Braille materials and equipment, while Braille and audio production facilities are non-existent.

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## Context Issues

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Let me turn now to what we may call ‘context issues’. Here I will focus on those issues which have acute relevance to Africa and the developing world, which is not to say that they do not have relevance for industrialized countries. They ought also to have particular importance for IFLA, the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), and the WBU.

### **Literacy and Education**

And the first of these issues is literacy and education. Where education is provided in special schools, the number of learners tends to be limited to the capacity of existing schools. In inclusive settings, enrolment levels, dropout numbers, inadequate support and material resourcing, and lack of specialized teacher training are the challenges to be overcome. It follows that wherever these circumstances prevail literacy rates will be low. In South Africa, where school attendance is relatively high, I have applied an equation based on the national census and taking into account the number of school leavers each year, as well as the number of readers of magazines and books from the national library. My conclusion is that the Braille literacy rate is no more than 1.2 percent.

Now the level of education and the promotion of a culture of reading, on the one hand, and the development of library services to meet growing needs and stimulate usage, on the other hand, are interdependent forces. This means that educators and librarians, in partnership with organizations of blind people, are jointly and severally responsible for advancement in these areas. One of the basic needs that I would emphasize is that in every school setting blind children and children with low vision should have access to a library service.

### **Scarcity of Services**

The next issue I want to point to is the scarcity of services and resources. From the brief country reports included in this paper, and even more from

impressions on the ground in Africa, it is clear that there are only a scattering of Braille production units, few libraries, and very few libraries operating optimally. Such libraries as do exist work in isolation and it is to be doubted whether these libraries and production units are archiving and cataloguing their materials effectively. Frequently, there is an emphasis on leisure reading, while educational and professional needs are neglected. Another unpalatable truth is that professional librarians do not consider employment in library services for the blind to be a serious career option. A system of peer support, twinning, and personnel exchanges could go some way to addressing this negative factor.

### Standards and Expectations

Another question to consider is what standards our libraries ought to aspire to. How many readers are to be served via what formats? How big should the collection be? What support should be given to schools, and what training can be offered to individuals in the community?

The reverse side of the coin is equally important. What expectations can blind people rightly have of their library services, in terms of their diverse needs, pressing as well as less urgent? And to what extent can an information service become part of the demand? These are not philosophical questions, but practical ones that have to be translated into our expectations of governments and ourselves.

### The Technological Divide

The final issue I will raise today is relevant to library services for the blind everywhere. It is the technological divide, not only between the 'haves' and 'have nots', but also between an older and a younger generation. There is a younger generation of blind people skilled in the use of computers and for whom the Internet and the burgeoning electronic media have become their source of information and intellectual satisfaction. I am acquainted with blind individuals who are avid readers and who have not ordered a book from any library for a long time. A father recently expressed to me the hope that his blind daughter will be able to carry in her pocket a single device that will be for her a means of communication, information, and entertainment. The challenge in this technological age is how to make our libraries relevant to this emergent generation. We are at a

watershed in our affairs, of that there can be no doubt.

### The Right to Read

Finally, I have laid before you some stark facts and daunting challenges, but I firmly believe that there is cause for optimism. We are experiencing a gathering wave of new activism in the disability rights movement, globally and in Africa, and we find ourselves empowered and greatly strengthened in our efforts by a variety of instruments and initiatives, including:

- The new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with its monitoring mechanisms and implementation plans, at both the international and national levels;
- The African Decade of Disabled Persons, with its continental objectives;
- The Education for All Visually Impaired Children (EFA-VI) programme of ICEVI and the WBU, to push forward the inclusive education agenda;
- The WBU Copyright negotiations with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the International Publishers Association (IPA); and
- Increasing cohesion in the work of the WBU and AFUB with its development partners.

And there is more; but it is what we do in the field of education, and what we do about education in each and every country, that will change the future prospects of blind people. And let me here emphasize an element in the EFA-VI campaign which we consider to be absolutely essential: that in our campaigning there must be a demand-side in the action, a demand for inclusive education vocally and unrelentingly expressed by organizations of blind people and the parents of blind children.

As part of this, we assert a universal right to read. For the right to read to be realized, there has to be the ability to read and something to read. And this is why educators and librarians are allies with us in the disability rights movement. I believe progress to be imminent, and when I think of the instruments now at our disposal and the energy rising in our ranks, I am exhilarated. It is the same kind of exhilaration one feels when one takes up a good book to enter its world of unlimited possibilities.



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# The National Library of Pakistan: an overview

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## Abstract

Describes the history and development of the National Library of Pakistan, which was founded in 1949, merged with the Liatat Memorial Library in 1954 and separated again in 1968. The Library moved to its own building at Islamabad in 1988, and opened to the public in 1993. The Library is administered by the Department of Libraries of the Directorate of Libraries and Archives in the Ministry of Education. The prime function of the National Library of Pakistan is to receive, preserve, and maintain the literary heritage of the country under copyright provisions. The annual Pakistan National Bibliography is based on copyright receipts, mainly books. The National Library receives about 66 percent of serial publications and 50–55 percent of books published in the country. Electronic publications are not yet covered by the copyright laws. The Library assigns ISBNs to nearly half of all books published. Library membership and daily readership are very low and services to users very limited. The development of staff and services need immediate attention.

**Keywords:** national libraries; copyright; national bibliography; National Library of Pakistan.

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## Introduction

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Pakistan, born on 14 August 1947 as a result of the partition of British India, is now a federation of four provinces in South Asia. The country has an area of 796,096 square kilometres and a population of 161 million.<sup>1</sup> The national language of Pakistan is Urdu.

The early library scenario in Pakistan was not encouraging. The newly formed government could not pay attention to the library sector due to other priorities. There was no library movement in the country because of the meagre economy and migration and settlement of the masses. At Partition, all the major libraries in former British India went to the lot of India. Pakistan inherited only two libraries of significance, the Punjab University Library (1908), and the Punjab Public Library (1884) – both at Lahore. The establishment of the Directorate of Archives and Libraries was the first noteworthy step towards library development.<sup>2-3</sup>

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## Library Education and Training

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An American librarian, Mr. Asa Don Dickinson, introduced a library science certificate course of short duration at university level in the subcontinent in 1915. The University of the Punjab, Lahore, appointed him as librarian and library science teacher.<sup>4</sup> Several subsequent proposals were made by different library associations and individuals of the subcontinent to start library education at postgraduate level. Delhi University first introduced a degree course in library science in 1947.<sup>5</sup>

The library course at the University of the Punjab was closed in 1947 when Pakistan came into being. This course was revived in 1950 and re-organized in 1955. Enrolment was restricted only to graduates. It was a university-based post-graduate programme of one year's duration, but it was still called a certificate course. Most of the early librarians of Pakistan had passed this course before independence. A number of other certificate courses were started in non-university settings during the first few years after Pakistan's creation. The University of Karachi was the first in Pakistan to introduce a postgraduate diploma in library science in 1956 and a master's degree in 1962.<sup>6</sup>

Out of a total of 87 universities in Pakistan, there are now 11 (nine in the public sector and two in the private sector) in Pakistan having LIS programmes at postgraduate level. Five of these universities offer LIS education up to MPhil and PhD level.<sup>7</sup>

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### Establishment of Directorate of Archives and Libraries

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The Government of Pakistan appointed Mr. K.M. Asadullah (founding Secretary-General of the Indian Library Association and ex-librarian of the National Library in Calcutta) as Officer on Special Duty after his migration to Pakistan in early 1948. Mr. Asadullah and his colleague, Mr. Muhammad Shafi, prepared and submitted to government a plan for establishing a directorate of libraries with archives and a national library in the country. It was due to this proposal that the Ministry of Education established the Directorate of Archives and Libraries (DAL) at Karachi in 1949<sup>8-9</sup> to preserve national documents, manuscripts and other literary heritage of historical importance as well as to institute, govern and promote libraries.<sup>10-11</sup>

The Directorate comprised two major units, dealing respectively with archives and libraries. Although the Directorate was established in the early years of Pakistan, library development thereafter was slow due to want of necessary leadership, as non-librarians always headed the Directorate. In 1973 the government divided the Directorate into two separate departments, the Department of Archives at Islamabad and the Department of Libraries at Karachi.<sup>12-14</sup>

The Department of Libraries is mainly entrusted with the administration of its three subordinate

libraries at Islamabad, namely the National Library of Pakistan, the Islamabad Public Library, and the Model Children's Library.<sup>15</sup> The government demolished the building of Model Children's Library in July 2007 after the military operation at the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) and Jamia Hafsa (Hafsa University), as it was adjacent to these buildings.

A non-professional was the Director General of the Department of Libraries from July 2003 to July 2004 (Hafiz Khubaib Ahmad, personal communication, December 5, 2007). Non-librarians have headed the Directorate of Public Libraries, Punjab (1981) and the Punjab Library Foundation (1985) from the inception of these organizations to the present (Shaukat Hussain, personal communication, December 5, 2007).

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### The National Library of Pakistan

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There is minor disagreement among Pakistani library experts about the year of establishment of the National Library of Pakistan. However, the majority agree upon 1949 as the founding year.<sup>16</sup>

Although the National Library was created in 1949, it existed on paper only and was without any physical building. The National Library started functioning in the real sense when it was renamed as the Liaquat National Library in 1954 after it was merged with the Liaquat Memorial Library. The Liaquat Public Library was founded in 1950 in Karachi in the name of Pakistan's first premier, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan (assassinated on 16 October 1951), and renamed as the Liaquat Memorial Library in 1951. This merger ended in 1968 because the government designated the National Library of Pakistan at Islamabad and the Liaquat Memorial Library (reverted to previous name) at Karachi both as copyright depositories under the copyright ordinance of 1962. The Liaquat Memorial Library was handed over to the government of Sindh province in 1986.<sup>17</sup> It is a question for the National Library of Pakistan administration as to why its rightful share of the rich collection built up over the years was not taken from the Liaquat Memorial Library when it was handed over to the Sindh provincial government.

The National Library started building its own collection in 1967 with copyright receipts and began purchasing books in the mid-1970s, when it got its first ever budget. The Library was

moved among various buildings – mostly rented – in Islamabad and Rawalpindi from 1968 to 1988. The initial plan for the construction of the National Library’s own building at Islamabad was prepared in 1968, revised in 1973, and finally approved in 1980. Construction started in 1982 and was completed in December 1988 at a cost of PKR 130,322 million, now approximately equivalent to USD 2,172 million. The collection of 70,000 volumes which had already been acquired under copyright law and through purchases was then moved to the new building.<sup>18-23</sup> The National Library of Pakistan was formally opened to the public by the then premier on 24 August 1993.<sup>24</sup>

It is astonishing that the copyright ordinance was only enforced in 1967, five years after its approval. Further, it took 20 years from the initial plan to the final construction of the library building and five more years to inaugurate the library. This clearly shows that libraries were not given immediate importance by the people then at the helm of affairs.

### **The National Library Building**

The National Library building is a beautiful, four-storey centrally heated and air conditioned modular building on a 500,112 ft<sup>2</sup> plot comprising a covered area of 168,844 ft<sup>2</sup> designed to accommodate one million volumes, 500 general readers’ seats, work areas for staff, an auditorium with a seating capacity of 450, and other services.<sup>25-26</sup>

The physical location of the National Library has made it almost inaccessible for the populace of capital; it is more suited to the people of the diplomatic enclave. Besides, the Library is surrounded by the Prime Minister’s and President’s secretariats, the Supreme Court, foreign missions, the National Assembly and Senate, the Central



*Figure 1. The National Library of Pakistan.*

Board of Revenue, the radio station and the like. This power zone has further minimized public access to National Library of Pakistan in sensitive conditions.

### **Functions, Activities and Objectives**

The main functions, activities and objectives of the National Library<sup>27</sup> are:

1. To acquire library materials generally, and particularly a comprehensive collection, both current and retrospective, relating to Pakistan and its people and in accordance with national requirements.
2. To receive and maintain the national published heritage under copyright law.
3. To promote and encourage the use of library materials through user orientation, information, and document delivery services to the key people in Pakistan’s socioeconomic and cultural development sectors.
4. To produce current and retrospective national bibliographies.
5. To participate in the planning of all types of library services in the country to build support services and cooperation between libraries.
6. To act as an organizing agency for international lending and exchange of library material.
7. To organize courses, seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. for the training and education of librarians and to encourage the use of new technologies.
8. To play an effective role in raising the standards of libraries and library services and conduct research to determine information needs.
9. To take measures towards the establishment of union catalogues or databases of resources of important libraries of Pakistan regarding coordinated use.
10. To participate in international library meetings, conferences, etc. for mutual benefit.
11. To promote such other activities which contribute to the enlightenment, enjoyment and community life of the people of Pakistan.

The National Library of Pakistan is a member of IFLA and of the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL).<sup>28</sup>

The Library has organized some seminars and a workshop since 2000. It hosted the Pakistan Library Association’s 17th annual conference and a focus group discussion conducted by the library and information science (LIS) teachers of Punjab

University in 2007. The office of the Federal Branch of the Pakistan Library Association (PLA) has been situated in the National Library since 1995.

Firm determination and sincere efforts are required to make some of the above objectives realistic and achievable like international lending, encouragement in the use of new technologies (relevant laboratories should be established first), playing an effective role in raising the standards of libraries and library services, conducting research to determine information needs, and the establishment of union catalogues or databases of resources of important libraries of Pakistan regarding coordinated use. Nevertheless, the organizing or hosting of a few useful professional events is commendable.

**Staff**

The National Library of Pakistan now employs 180 people, including 33 professionals and semi-professionals. A professionally qualified and experienced Director General heads the Library. Other professional positions include directors (2), deputy directors (2), assistant directors (9), bibliographer (1), editor (1), and semi-professional junior librarians (17). The basic qualification required for all the professional positions is at least a master’s degree in library and information science (Haji Dad Khan and Zulfiqar Ahmad, personal communication, November 22, 2007).

The staff of the National Library of Pakistan seemed to be reluctant when asked by the author for some critical information about their internal work environment, staff interrelations and job satisfaction level, problems, attitude of the administration towards professional staff and vice versa, the cost of Virtua, stocktaking results, etc. There has also been a brain drain; many capable persons who could be assets to the Library have left. It appears that there is frustration and lack of coordination and communication among the staff due to the lack of promotion for senior professionals, who have been working in the same grade for more than 14 years.

**Budget**

An approximate budget of PKR 40 million, including a book budget of PKR 3.5 million, has been provided to the Department of Libraries for the financial year 2007–2008. A development

budget amounting to PKR 6 million was also allocated during the same fiscal year (Chaudhry Muhammad Nazir, personal communication, November 22, 2007).

**Collections**

The collections shown in Table 1<sup>29</sup> have been gradually built through purchase, copyright deposit, gifts, exchange, and donations.

The book collection includes 40,100 volumes received through copyright deposit. The acquisition of copies of 30 PhD dissertations on Pakistan from different American universities has further enriched the collection.

Access to worldwide online digital resources is provided to 250 local institutions by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) under the national digital library programme – “A programme to provide researchers within public and private universities in Pakistan and non-profit research and development organizations with access to international scholarly literature based on electronic (online) delivery, providing access to high quality, peer-reviewed journals, databases and articles across a wide range of disciplines.” These resources comprise 30 databases having over 20,000 full-text research journals and other periodical literature and 40,000 books from the world’s leading publishers.<sup>30</sup> However, the Higher Education Commission has not yet included the National Library in this programme, nor does the National Library maintain direct subscriptions to such sources. Instead some foreign magazines (e.g. *Time*, etc) are purchased from local vendors (Fazal-e-Majid, personal communication, December 6, 2007).

Category	Quantity
Books	130,000 volumes
Manuscripts	555 titles
Microfilms	45 reels
Microfiches	48000 cards
Magazines	845 titles
Newspapers	135 titles

*Table 1. National Library of Pakistan. Collections, November 19, 2007.*

### National Bibliographical Unit

The National Bibliographical Unit (NBU) is the oldest section of the National Library. It was established in 1962 in the Liaquat National Library after approval of the copyright ordinance and subsequently inherited by the Department of Libraries in 1973. Its primary aim is to prepare the Pakistan National Bibliography (PNB). The unit has so far prepared and published 39 volumes of the PNB from 1962 to 2006. The PNB follows the pattern of the British National Bibliography. The bibliography from 1947 to 1961 was published in 1962 by a separate organization, the Pakistan Bibliographical Working Group. The Unit also sends a bibliography of Urdu translations of foreign works to UNESCO. The copyright law was amended in 1992 and implemented as an act to include serial publications.<sup>31-33</sup> The PNB has frequently been published with a time lag of one to two years due to manual formatting, preparation, typing, etc.

The extension of copyright law to embrace non-book publications has been in the pipeline for more than a decade. The National Library of Pakistan should work on this matter promptly to avoid further loss of these publications. As long ago as 1999, an average of 30 video discs/cassettes per month was being published in Pakistan.<sup>34</sup> This will have increased by three to four times by now.

### Delivery of Book and Newspaper Branch

The Delivery of Book and Newspaper Branch (DBNB) is the second oldest section of the National Library, established in 1967 to receive publications under copyright law. According to this law, it is obligatory for Pakistani publishers to deposit one best copy of their publications with the National Library within 30 days without any charges.<sup>35</sup> The PNB is the product of such depository publications, almost all books. There is no record of whether or not the books received bear ISBNs.

The copyright receipts, according to a rough estimate, comprise between 50 and 60 percent of the total published literature of Pakistan. This is due to complications and procedural flaws in the copyright law such as prolonged process from the National Library to the Ministry of Law through the Ministry of Education and prolonged trials in court through the public prosecutor. No publisher has been sued so far, for the litigation process

may involve more expenditure and labour than the cost of a book or periodical and the penalty, which is only PKR 500 (Zulfiqar Ahmad, personal communication, December 6, 2007). According to the *Pakistan Statistical Yearbook* for 2007 a total of 1464 periodical titles were published in Pakistan in 2006. All these titles should be available in the National Library under copyright law. However, as shown in Table 1, the periodical collection of the National Library comprises only 980 periodical titles (845 magazines and 135 newspapers), including some foreign serial publications. The National Library's periodical receipts under copyright law would therefore appear to be less than 66 percent of the total annual production of periodical titles in Pakistan. It is estimated that copyright deposit receipts of Pakistan book titles may be between 50 and 55 percent of the total published output, since books are far more costly than periodicals. Unfortunately, statistics on book publishing output and deposits are not available.

### Acquisition Section

This section started functioning in 1975. At present it has two major duties; the first is to fill the publications gap from 1947 to 1967 through purchase, etc., especially from privately held personal collections; the second is the acquisition of foreign publications.<sup>36</sup> Four members of the professional staff comprise the committee formed for the selection of books. Weeding has never been done, so that many knowledge resources have become outdated. The acquisitions budget of about PKR 3.1 million is spent on the purchase of local books (mostly in Urdu and English) and foreign books (in English). Books purchased during the financial year 2006–2007 on almost all disciplines with an emphasis on social sciences and humanities are 1596 (Irshad Ahmad Sherwani, Zulfiqar Ahmad and Haji Dad Khan, personal communication, December 6, 2007).

### ISBN Agency

The International ISBN Agency in Berlin nominated the National Library of Pakistan in 1985 for registering publishers and assigning ISBNs to local publications. Nearly 1200 codes have so far been allotted to publishers out of 1842 codes given by the International ISBN Agency<sup>37</sup>. The National Library has so far assigned near 25,500 ISBNs to Pakistani publications (Zulfiqar Ahmad, personal communication, November 23, 2007).

The agency is believed to receive requests from publishers for ISBN assignment in respect of about half the estimated annual output of book titles. Most minor publishers might not apply to get ISBNs for their books, either due to lack of awareness about the existence or importance of ISBNs or the fact that applying for an ISBN would bring the publication to the notice of the National Library, which would then expect to receive a copy of the book after publication under the copyright law.

### Readers Services

This section started functioning in 1993 after the formal opening of National Library for the general public. The services of this section encompass:

- reference, information, reading and research services
- audiovisual and reprographic services, free Internet surfing on 10 PCs, online public access catalogue (OPAC)
- book exhibitions on important national events
- orientation tours for national and international delegates, and membership service.

Besides discipline-wise reading halls, 14 separate rooms have also been built for researchers. Reprographic facilities, mostly photostat, are available at a fee. The Library remains open on Monday through Saturday from 08:00 am to 07:00 pm. Any citizen of Pakistan above 20 years of age is entitled to become a member. Citizens of foreign countries who live or work in Pakistan may also become members.<sup>38-39</sup>

The National Library of Pakistan is a reference library without any lending service. Membership is granted only to postgraduates against a fee of PKR100 for life. There are 795 registered members, representing about 2 percent of the estimated postgraduate population of some 39,000 in Islamabad. Since non-members may use the library without any fees or charges, there are seemingly no advantages, in terms of facilities and services, in being a member. Loan services, delivery services, distance services to people in other parts of the country, extension and field services, virtual accessibility to digitized resources, chat reference service and CAS/SDI, livelihood guidance, or reading halls in different locations of Islamabad do not exist at present. Between 50 and 70 (average 60) users (0.007 percent) out of 780,000 Islamabad adult population – mostly

students – visit the Library every day (Hafiz Khubaib Ahmad, Zulfiqar Ahmad and Liaquat Ali Chatta, personal communication, December 8, 2007).

### Technical Processing Section

This section started functioning in 1993. Classification, subject assigning, cataloguing and allied tasks, data input and computerization, filing and cataloguing in publication (CIP) are the main functions of this section.<sup>40</sup> Bibliographic details of almost all the occidental and oriental book collection have been computerized using the new software, Virtua. Typographic errors made at the data input stage are now being removed. (Sheikh Iqar Hussain, personal communication, November 16, 2007).

Since technical processing (subject cataloguing, filing of catalogue entries, ordered shelving, etc.) of books only started in 1993, a large part of the book collection was unidentifiable and thus unserviceable for about 26 years from 1967. Most of the collection would have become outdated during this period.

### Conservation and Preservation Section

This section was established in 1994. An MSc in chemistry heads this section. Binding and repairing, fumigation, lamination, microfilming, and photocopying and duplicating are among the main responsibilities of this section. A modern conservation laboratory with an adjunct of a bindery has been established to conserve and preserve the collections. Books are regularly fumigated. Manuscripts and rare books have been microfilmed. Tissue lamination is being done for the restoration of manuscripts and rare books. Optical scanning of important national dailies has also been planned.

### Computer and Information Technology Section

This section, which now has more influence on the Library's administration than professional librarians, and comprises an IT team headed by a systems analyst, was established in 1993. The National Library initially prepared inhouse library automation software developed through a local private company, at a cost of more than PKR 1 million. Bibliographic data input started in 1998, but the Urdu version of the software could not be developed. The software could not

cope with international changes in information and communication technologies (ICTs). Hence the National Library of Pakistan purchased the international client-server software 'Virtua' and started using it in 2005 with a 16-user license. The Library now has modern PCs, database servers, gateway servers, a proxy server, a network server, a load sharing server, heavy duty printers and scanners, a multimedia projector, and uninterruptible power supply (UPS) equipment. There is also an intranet of 48 nodes with a digital subscriber line (DSL) connection.<sup>41-43</sup>

The switch from inhouse software to Virtua is under criticism in professional circles. People consider that the move represents a heavy loss (of some PKR 4 to 5 million) to the national exchequer of a developing country and ask why the inhouse (and costly) software was not upgraded to meet the needs. Though all the bibliographic data of the book collections has been fed into Virtua, all the modules and facilities of this software have not yet been fully explored. The present OPAC of the English collection is still using the database created with the previous software.

### **Security Section**

This section was established for the safety and security of the literary resources, building and auditorium, staff and readers. In addition to professional events, hundreds of non-library national and international conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. have been conducted in the auditorium by other organizations. The security section is equipped with modern technology like closed-circuit television (CCTV) system, metal detectors, a sensitized electromagnetic entrance and mobile radio.<sup>44</sup>

Besides the above sections, there are others dealing with establishment/administration, planning and research, serials and accounts.

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### **Recommendations**

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The National Library should convince the authorities of Higher Education Commission, Pakistan regarding its inclusion in the National Digital Library Programme to gain access to worldwide online digital resources. This facility may enhance the readership and membership of the Library.

The Pakistan National Bibliography should follow some standard format for indexing. There should be separate and brief indices for author, title and subject entries. To determine the number of individual titles included in the PNB it is necessary to count all the entries manually one by one. The price of the PNB (PKR 1100, USD 60) should be reduced to make it affordable for all those interested. The PNB should also contain a value-added statistical portion in terms of book publishing output of the country, content and bibliometric analysis, printing trends, price modes, authorship statistics, publishers' trends towards getting ISBNs, etc. Preparation of the bibliography in a timely manner should not be a difficult task using today's electronic means.

In addition to publishing the Pakistan National Bibliography, the National Library should also publish a newsletter and library journal, either independently or in collaboration with the Federal branch of the Pakistan Library Association.

The logic behind the name 'Delivery of Book and Newspaper Branch' is not understandable. This section may either be merged in the acquisition section or the National Bibliographical Unit or renamed as 'Copyright Receipt Department'.

A collection development policy should be devised. If the National Library of Pakistan is intended to be a reference library for all purposes, a working place for scholars, postgraduate students of social sciences and humanities, then there should also be relevant scholars and scientists in the book/material selection committee. Outdated reference books need to be replaced with the latest editions.

There is a need to launch awareness campaigns through various media regarding the importance of ISBN. This would also enhance the copyright deposits.

The National Library of Pakistan should seriously concentrate on enhancing its membership and readership. Either the restriction of membership to postgraduates should be waived or additional facilities and incentives should be provided for members only. These should include: lending services, mobile services, outreach and extension services, online access to digitized resources (newspaper archives, rare books and manuscripts collection, etc) and real-time digital document



delivery, interactive digital reference service, current awareness service (CAS) and selective dissemination of information (SDI), career and research counselling, self-employment and household maintenance workshops, encouragement to users with sincerity and devotion, building of reading halls in different sectors of Islamabad and marketing and public relation campaigns keeping in view the AIDA (awareness, interest, desire, action) model. All these are direly needed. The staff should be given training in modern marketing techniques.

The influence of IT professionals in librarianship is growing day by day. Lest they should replace library professionals in future, library schools in Pakistan need to emphasize more on the ICT module of the LIS curriculum for the training of prospective librarians.

The Virtua software should be fully explored and utilized. For such costly software, the integration of all library operations, automatic generation of the PNB and accessions lists, indexing, authority filing, OPAC, cross referencing, system-generated CAS and SDI on the basis of already maintained users' profiles, automatic reply to FAQs, virtual reference service, various reports and statistics, management information system, and the like should be minor tasks.

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### Conclusion

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National libraries are the symbols of civilized nations. Indeed the National Library of Pakistan has added more to the glory of Pakistan. Still there is a lot for the National Library to do. It should be the topmost information and resource centre. It should work in collaboration with the PLA as a coordinating force for all libraries, and the fountainhead of all kinds of library development in the country. For this purpose, the promulgation of a national library law and the structuring and re-organization of the National Library are essential. The National Library should establish branches in the four provincial headquarters as copyright depositories for backup purposes. Finally, there is a need to inculcate a professional culture in the National Library of Pakistan. Nonetheless, the present leadership, having visionary traits, seems to be resourceful and enthusiastic to make the National Library of Pakistan an example for its global counterparts.

As this study did not take into account the evaluation of National Library of Pakistan against standards or its comparison with any other national library of repute, future studies can be conducted in this context. This would be helpful in providing information on how the National Library of Pakistan can improve further.

### Acknowledgements

The author is deeply indebted to the administration and officers of National Library of Pakistan, especially Chaudhry Muhammad Nazir (Director General), Syed Ghayyur Hussain (Research Officer), Zulfiqar Ahmad (Director), Hafiz Khubaib Ahmad (Deputy Director), Haji Dad Khan (Assistant Director), Sheikh Iqrar Hussain (Assistant Director), Irshad Ahmad Sherwani (Editor), Fazal-e-Majid (Computer Programmer), and Amjad Majeed (Assistant Director), for all their help and information provided. Mr. Liaqat Ali Chatta (Assistant Census Commissioner in Population Census Organization) is appreciated for giving population statistics. Professor Doctor Khalid Mahmood of Punjab University is highly thanked for finally reviewing this paper.

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## How to Get Libraries on to the Political Agenda. The President's Workshop on Successful Lobbying in Durban

**Bernd Schleh**

At Congresses – national and international – word has already gotten about: while participants at most events can sit back relax and simply listen, participation is in order with the new IFLA President Claudia Lux – but still the rush is big. Over 100 librarians and information specialists poured into Lux's workshop in Durban. They made up an impressive list of references for the lobbying of librarians and agreed on which mistakes are to be avoided at any rate.

There are sufficient instructions on successful lobbying, above all from the US and Scandinavia. During a joint brainstorming it became apparent



*Claudia Lux during the Workshop.*

that these pieces of advice cannot be applied to all libraries in all countries in the same way. It makes a difference whether you promote the extension of a library in a highly developed industrial nation or in a rural community in Southern Africa, where establishing a library is competing with setting up water supplies.

In her introduction, Claudia Lux therefore outlined what matters in lobbying for libraries – no matter in which situation: “It’s about pointing out the value of libraries.” Those who, in addition, manage to bravely think ahead and keep in regular contact with the decision makers in the library’s external environment are well prepared and make an important contribution to put into action the current theme of the IFLA presidency ‘Libraries on the Agenda!’

The suggestions coming from the different task groups were as colourful and international as their composition. The questions that needed answering were:

- How to establish the first contact?
- How to present one’s ideas?
- Which are the corner pillars of successful lobbying?
- What ought to be avoided?

A short summary of the most important suggestions:

- act convincingly, self-confidently and professionally – and passionately if it’s appropriate
- show solutions instead of complaining about problems
- try to convince VIPs from the public sector (politics, culture, sports) of your aims
- cooperate with professional lobbyists if necessary
- approach the media



*Participants get down to work in the President's Workshop.*

- be aware of government and council programmes and place your institution within
- establish circles of friends for libraries
- be persistent and keep applying
- when talking to decision makers: know what you want to achieve and stick to the subject
- express your request in a style common in politics
- address your dialogue partner correctly
- when on an engagement with decision makers: have an antenna for how much talking is appropriate and take time to listen
- call attention to your library and surprise with its services and campaigns
- allow your library to be used in different contexts and functions: e.g. as a polling station like in some Scandinavian countries
- emphasize the various possibilities your library offers concerning integration issues
- invite decision makers into the library
- strategically plan your lobbying
- put yourself in a politician's position and make it clear how your library can contribute to achieving his or her political goals and thus help with his or her re-election
- be flexible during negotiations and also make compromises (it sometimes can be helpful

to take a step backwards first to reach your goal)

- include customers into your strategy (often they can put more pressure onto decision makers and achieve more than librarians themselves)
- during negotiations, be well prepared and produce solid numbers and statements
- libraries have to present themselves in public life – and this applies just as well to scientific libraries

Those who take to heart these pieces of advice stand a good chance of putting their libraries' work in perspective and receiving more political and financial support to reach their goals. Of course lobbying also offers plenty opportunities to put one's foot in it. The participants of the international workshop spotted mainly two danger zones. First of all: never appear pitiful! Second: never appear as a petitioner but always at eye level!

**Note**

Translated by Kirsten Wiczorek (Dec. 2007)

## From the Secretariat

## NEWS CONTENTS

From the Secretariat . . . . .	101
Membership Matters . . . . .	102
Future IFLA Conferences and Meetings . . . . .	102
IFLA Publications . . . . .	104

## New Secretary General



*Jennefer Nicholson*

IFLA is pleased to announce the appointment of Jennefer Nicholson as its new Secretary General, from September 2008. She will join IFLA's Headquarters in The Hague on 1 June 2008 as Secretary General designate and work with the outgoing Secretary General, Prof. Peter Lor, until she takes over on 6 September 2008.

Jennefer Nicholson has graduate qualifications in library and information science and in public policy and has spent most of her working life in the information sector – in advertising, information brokerage, and the library and information services sector. She moved

into association management in the early 1990s and was appointed Executive Director of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) from 1999 to the end of 2005, following five years as the Deputy Executive Director. ALIA is the national professional body for the library and information sector, with 5000 personal members and 1000 institutional members. Jennefer was instrumental in the Association's renewal and restructure process, and in expanding ALIA's advocacy and participative role in the wider community.

For the past year Jennefer has been working with the Australian Government on media and content policy, and a major national broadband strategy.

Jennefer has over ten years' involvement in IFLA. She completed her second term as a member of the IFLA Management of Library Associations Section at WLIC Durban 2007, and has also served a term on the Education and Training Section. In addition, Jennefer has extensive experience as a director or member of a number of government and industry advisory bodies in the cultural, education and training, and association sectors.

## New Senior Policy Adviser

IFLA is pleased to announce the appointment of Stuart Hamilton as its new Senior Policy Adviser. Stuart will begin work at IFLA's Headquarters in The Hague in January 2008 and his appointment will last for three years.

Stuart Hamilton holds a PhD in Library and Information Science from the Royal School of Library

and Information Science in Copenhagen, Denmark, and he gained his Masters LIS qualification from University College London. His PhD research examined freedom of access to information on the Internet worldwide, and the ways in which libraries can overcome barriers such as censorship or the digital divide to ensure that library users receive the best possible access to online information resources. He has lectured extensively around the world on his PhD subject and other intellectual freedom matters, and his findings have been published in print and online journals.

Stuart worked for IFLA's FAIFE Office in Copenhagen between 2001–2006 at the same time as completing his PhD. During this time he was able to build an extensive network of experts in intellectual freedom who were able to contribute to the work of FAIFE, and he was also able to research and develop IFLA policy through involvement in areas where freedom of expression has been under pressure. He has travelled to Cuba, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and also to Tunisia where he assessed the situation in the country in the



*Stuart Hamilton*

run up to the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis. Since 2005 he has been involved in FAIFE's outreach efforts in relation to the IFLA Internet Manifesto and has organized workshops on freedom of access to information on the Internet in Europe, the Caribbean and South America.

Stuart has a background in public libraries, working at Brighton Library on the south coast of England before moving to Denmark in 2001. In Brighton he specialized in Internet training for the Internet and studied for his LIS Masters qualification part-time. He has always been interested in the difficulties

of building a network and firm base in the library profession, and in 2003 co-founded IFLA's New Professionals Discussion Group to address these issues.

## Membership Matters

### New Members

We bid a warm welcome to the following 22 members who have joined the Federation between 28 of September and 14 of December.

#### *Institutions*

WHO Regional Office for Africa, Library, Congo  
Ferdowsi University, Information Center & Central Library, Iran, Islamic Republic of

Parent Library Community of Serbia, Republic of Serbia  
Thailand Knowledge Park, Thailand  
San Francisco Public Library, United States

#### *Personal Affiliates*

Abile Atitihoun, Benin  
John Slater, Canada  
Ms Carly Bachman, Chile  
Ms Claire Palemer, China  
Ruperto Arce, Costa Rica  
Ms Jane Wilson-Giron, France  
Ms Binta Cadan Farouk, Nigeria

Ms Rosemary Ilunamhe, Nigeria  
Ms Vathiswa Majaja-Magwentshu, South Africa  
Ms Elsie Okobi, United States  
Joy Sentman-Paz, United States  
Paul Signorelli, United States  
Ryan Womack, United States

#### *Student Affiliates*

Ms Maria Helena de Lima Hatschbach, Brazil  
Ms Veronika Leibrecht, Germany  
Ms Mara Thacker, United States  
Ms Alice Campbell, United States

## Future IFLA Conferences and Meetings

### IFLA WLIC Quebec, 2008

**World Library and Information Congress: 74th IFLA General Conference and Council, Québec, Canada, 10-15 August 2008.**  
*Theme:* Libraries without borders: navigating towards global understanding.

**74e Congrès mondial des Bibliothèques et de l'Information, Ville de Québec, Québec, Canada, 10-14 août 2008.** *Thème:* Bibliothèques sans frontières : naviguer vers une compréhension globale

#### *Sessions and Satellite Meetings*

Academic and Research Libraries Section. Consortia and cooperative programmes  
Acquisition and Collection Development Section. In and out (of copyright): contrasting perspectives

on digitization of library collections  
Africa Section. Globalization: challenges and opportunities for African libraries  
Agricultural Libraries Discussion Group in association with IAALD (International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists). Agricultural information transfer systems worldwide  
ALP program In conjunction with the Association internationale Francophone des Bibliothécaires et Documentalistes (AIFBD) first congress/À l'occasion du premier congrès de l'AIFBD. Francophonies et bibliothèques: innovations, changements et réseautage/Association internationale francophone des bibliothécaires et documentalistes, supported by the IFLA ALP Core Activity. Libraries and the French-speaking communities of the world: innovation, change and networking

Audiovisual and Multimedia Section, with the Committee on Copyright and Other Legal Matters, the National Libraries Section, and the Section on Bibliography. The legal deposit of audiovisual and multimedia materials: practice around the world  
Bibliography Section. National bibliography agencies without borders? Experiences on collaboration with other producers of bibliographic data  
Cataloguing Section. RDA: Resource Description and Access: foundations, changes and implementation  
Cataloguing Section. Sharing standards: cooperation with other actors  
Division for Regional Activities. Indigenous knowledge: language, culture and information technology  
Document Delivery and Resource Sharing Section. Global resource

- sharing across borders: crossing geographical, language and conceptual boundaries in interlibrary loan and document delivery services
- Education And Training Section. LIS support staff education: library technicians & library assistants?
- Education And Training Section. Recruiting students into LIS programmes: navigating towards global understanding
- Genealogy and Local History Section with the Reference and Information Services Section. Genealogy and local history for all – focus on family and local history collection and reference services for multicultural communities
- Geography and Map Libraries Section. Mapping North America: a graphic journey through history
- Government Information and Official Publications Section. Globalization of government information: creating digital archives for increased access
- Government Libraries Section. Conquering barriers : the politics of information: communication, collaboration, and content
- Health and Biosciences Section. The role of evidence-based research in medical libraries
- Health and Biosciences Libraries Section. The role of humanities in medical education and patient care
- Information Literacy Section and Academic and Research Libraries Section. Retour sur investissement: évaluer l'enseignement de la maîtrise de l'information. Qu'apprennent-ils vraiment et à quel prix ?
- Information Technology Section. Enabling access to the global library – small is beautiful: distributed deployment of library services for small and special libraries
- Latin American and the Caribbean Section. Cultural identity and technology in Latin America and the Caribbean libraries / Identidad cultural y tecnología en las bibliotecas de América Latina y el Caribe
- Libraries for Children And Young Adults Section. Setting sails for new horizons: what tools do we need and do we want?
- Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section. Legislative libraries: partners in democracy
- Library Buildings and Equipment Section in conjunction with the Metropolitan Libraries Section. Renovating and renewing libraries: the wow factor
- Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section. Multicultural library services: success stories from Canada and around the world
- Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section. Library services without cultural borders: navigating through demographic realities and best practices in multicultural library services
- Library Theory and Research Section. Theoretical approaches to research on libraries as space and place
- Management and Marketing Section; Statistics and Evaluation Section; and Library Theory and Research Section. Managing libraries in a changing environment – legal, technical, and organizational aspects
- Management of Library Associations Section with Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Section and Action for Development through Libraries Programme. Leadership skills and advocacy for libraries: best practices in library association management
- National Libraries Section and Statistics and Evaluation Section. Ensuring quality in national libraries: performance measures and quality evaluation supporting cultural heritage and research
- Preservation and Conservation Section with the National Libraries Section and possibly the IFLA Preservation and Conservation Core Activity. Preserving cultural heritage: the Canadian view
- Preservation and Conservation Section, IFLA CDNL Alliance on Bibliographic Standards (ICABS), IFLA Information Technology Section, IFLA Core Activity on Preservation and Conservation (PAC) and IFLA Law Libraries Section: Session 1: Digital objects on physical carriers; Session 2: Preservation infrastructures
- Public Libraries Section with the Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section. In these days of technology, how can public libraries attract and keep youth patrons?
- Rare Books and Manuscripts Section with the Geography and Map Libraries Section. Rare maps of North America: their cultural significance, their research value, and their security
- Rare Books and Manuscripts Section. Expanding frontiers of knowledge: documents of exploration, discovery, and travel
- Reading Section. Global Village: beyond bricks and bookshelves. Innovation in the development of community and school libraries
- Reading Section in co-operation with the Public Libraries and Multicultural Sections. The Global Literacy and Reading Fair: sharing good library practices in support of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012
- Reference and Information Services Section. Have we have blown up the reference desk? Reference Services in virtual worlds
- School Libraries and Resource Centres Section. Boys and reading; Web 2.0 and maximizing the presence of the school librarians and libraries; Getting school libraries on the political agenda at the regional or local level; School librarians training: international issues in relation to training; Evidence based practice
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Disappearing disciplinary borders  
in the social science library –  
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Library statistics for the 21st-  
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More information about the location  
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### Further information:

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French: [http://www.ifla.org/IV/  
ifla74/finalann2008fr.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla74/finalann2008fr.pdf)

## IFLA WLIC 2009 in Italy

The IFLA World Library and  
Information Congress: 75th IFLA  
General Conference and Council  
will be held from 23-27 August  
2009 in Milan, Italy, on the theme:  
Libraries create futures: building on  
digital heritage.

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ifla.org/IV/ifla75/1st-ann2009-  
en.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla75/1st-ann2009-en.pdf)

or

Milan City National Committee,  
IFLA 2009 Milan, Italy, Associazione  
Italiana Biblioteche. E-mail: [ifla2009-  
pres@aib.it](mailto:ifla2009-pres@aib.it) Website: [www.aib.it](http://www.aib.it)

## IFLA WLIC 2010 in Australia

The Australian Library and Infor-  
mation Association and the city  
of Brisbane have been selected to  
host the International Federation  
of Library Associations and Insti-  
tutions (IFLA) World Library and  
Information Congress in 2010.

*Further information from:* IFLA  
Headquarters, PO Box 95312, 2509  
CH The Hague, The Netherlands.  
Phone: +31 70 314 0884. Fax: +31  
70 383 4827. IFLA Headquarters,  
PO Box 95312 ,2509 CH The  
Hague, The Netherlands. Phone:  
+31 70 314 0884. Fax: +31 70 383  
4827. E-mail: [ifla@ifla.org](mailto:ifla@ifla.org). Website:  
[www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org)

## IFLA Publications

**World Guide to Library, Archive  
and Information Science Edu-  
cation. 3rd new and completely  
revised edition.** Edited by Axel  
Schneiderjürgen. Munich: K.G.  
Saur, 2007 (IFLA Publications;  
128/129). ISBN 978-3-598-22035-7.  
Price: EUR 168,00 (EUR 148,00 for  
IFLA Members)

The third edition of this guide-  
book lists education institutions  
world-wide where professional  
education and training programmes

are carried out at a tertiary level of  
education or higher.

- More than 900 universities and  
other institutions, and more than  
1,500 relevant programmes from  
all over the world;
- Clearly laid out, entries provide  
address and contact details, as  
well as information regarding  
teaching staff and students,  
programmes' contents, duration  
and level, admission and com-  
pletion requirements, tuition

rates, library and technological  
facilities, continuing education,  
etc.;

- Along with its alphabetical index  
of institutions and an index by  
place names, this makes it an  
up-to-date tool, indispensable for  
networking, as well as quick and  
easy reference.

*Published by:* K.G. Saur Verlag,  
PO Box 701620, 81316 Munich,  
Germany. Tel: +49-89-76902-300.  
Fax: +49-89-76902-150/250).



E-mail: info@saur.de. Website: www.saur.de

**Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dementia.**

Helle Arendrup Mortensen and Gyda Skat Nielsen. The Hague, IFLA Headquarters, 2007. 20p. (IFLA Professional Reports : 104) ISBN 978-90-77897-22-5. ISSN 0168-1931.

The purpose of these guidelines is to raise awareness in libraries, among library professionals, care givers, public policy makers, as well as among families and friends of persons suffering from dementia, that many types of library services and materials can help stimulate the memory while providing pleasure and entertainment. Experience shows that even persons with a middle-stage dementia can benefit from reading literature and obtaining information. These guidelines give

practical recommendations on how to provide mental stimulation with books and other library materials. The publication also includes suggestions for library staff on how to tailor such services to the target population. The examples included are mostly taken from public libraries in Denmark.

This publication is part of a series of guidelines publications from the IFLA Standing Committee Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons (LSDP) focusing on persons with specific disabilities or special needs.

*Available from:* IFLA Headquarters, PO Box 95312, 2509 CH The Hague, Netherlands. Tel: +31 70 3140884. Fax: +31 70 3834827. E-mail: ifla@ifla.org

***International Cataloguing and Bibliographical Control.*** Contents,

Vol. 36, No. 4, October/December 2007.

News and Events

“Tomorrow Never Knows”: the End of Cataloguing? Alan Danskin

UNIMARC Registry. Hugo Manguinhas, Nuno Freire, José Borbinha

Automated Text Classification Using Library Classification Schemes: Trends, Issues, and Challenges. Kwan Yi

Abbreviations and Mark Symbols Recommended by Thesaurus Standards and Authority Guidelines: a Need for Uniform Criteria. Ana M. Martínez

Microfilming and Cataloging the Newspapers in the National Diet Library (NDL). Keiyu Horikoshi  
Harmonising CIDOC CRM and FRBR. Patrick Le Bœuf & Martin Doerr

## INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

### 2008

April 21–22, 2008. Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

**International Copyright Symposium: The Book in the Internet Era: Copyright and the Future for Authors, Publishers and Libraries.**

*Provisional programme:* [www.amsterdamworldbookcapital.com](http://www.amsterdamworldbookcapital.com).

5–7 de mayo de 2008. Salamanca, España.

**III Encuentro Ibérico de Docentes e Investigadores en Información y Documentación. Formación, Investigación y Mercado Laboral en Información y Documentación en España y Portugal.**

*Información:* Correo electrónico: dirección [edibcic2008@usal.es](mailto:edibcic2008@usal.es). <http://www.edibcic.org/>

April 27–30, 2008. Wooster, OHIO, USA.

**United States Agricultural Information Network (USAIN) Conference 2008.** *Theme:* Tradition in Transition: information fueling the future of agbiosciences.

*More information:* [www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/usain/](http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/usain/)

May 14–16, 2008. Windhoek, Namibia.

**IST-Africa 2008: Regional Impact of Information Society Technologies in Africa Conference 2008.**

*More information:* [www.IST-Africa.org/Conference2008](http://www.IST-Africa.org/Conference2008).

May 18–22, 2008. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

**World Congress on Information Technology 2008 (WCIT 2008).**

*Further information:* WCIT 2008 SDN BHD, 1106 & 1107, Block

B, Phileo Damansara II, No. 15, Jalan 16/11, 46350 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia. Tel: (603) 7955 2922. Fax: (603) 7955 2933. E-mail: [cslim@wcit2008.org](mailto:cslim@wcit2008.org). Website: <http://www.wcit2008.org>

May 28–30, 2008. Accra, Ghana.

**eLA 2008: 3rd International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training.**

*Further information:* <http://www.elearning-africa.com/>

June 2–7, 2008. Dubrovnik and Mljet, Croatia.

**Libraries in the Digital Age (LIDA) 2008.**

*Course co-directors:*

Tatjana Aparac-Jelusic, PhD, Department of Information Sciences, Faculty of Philosophy, J.J. Strossmayer University, 31000 Osijek, Croatia. E-mail [taparac@ffos.hr](mailto:taparac@ffos.hr) (contact for general correspondence):

Tefko Saracevic, PhD, School of Communication, Information and Library Studies; Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 08901 USA. E-mail: [tefko@scils.rutgers.edu](mailto:tefko@scils.rutgers.edu)

July 2008. Lusaka, Zambia.

**XVIII Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Library and Information Associations (SCECSAL).**

*Theme:* Libraries and information services towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

*Further information:* <http://www.scecsal.org/zcall.html>

July 14–17, 2008. Las Vegas, USA.

**WORLD COMP'08: World Congress in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, and Applied Computing.** (Composed of 25 International Conferences on various aspects of computing.)

*Further information:* General

Chair and Coordinator, H.R. Arabnia, PhD, Professor, Computer Science, Editor-in-Chief, The Journal of Supercomputing (Springer), University of Georgia, Department of Computer Science, 415 Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7404, USA. Tel: (706) 542-3480. Fax: (706) 542-2966. E-mail: [hra@cs.uga.edu](mailto:hra@cs.uga.edu)

August 10–15, 2008. Québec, Canada.

**IFLA World Library and Information Congress: 74th IFLA General Conference and Council.** *Theme:* Libraries without borders: navigating towards global understanding.

*Contact Details*

IFLA/WLIC Conference Secretariat, Concorde Services Ltd., 4B, 50 Speirs Wharf, Port Dundas, Glasgow, G4 9TH, Scotland. Tel: +(44)(141) 331 0123. Fax: +(44)(141) 331 0234. E-mail: [Wlic2008@congrex.com](mailto:Wlic2008@congrex.com). Web: [www.concorde-uk.com](http://www.concorde-uk.com)

IFLA Headquarters, PO Box 95312, 2509 CH The Hague, The Netherlands. Phone: +31 70 314 0884. Fax: +31 70 383 4827. E-mail: [ifla@ifla.org](mailto:ifla@ifla.org). Website: [www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org)

Quebec City National Committee, WLIC 2008 Québec, Canada, Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de la documentation (ASTED), 3414, avenue du Parc, bureau 202, Montréal, Québec, Canada, H2X 2H5. Tel: (514) 281-5012. Fax: (514) 281-8219. E-mail: [info@asted.org](mailto:info@asted.org). Website: [www.asted.org](http://www.asted.org)

Secrétariat de l'IFLA: Casier postal 95312, 2509 CH La Haye, Pays-Bas. Tél. : +31 70 314 0884. Fax: + 31 70 383 4827. Courriel: [ifla@ifla.org](mailto:ifla@ifla.org). Site Web: [www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org)

Secrétariat du Congrès IFLA/WLIC, Concorde Services Ltd.,

4B, 50 Speirs Wharf, Port Dundas, Glasgow, G4 9TH, Scotland. Tel: +(44)(141) 331 0123. Fax: +(44)(141) 331 0234. E-mail: wlic2007@congrex.com. Wlic2008@congrex.com. Web: www.concorde-uk.com

Comité d'organisation – Québec, WLIC 2008 Québec, Canada, Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de la documentation (ASTED), 3414, avenue du Parc, bureau 202, Montréal, Québec, Canada, H2X 2H5. Tél. +1 (514) 281-5012. Fax: (514) 281-8219. Courriel: info@asted.org. Site Web: www.asted.org

*Further information:*

English: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla74/finalann2008en.pdf>

French: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla74/finalann2008fr.pdf>

August 24–27, 2008. Tokyo, Japan.

**World Conference on Agricultural Information 2008.** *Theme:* The agricultural information community of the future: progress, development, partnerships.

*More details on the programme and logistics will follow:* <http://iaald.blogspot.com/2007/05/iaald-world-congress-2008.html>

October 1–December 19, 2008. Brussels, Belgium.

**STIMULATE: Scientific and Technological Information Management in Universities and Libraries: an Active Training Environment. (Edition 8).**

*Further information:* E-mail (Internet): [stimulate@vub.ac.be](mailto:stimulate@vub.ac.be) or [Paul.Nieuwenhuysen@vub.ac.be](mailto:Paul.Nieuwenhuysen@vub.ac.be) Fax: +32 2 629 2693 (or 2282). Tel. +32 2 629 2629 or +32

2 629 2429 or +32 2 629 2609. Telex 61051 vubco-b. Classical mail: STIMULATE-ITP (or Paul NIEUWENHUYSEN), University Library, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan 2, B-1050 Brussels, BELGIUM. Website: <http://www.vub.ac.be/BIBLIO/itp/>

October 14–16, 2008. Beijing, China.

**International Conference on the Development of Subject Librarianship and Personal Librarianship.** *Themes:* Development of subject librarianship and personal librarianship.

*Further information:* Michael Bailou Huang, LAc, MAc, MLS, MEd, Associate Librarian, Stony Brook University, Health Sciences Library, HSC Level 3, Rm 136, Stony Brook, NY 11794-8034, USA. Tel.: +1 631-444-3794, Cell: +1 631-786-7023, Fax: +1 631-444-6649. E-mail: [michael.b.huang@stonybrook.edu](mailto:michael.b.huang@stonybrook.edu)

## 2009

January 20–22, 2009. Sydney Australia.

**Information Online 2009.**

*Further information:* Conference website: [www.information-online.com.au](http://www.information-online.com.au)

July 27–31, 2009. Florianópolis, SC, Brazil.

**WCCE 2009: 9th IFIP World Conference on Computers in Education.**

*Further information:* E-mail: [coordenacao@wcce2009.org](mailto:coordenacao@wcce2009.org)

August 23–27, 2009. Milan, Italy.

**IFLA World Library and Information Congress: 75th IFLA General Conference and Council.**

*Theme:* Libraries create futures: building on digital heritage.

*Further information:* IFLA 2009 Secretariat, 4B, 50 Speirs Wharf, Port Dundas, Glasgow G4 9TH, Scotland, UK. Tel: +44(0)141 331 0123. Fax: +44(0)207 117 4561. E-mail: [ifla2009@congrex.com](mailto:ifla2009@congrex.com) Conference website: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla75/1st-ann2009-en.pdf>

or

Milan City National Committee, IFLA 2009 Milan, Italy, Associazione Italiana Biblioteche. E-mail: [ifla2009-pres@aib.it](mailto:ifla2009-pres@aib.it) Website: [www.aib.it](http://www.aib.it)

## 2010

August, 2010. Brisbane, Australia.

**IFLA World Library and Information Congress: 76th IFLA General Conference and Council.**

Information regarding the 76th IFLA General Conference and Council will be available on the IFLANET website at a later date: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla76/index.htm>

*Further information:* IFLA Headquarters, PO Box 95312, 2509 CH The Hague, The Netherlands. Phone: +31 70 314 0884. Fax: +31 70 383 4827. E-mail: [ifla@ifla.org](mailto:ifla@ifla.org).

### SOMMAIRES

G.E. Gorman, Daniel G. Dorner and Birgitta Sandell. **Facilitating Grassroots Development: the role of ALP in Division VIII countries. [Aider au développement à la base: le rôle de l'ALP dans les pays de la Division VIII.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 7-12

Décrit les origines et l'évolution de l'Action pour le Développement à travers le Programme des bibliothèques (Advancement of Development through Libraries ou ALP), lancé en 1984 comme programme prioritaire de la Fédération internationale des associations et institutions bibliothécaires (IFLA) et financé principalement à partir de sources provenant des pays nordiques. Évoque la philosophie de l'ALP basée sur la foi dans le développement à la base et son cadre populaire, exprimée dans les termes de son Plan stratégique. Depuis 1991, 181 projets, y compris formations continues, formation aux TIC et à la culture de l'information ainsi que bourses de voyage, ont été menés à bien moyennant un coût total de plus de 3 millions US\$. Les projets sont initiés depuis les régions en voie de développement et menés à bien par des professionnels dans ces régions. Ces activités viennent étayer les trois piliers fondateurs de l'IFLA: profession, société et appartenance. L'article identifie ce qui caractérise un bon projet et décrit brièvement quelques exemples de projets de qualité avec des ateliers de formation sur la conservation des collections photographiques africaines, la gestion des bibliothèques numériques et la culture de l'information. Il conclut en disant que l'ALP est essentielle pour le développement des bibliothèques et la présence de l'IFLA dans les pays en voie de développement, mais qu'il faut élargir la base de soutien financier.

Li Zhaochun and Huang Qunqing. **Reaching Out to Vulnerable**

**Groups in China: a broad library with social inclusion. [Aider les groupes vulnérables en Chine: une vaste bibliothèque à caractère social.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 13-19

Dans la Chine en plein développement, certains groupes d'individus sont confrontés à l'exclusion sociale. Il s'agit de chômeurs ou de personnes malades, de travailleurs peu qualifiés, d'adolescents en prison, de personnes victimes d'un désastre et de paysans de régions isolées. Les services bibliothécaires sont cruciaux pour ces groupes vulnérables, comprenant chômeurs ou personnes malades, travailleurs peu qualifiés, adolescents en prison, personnes victimes d'un désastre et paysans de régions isolées. La bibliothèque Sun Yat-sen s'est employée à leur fournir des services en créant 56 antennes bibliothécaires dans tout le pays. L'article donne des exemples de services novateurs mis à la disposition de certaines communautés: familles ayant des difficultés financières, prisonniers – en particulier jeunes et personnes étudiant en prison – bibliothèque dévastée par une inondation et deux communautés montagnardes isolées au Tibet.

Nancy Beygijanian and Dr. John V. Richardson Jr. **E-Government in the Islamic Republic of Iran: reaching out to the world? [Gouvernement en ligne dans la République Islamique d'Iran: une ouverture sur le monde?]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 20-33

Cet article a pour objet de révéler la nature et l'étendue des sites Web officiels en anglais de la République Islamique d'Iran et les facteurs ayant motivé cette pratique. Ces sites en anglais relativement nombreux semblent devoir leur création à la promotion du tourisme, au désir d'une coopération scientifique

internationale et à l'augmentation des transactions financières. L'article donne des informations sur le contenu en anglais des principaux sites gouvernementaux iraniens, identifie certains des obstacles empêchant d'accéder de façon efficace à ce contenu et invoque le besoin d'améliorer la conception des sites iraniens afin que le gouvernement iranien puisse pleinement atteindre ses objectifs.

Luiza Baptista Melo, Cesaltina Pires and Ana Taveira. **Recognizing Best Practice in Portuguese Higher Education Libraries. [Identifier les pratiques d'excellence au sein des bibliothèques universitaires portugaises.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 34-54

Cet article s'attache à identifier les pratiques d'excellence afin d'améliorer la qualité des services dans les bibliothèques universitaires portugaises. Il décrit un projet en cours pour évaluer les performances des services bibliothécaires résultant d'un partenariat entre six bibliothèques universitaires portugaises. L'étude comprend trois niveaux principaux: (1) la sélection des critères devant être évalués et la sélection des indicateurs de performance qui leur correspondent; (2) le rassemblement et l'analyse des données; (3) l'identification des pratiques d'excellence. La sélection des critères devant être évalués est basée sur un modèle mixte combinant Cadre d'autoévaluation des fonctions publiques (Common Assessment Framework ou CAF) et tableau de bord prospectif (Balanced Scorecard). Les indicateurs associés de performance sont conformes aux normes internationales ISO 11620:1998 et ISO 2789:2006.

Helen Partridge, Sylvia Edwards, Andrew Baker and Lynn McAllister. **The Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment: embedding information literacy into student learning through an online**

**environnement. [L'environnement sur les aptitudes réflexives de recherche en ligne (ROSS): inclure la culture de l'information dans l'apprentissage étudiant grâce à un environnement en ligne.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 55–71

L'environnement sur les aptitudes réflexives de recherche en ligne (Reflective Online Searching Skills ou ROSS) est un outil d'apprentissage en ligne qui encourage le développement des aptitudes et des connaissances des étudiants en matière de recherche en ligne. Il a été conçu avec le soutien de la Faculté des Technologies de l'Information et les services de pédagogie et d'apprentissage de l'Université de Technologie de Queensland (QUT). En 2007, ROSS a été mis au point pour être utilisé au cours de la première année d'études dans d'autres facultés au sein de QUT. Cet article donne une démonstration de l'environnement ROSS et de la façon dont il a été inclus dans le programme d'enseignement de deux disciplines très différentes: Technologies de l'information et Science. De nombreux outils en ligne de culture de l'information sont statiques, modulaires, linéaires et très fortement basés sur des textes, et ils ne sont pas parvenus à intégrer une approche interactive du processus d'apprentissage. Cet article démontre que ROSS repousse les limites des programmes en ligne de culture de l'information en guidant les étudiants afin qu'ils puissent connaître, réfléchir sur et pratiquer les concepts de culture de l'information en utilisant des études de cas ou l'apprentissage fondé sur des problèmes.

**V.K.J. Jeevan. Library Personalization Systems: an Indian experience. [Systèmes de personnalisation bibliothécaire: une expérience indienne.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 72–83

La personnalisation des ressources bibliothécaires est envisagée comme une alternative viable pour

faire face à l'augmentation explosive des informations et pour faire gagner du temps aux utilisateurs en vue de tâches intellectuelles plus productives. La personnalisation nécessite un contenu électronique suffisant sur le site concerné ainsi que des mécanismes adaptés pour identifier l'utilisateur grâce à son profil, rechercher de façon sélective le contenu correspondant au profil de l'utilisateur et l'agencer afin de le présenter à son utilisateur de façon attractive. Les différents composants d'un système de personnalisation du contenu comprennent: 'Système de gestion du contenu' pour héberger le contenu électronique au-delà d'une masse critique, 'Système de gestion des intérêts de l'utilisateur' pour gérer les profils dynamiques des utilisateurs, 'Moteur de recherche' pour faire automatiquement coïncider le contenu avec les profils, et des mécanismes de 'Fourniture de contenu personnalisé' pour fournir des résultats adaptés à l'utilisateur. Les progrès technologiques faits par l'informatique sur le Web associés au fait que les utilisateurs sont constamment intéressés par la possibilité de rassembler les ressources d'information disponibles sur le Web ont mené de nombreux portails populaires à introduire le concept de personnalisation du contenu adapté aux intérêts variés des utilisateurs. Quelques initiatives de ce type sont expliquées. Des projets de personnalisation bibliothécaire dans différentes bibliothèques universitaires de pays développés sont évoqués, notamment MyLibrary. Afin d'explorer l'efficacité des systèmes de personnalisation bibliothécaire dans un pays en voie de développement, le prototype de personnalisation SAI mis au point dans la Bibliothèque centrale de l'Institut indien de technologie de Kharagpur est décrit en détails.

**William Rowland. Library Services for Blind People: an African perspective. [Services bibliothécaires pour aveugles: une perspective africaine.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 84–94

L'objectif de cet article est de faire prendre conscience à la communauté de l'IFLA de la situation des aveugles en Afrique. L'Afrique compte près de 7 millions d'aveugles. Dans la plupart des pays africains, moins de 10% des enfants aveugles sont scolarisés. Cet article se fonde sur des informations rassemblées par des délégués africains au séminaire de la section des bibliothèques pour aveugles de l'IFLA à Grahamstown en Afrique du Sud en août 2007. Aucune information n'était disponible à propos des pays francophones ou lusophones d'Afrique subsaharienne. L'article évoque brièvement la situation des services bibliothécaires pour les aveugles en Afrique du Sud, au Kenya, en Zambie, au Zimbabwe, au Nigeria, en Sierra Leone, au Liberia et en Gambie, et poursuit en parlant des problèmes d'alphabétisation et d'éducation, de la rareté des services, des critères et des attentes ainsi que de la fracture technologique. L'auteur constate en conclusion que ce que nous faisons dans le domaine de l'éducation et ce que nous faisons en matière d'éducation dans chaque pays en particulier peut modifier les perspectives d'avenir des aveugles.

**Pervaiz Ahmad. The National Library of Pakistan: an overview. [La Bibliothèque Nationale du Pakistan: une vue d'ensemble.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 90–98

Retrace l'historique et le développement de la Bibliothèque Nationale du Pakistan. Fondée en 1949, elle a fusionné avec la Bibliothèque du Mémorial Liaquat en 1954 pour s'en séparer en 1968. La bibliothèque s'est installée dans son propre bâtiment à Islamabad en 1988 et a été ouverte au public en 1993. La Bibliothèque est administrée par le département bibliothécaire de la direction des bibliothèques et des archives du Ministère de l'Éducation. La fonction première de la Bibliothèque Nationale du Pakistan est de recevoir, conserver et entretenir l'héritage littéraire du pays faisant l'objet de copyright. La bibliographie nationale pakistanaise

annuelle est basée sur le dépôt légal, principalement de livres. La Bibliothèque Nationale reçoit environ 66% des publications périodiques et 50 à 55% des livres publiés dans le pays. Les publications électroniques

ne sont pas encore couvertes par la législation sur le copyright. La bibliothèque attribue des ISBN à près de la moitié de tous les livres publiés. Le nombre d'adhérents à la bibliothèque et de lecteurs

journaliers est très peu élevé et les services aux utilisateurs très limités. Le développement du personnel et des services nécessite une attention immédiate.

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## ZUSAMMENFASSUNGEN

G.E. Gorman, Daniel G. Dorner and Birgitta Sandell. **Facilitating Grassroots Development: the role of ALP in Division VIII countries. [Förderung einer grundlegenden Entwicklung: die Rolle des ALP-Programms in den Ländern der Division VIII.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 7–12

Dieser Beitrag beschreibt die Ursprünge und die Entwicklung des ALP-Programms (Advancement of Development through Libraries). Dieses begann im Jahr 1984 als ein Kernprogramm der International Federation of Library Associations und Institutions (IFLA); finanzielle Unterstützung wurde in erster Linie aus Quellen in den nordischen Ländern bezogen. Die Autoren skizzieren die Philosophie des ALP-Programms, die sich auf den festen Glauben an die grundlegende Entwicklung des Menschen stützt, und das entsprechende grundlegende Rahmenwerk, das seinen konkreten Ausdruck im strategischen Plan gefunden hat. Seit 1991 wurden insgesamt 181 Projekte realisiert, einschließlich Inservice-Schulungen, ICT-Schulungen sowie Kurse zur Informationskompetenz; zudem wurden auch Reisezuschüsse gewährt. Die entsprechenden Kosten belaufen sich auf über 3 Millionen US-Dollar. Initiiert werden die Projekte aus den entsprechenden Entwicklungsregionen heraus und werden dann von Fachkräften in den fraglichen Regionen durchgeführt. Diese Tätigkeiten stützen die drei Pfeiler der IFLA, den Berufsstand, die Gesellschaft und die Mitgliedschaft. Die Autoren identifizieren die Eigenschaften eines guten Projekts und beschreiben kurz einige

Beispiele für gute Schulungs-Workshopprojekte zum Erhalt der afrikanischen Fotosammlungen (Preservation of African Photographic Collections), zur Verwaltung digitaler Bibliotheken (Managing Digital Libraries) und zur Informationskompetenz (Information Literacy). Die Schlussfolgerung läuft darauf hinaus, dass das ALP-Programm eine erhebliche Bedeutung für die Entwicklung der Bibliotheken und die öffentliche Präsenz der IFLA in den Entwicklungsländern hat, dass jedoch die Basis für die finanzielle Unterstützung breiter werden muss.

Li Zhaochun and Huang Qunqing. **Reaching Out to Vulnerable Groups in China: a broad library with social inclusion. [Kontakt zu gefährdeten Gruppen in China: eine breit angelegte Bibliothek mit sozialer Integration.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 13–19

In China als Entwicklungsland sind ganze Gruppen von Menschen von sozialer Ausgrenzung betroffen. Dabei handelt es sich um arbeitslose oder kranke Mitmenschen, schlecht ausgebildete Arbeiter, Teenager im Gefängnis, Katastrophenopfer und Kleinbauern in weit entlegenen Gebieten. Der Bibliotheksservice ist für diese gefährdeten Gruppen entscheidend; dazu zählen arbeitslose oder kranke Mitmenschen, schlecht ausgebildete Arbeiter, Teenager im Gefängnis, Opfer von Naturkatastrophen und Kleinbauern in weit entlegenen Gebieten. Die Sun Yat-sen – Bibliothek hat sich aktiv darum bemüht, diesen gefährdeten Gruppen einen Service zu bieten und hat landesweit insgesamt

56 Zweigstellen geschaffen. Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit den innovativen Dienstleistungen, die für Bürger einer speziellen Gemeinschaft geboten werden, für Familien, die in finanzielle Schwierigkeiten geraten sind, für Gefängnisinsassen – insbesondere Jugendliche und Studenten. Unterstützung erhielten ebenfalls eine Bibliothek, die durch eine Flutkatastrophe zerstört wurde, sowie zwei weit entlegene Bergdörfer in Tibet.

Nancy Beygijanian and Dr. John V. Richardson Jr. **E-Government in the Islamic Republic of Iran: reaching out to the world. [E-Government in der Islamischen Republik Iran: Kontakt zur Welt.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 20–33

Dieser Artikel beschreibt die Art und den Umfang der offiziellen englischsprachigen Websites der islamischen Republik Iran und legt auch die Faktoren dar, die diesen zugrunde liegen. Die wesentlichen Gründe für die relativ große Zahl an englischsprachigen Sites sind augenscheinlich in der Tourismuswerbung, einem Verlangen nach internationaler wissenschaftlicher Zusammenarbeit sowie verstärkten Finanzbeziehungen zu suchen. Der Beitrag enthält Informationen über den englischsprachigen Inhalt der führenden Websites der Regierung im Iran, er identifiziert einige Hindernisse, die den effektiven Zugriff auf diese Inhalte erschweren und plädiert für die Verbesserung des Website-Designs, so dass die Regierung im Iran ihre Ziele im vollen Umfang verwirklichen kann.

Luiza Baptista Melo, Cesaltina Pires and Ana Taveira. **Recognizing Best Practice in Portuguese Higher Education Libraries. [Die beste Strategie für portugiesische Hochschulbibliotheken.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 34–54

Dieser Beitrag möchte das beste Verfahren zur Verbesserung der Qualität der Dienstleistungen an den Unibibliotheken in Portugal identifizieren. Der Artikel beschreibt ein laufendes Projekt zur Messung der Leistung des Bibliotheks-Service, der sich aus der Partnerschaft von sechs Hochschulbibliotheken in Portugal ergibt. Die Studie ist in drei Schritte zu unterteilen: (1) Auswahl der auszuwertenden Kriterien und Selektion der entsprechenden Leistungskennzahlen; (2) Datenerfassung und Analyse; (3) Festlegung der besten Verfahren. Die Auswahl der zu evaluierenden Kriterien basiert auf einem gemischten Modell, einer Kombination aus dem Bewertungssystem des „Common Assessment Framework“ und der „balanced Scorecard“ (der ausgewogenen Wertungsliste). Die damit verbundenen Leistungskennzahlen entsprechen den internationalen ISO 11620:1998 und ISO 2789:2006 – Normen.

Helen Partridge, Sylvia Edwards, Andrew Baker and Lynn McAllister. **The Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment: embedding information literacy into student learning through an online environment. [Die Reflective Online Searching Skills – Umgebung (ROSS): Einbettung der Informationskompetenz in den Lernvorgang der Studenten in einer Online-Umgebung.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 55–71

Die Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) – Umgebung ist ein E-Learning-Tool, das die Entwicklung der studentischen Fähigkeiten und Kenntnisse im Hinblick auf die Online-Suche fördert. Entwickelt wurde sie mithilfe der Faculty of Information

Technology (der Fakultät für Informationstechnologie) und den Teaching und Learning Support Services (Support-Services für Lehre und Lernen) an der Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Im Jahr 2007 wird ROSS zur Verwendung für Studienanfänger entwickelt, die ihr erstes Jahr an anderen Fakultäten der QUT ableisten. Der vorliegende Beitrag bietet eine Einführung in die ROSS-Umgebung und zeigt auf, wie diese in das Curriculum zwei völlig unterschiedlicher Fachbereiche – IT und Wissenschaft – eingebettet worden ist. Viele Online-Tools zur Informationskompetenz sind statisch, modular, linear und stark textbezogen und haben bisher keine interaktive Lernmethode bieten können. Der vorliegende Artikel zeigt, dass ROSS die Grenzen der Online-Programme zur Informationskompetenz verschiebt, indem die Lernenden anhand entsprechender Fallstudien oder mithilfe des problembasierten Lernens (Problem-based Learning) an die Kenntnis, Reflexion und Praktizierung der Konzepte zur Informationskompetenz herangeführt werden.

V.K.J. Jeevan. **Library Personalization Systems: an Indian experience. [Individualisierungssysteme für Bibliotheken: Erfahrungen aus Indien.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 72–83

Die Individualisierung der Bibliotheksressourcen wird als eine praktikable Alternative zum Umgang mit der Informationsexplosion dargestellt und soll den Benutzern Zeit sparen helfen, um sich produktiveren intellektuellen Aufgaben widmen zu können. Zur Individualisierung werden hinreichende elektronische Inhalte auf der eigenen Site sowie geeignete Mechanismen zur Identifizierung des Benutzers anhand seines oder ihres Profils benötigt. Zudem muss es möglich sein, die zum jeweiligen Benutzerprofil passenden Inhalte selektiv zu suchen, anzuordnen und dem Benutzer in einer attraktiven

Darstellung zu präsentieren. Die einzelnen Komponenten eines inhaltlichen Individualisierungssystems beinhalten ein „Content Serving System“ für das Hosting elektronischer Inhalte, die über eine gewisse kritische Masse hinausgehen, ein „User Interest Management System“ zur Verwaltung dynamischer Benutzerprofile, eine „Search Engine“ (Suchmaschine) zur automatischen Zuordnung der Inhalte zu den einzelnen Profilen sowie „Personalized Content Delivery“ – Mechanismen zur Übermittlung der zugeordneten Ergebnisse an die einzelnen Benutzer. Die technologischen Fortschritte des Web Enabled Computing (des webgestützten Computing) in Kombination mit dem benutzerseitigen Interesse an der Sammlung der auf dem Web verfügbaren Informationsquellen haben dazu geführt, dass viele populäre Portale das Konzept der inhaltlichen Individualisierung eingeführt haben, um den spezifischen Interessen der einzelnen Benutzer gerecht zu werden. Einige dieser Initiativen werden hier erläutert. Zur Sprache kommen in diesem Zusammenhang Individualisierungsprojekte für Bibliotheken, wie beispielsweise MyLibrary, was in einer Reihe von Unibibliotheken in den Industrienationen verfügbar ist. Um die Zugkraft der Individualisierungssysteme für Bibliotheken in einem Entwicklungsland zu überprüfen, wird in diesem Zusammenhang der in der Zentralbibliothek (Central Library) des Indian Institute of Technology (der technischen Hochschule Indiens) in Kharagpur entwickelte Individualisierungstyp SAI in allen Einzelheiten beschrieben.

Willaim Rowland. **Library Services for Blind People: an African perspective. [Bibliotheks-Service für Blinde: eine afrikanische Perspektive.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 84–89

Mit diesem Artikel möchte der Autor die IFLA-Gemeinschaft

auf die Situation der Blinden in Afrika hinweisen. In Afrika gibt es fast 7 Millionen Blinde; in den meisten afrikanischen Ländern gehen noch nicht einmal 10 Prozent aller blinden Kinder überhaupt zur Schule. Dieser Beitrag stützt sich auf Informationen von afrikanischen Delegierten, die diese anlässlich der IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section Conference (der Konferenz der IFLA-Sektion "Bibliotheken für Blinde") in Grahamstown in Südafrika im August 2007 mitgeteilt haben. Leider waren jedoch keine Informationen über die frankophonen beziehungsweise lusophonen Länder im Sub-Sahara-Afrika verfügbar. Der Beitrag geht kurz auf Bibliotheks-Services für Blinde in Südafrika, Kenia, Sambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Sierra Leone und Liberia sowie Gambia ein; danach kommen Themen im Zusammenhang mit der Alphabetisierung und Bildung, der Knappheit der Services, den Standards und Erwartungen sowie mit der technologischen Kluft zur

Sprache. Der Autor gelangt zu der Schlussfolgerung, dass die Zukunft der Blinden im Wesentlichen davon abhängt, was wir in Bezug auf das Bildungswesen tun und in welcher Weise wir uns um den Unterricht in den einzelnen Ländern kümmern.

Pervaiz Ahmad. **The National Library of Pakistan: an overview. [Die Nationalbibliothek von Pakistan: ein Überblick.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 90–98

In diesem Beitrag geht es um die Geschichte und Entwicklung der Nationalbibliothek von Pakistan, die im Jahr 1949 gegründet wurde, sich im Jahr 1954 mit der Liaquat Memorial Library zusammengeschlossen hat und ab 1968 wieder eigene Wege gegangen ist. Im Jahr 1988 hat die Bibliothek ihr eigenes Gebäude in Islamabad bezogen und ihre Tore im Jahr 1993 der Öffentlichkeit geöffnet. Verwaltet wird die Bibliothek von der Bibliotheksabteilung der

Direktion für Bibliotheken und Archive im Bildungsministerium. Die wichtigste Aufgabe der Nationalbibliothek von Pakistan besteht darin, das literarische Erbe des Landes unter Beachtung der Urheberrechte zu sammeln, zu bewahren und zu erhalten. Die jährlich herausgegebene Pakistan National Bibliography basiert auf Urheberrechtsbelegen, in erster Linie im Zusammenhang mit Büchern. Die Nationalbibliothek erhält etwa 66 Prozent aller Serienpublikationen und 50 bis 55 Prozent aller Bücher, die landesweit veröffentlicht werden. Elektronische Publikationen unterliegen bisher noch keinen Urheberrechtsgesetzen. Die Bibliothek versieht fast die Hälfte aller veröffentlichten Bücher mit ISBN-Nummern. Die Bibliotheksmitgliedschaft und die tägliche Leserschaft sind sehr gering und den Benutzern wird nur sehr wenig Service geboten. Bezüglich der Entwicklung der Mitarbeiter und der Services herrscht ein dringender Bedarf.

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## RESÚMENES

G.E. Gorman, Daniel G. Dorner y Birgitta Sandell. **Facilitating Grassroots Development: the role of ALP in Division VIII countries. [Ayudar a sentar las bases: la función que desempeña ALP en los países de la División VIII.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 7–12

Describe los orígenes y la evolución del programa Advancement of Development through Libraries (Adelanto del desarrollo mediante las bibliotecas) o ALP, que se lanzó como una iniciativa básica de la Federación Internacional de Asociaciones e Instituciones Bibliotecarias (IFLA) en 1984, y cuya financiación se realiza principalmente con recursos de los países nórdicos. Define la filosofía de ALP, que se fundamenta en la confianza en el establecimiento de las bases, y en sus principios básicos

expresados en términos de su Plan Estratégico. Desde 1991 se han llevado a cabo 181 proyectos, incluidos cursos de formación continua, formación en informática y sistemas de información, siendo el coste total de estas iniciativas superior a los 3 millones de USD. Los proyectos se inician en las regiones en desarrollo y su gestión corre a cargo de los profesionales de dichos territorios. Estas actividades sostienen los tres pilares de IFLA: la profesión, la sociedad y los miembros. Identifica las características que debe tener un buen proyecto y describe brevemente ejemplos de proyectos para talleres de formación efectivos sobre la conservación de las colecciones fotográficas de África, gestión de bibliotecas digitales y alfabetización informática. Concluye que ALP es muy importante para la mejora de las bibliotecas y la visibilidad de

IFLA en los países en desarrollo, pero que es necesario ampliar el apoyo financiero.

Li Zhaochun y Huang Qunqing. **Reaching Out to Vulnerable Groups in China: a broad library with social inclusion. [Llegar hasta los grupos de población vulnerables en China: una biblioteca amplia que contemple la integración social.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 13–19

En la China en desarrollo existen grupos de personas que se enfrentan a la exclusión social. Son ciudadanos desempleados o enfermos, trabajadores con escasa cualificación, adolescentes en prisiones, residentes víctimas de desastres y campesinos en zonas rurales remotas. El servicio de bibliotecas es fundamental para estos



grupos vulnerables, incluidas todas las personas pertenecientes a los grupos antes citados. La biblioteca Sun Yat-sen ha desarrollado una labor activa prestando servicios a estos grupos vulnerables con la creación de 56 bibliotecas sucursales en todo el país. Este documento describe los servicios innovadores que se prestan a los residentes de una comunidad especial formada por familias con dificultades financieras, a las personas presas –especialmente jóvenes y estudiantes–, a una biblioteca devastada por una inundación y a dos comunidades ubicadas en montañas remotas del Tibet.

Nancy Beygijanian y Dr. John V. Richardson Jr. **E-Government in the Islamic Republic of Iran: reaching out to the World. [Administración electrónica en la República Islámica de Irán: ¿una puerta al mundo exterior.]** IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 20–33

El propósito de este artículo es revelar la naturaleza y el alcance de los sitios Web oficiales en inglés de la República Islámica de Irán, así como los factores que motivan esta práctica. Los motivos principales de que exista un número relativamente elevado de sitios Web en inglés son la promoción del turismo, el deseo de establecer una cooperación científica internacional y el aumento de las operaciones financieras. El documento proporciona información sobre el contenido en inglés de las principales páginas Web del gobierno iraní, identifica algunos de los obstáculos para acceder correctamente a este contenido y sugiere mejoras en el diseño de dichos sitios para que el gobierno iraní pueda alcanzar plenamente sus objetivos.

Luiza Baptista Melo, Cesaltina Pires y Ana Taveira. **Recognizing Best Practice in Portuguese Higher Education Libraries. [Reconocimiento de las mejores prácticas en las bibliotecas portuguesas de educación superior.]** IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 34–54

El propósito de este documento es identificar mejores prácticas para mejorar la calidad de los servicios que se prestan en las bibliotecas académicas portuguesas. Este artículo describe un proyecto continuo para evaluar los resultados de los servicios bibliotecarios y es resultado de una alianza de seis bibliotecas portuguesas de educación superior. El estudio consta de tres fases principales: (1) selección de los criterios que deben evaluarse y de sus correspondientes indicadores de resultados; (2) recopilación y análisis de los datos; (3) identificación de las mejores prácticas. La selección de los criterios que deben evaluarse se basa en un modelo mixto que combina el marco común de evaluación y el cuadro de mando integral. Los indicadores de rendimiento asociados se establecen conforme a las normas internacionales ISO 11620:1998 e ISO 2789:2006.

Helen Partridge, Sylvia Edwards, Andrew Baker y Lynn McAllister. **The Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment: embedding information literacy into student learning through an online environment. [El entorno para la adquisición de habilidades de búsqueda en la red (ROSS): integrar la alfabetización informática en el aprendizaje de los estudiantes mediante un entorno en línea.]** IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 55–71

El entorno para la adquisición de habilidades de búsqueda en la red (ROSS) es una herramienta de e-learning cuyo objetivo es mejorar las habilidades y los conocimientos de los estudiantes para realizar búsquedas en línea. Fue desarrollada con la ayuda de la facultad de Tecnologías de la Información y los servicios de Formación y Aprendizaje de la Universidad de Tecnología de Queensland (QUT). A lo largo de 2007, ROSS se ha ido desarrollando para utilizarse en el currículum del primer año de otras facultades pertenecientes a QUT. Este documento ofrece una demostración del entorno de

ROSS y cómo se ha integrado en el currículum de dos disciplinas antagónicas: las tecnologías de la información y la ciencia. Muchas de las herramientas de alfabetización informática son estáticas, modulares, lineales y muy basadas en textos, y han fracasado a la hora de incorporar un enfoque interactivo en el proceso de aprendizaje. Este documento demostrará que ROSS va más allá de las fronteras de los programas de alfabetización informática de la red al orientar a los estudiantes a conocer, reflexionar y practicar los conceptos de alfabetización informática mediante el uso de casos prácticos o el aprendizaje basado en la resolución de problemas.

V.K.J. Jeevan. **Library Personalization Systems: an Indian experience. [Sistemas de personalización de bibliotecas: una experiencia en la India.]** IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 72–83

La personalización de los recursos de bibliotecas se proyecta como una alternativa viable para resolver los problemas de la proliferación de datos y permitir que los usuarios dispongan de más tiempo para realizar tareas intelectuales más atractivas. Para llevar a cabo la personalización es necesario disponer de contenido electrónico suficiente en los centros, así como mecanismos adecuados para identificar al usuario a través de su perfil, buscar de manera selectiva el contenido que se corresponda a dicho perfil, y organizarlo y presentarlo al usuario de manera atractiva. Un sistema de personalización de contenidos se compone de: un sistema que facilite contenidos para albergar información electrónica más allá de una masa crítica; un sistema de gestión de intereses para administrar los perfiles dinámicos de los usuarios; un motor de búsqueda para establecer correspondencias automáticas entre el contenido y los perfiles y mecanismos personalizados de entrega de contenidos para facilitar los resultados coincidentes con los perfiles de usuario. Los avances tecnológicos gracias a

ла информатика habilitada por la red, junto con el continuo interés de los usuarios de recopilar recursos de información disponibles en la Web, pueden conducir a que muchos portales populares incorporen el concepto de personalización de contenidos conforme a los distintos intereses de los usuarios. En el documento se explican algunas de estas iniciativas. También se exponen proyectos de personalización, como MyLibrary, en distintas bibliotecas universitarias de países avanzados. Asimismo, el prototipo de personalización SAI desarrollado en la Biblioteca Central del Instituto Indio de Tecnología, en Kharagpur, se describe en detalle para explorar la eficiencia de los sistemas de personalización de bibliotecas en un país en desarrollo.

William Rowland. **Library Services for Blind People: an African perspective.** [Servicios bibliotecarios para personas invidentes: una perspectiva africana.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 84–89

El propósito de este documento es aumentar la concienciación de la comunidad de IFLA sobre la situación de las personas invidentes en África. En este continente hay cerca de 7 millones de personas

ciegas y, en la mayoría de los países, la tasa de escolarización de los niños invidentes es inferior al 10%. Este documento se basa en la información que han recopilado los delegados africanos en la sección de Bibliotecas de IFLA para invidentes de la conferencia celebrada en Grahamstown, Sudáfrica, en agosto de 2007. No se dispone de información sobre los países francófonos o lusófonos del África Subsahariana. El documento resume brevemente la situación de los servicios bibliotecarios para los invidentes en Sudáfrica, Kenia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Sierra Leona, Liberia y Gambia, y expone los problemas de alfabetización y educación, escasez de servicios, calidad y expectativas, así como la brecha tecnológica. El autor concluye que lo que hagamos en el área de la educación y cómo abordemos esta cuestión en cada uno de los países cambiará las perspectivas de futuro de las personas invidentes.

Pervaiz Ahmad. **The National Library of Pakistan: an overview.** [La Biblioteca Nacional de Pakistán: visión general.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 90–98

Describe la historia y evolución de la Biblioteca Nacional de Pakistán,

que se fundó en 1949, se fusionó con la biblioteca histórica Liaquat en 1954 y se volvió a separar en 1968. La biblioteca se trasladó a su propio edificio en Islamabad en 1988 y abrió al público en 1993. La administración del centro corre a cargo del Departamento de Bibliotecas del Consejo de Bibliotecas y Archivos del Ministerio de Educación. La principal función de la Biblioteca Nacional de Pakistán es recibir, preservar y mantener el patrimonio literario del país mediante la protección de los derechos de autor. La bibliografía anual de la Biblioteca Nacional de Pakistán se compone de reseñas protegidas por derechos de propiedad intelectual, principalmente libros. La Biblioteca Nacional recibe alrededor del 66% de las publicaciones periódicas y del 50 al 55% de los libros publicados en el país. Las publicaciones electrónicas aún no están protegidas por las leyes de propiedad intelectual. La biblioteca asigna ISBN a cerca de la mitad de los libros publicados. El número de socios de la biblioteca y el uso diario de la misma son realmente bajos, y los servicios a los usuarios son muy escasos. Es necesario abordar inmediatamente las necesidades de formación del personal y de mejora de los servicios.

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## Рефераты статей

Г.Е.Горман, Даниэл Г. Дорнер и Биргитта Сандел. **Facilitating Grassroots Development: the role of ALP in Division VIII countries.** [Облегчение развития на местном уровне: роль ALP в странах VIII дивизиона.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 7–12

Описывается происхождение и становление программы ALP (Продвижение развития посредством библиотек), запущенной в 1984 году в качестве ключевой программы Международной федерации библиотечных ассоциаций и учреждений (ИФЛА) и финансируемой

в основном из источников в Северных странах. Излагается философия ALP, выраженная в терминах ее Стратегического плана, которая основана на вере в развитие на местном уровне и на ее концепции массовости. Начиная с 1991 года, был реализован 181 проект на общую сумму более 3 млн. долларов США, включая обучение без отрыва от производства, обучение информационно-коммуникационным технологиям и информационной грамотности, а также предоставление грантов на путевые расходы. Проекты иницируются изнутри развивающихся регионов и осуществляются профессионалами в этих регионах. Эти виды деятельности

поддерживают три главных идеи ИФЛА: Профессия, Общество и Членство. Идентифицируются критерии хорошего проекта и коротко рассматриваются примеры удачных обучающих семинаров в рамках проектов по сохранению коллекции африканских фотографий, управлению цифровыми библиотеками, информационной грамотности. Содержится заключение о большой важности ALP для развития библиотек и большей узнаваемости ИФЛА в развивающихся странах, в то же время указывается на необходимость расширения базы финансовой поддержки.

Ли Джаохун и Хуанг Кункинг. **Reaching out to Vulnerable Groups in China: a broad library with social inclusion.** [Как дотянуться до уязвимых групп населения в Китае: библиотека с широким охватом в целях социальной интеграции.] IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 13–19

В развивающемся Китае целые группы населения живут в условиях социальной изоляции. К таким группам относятся безработные или граждане с плохим здоровьем, работники со слабыми навыками, заключенные в тюрьму подростки, население, пострадавшее от стихийных бедствий, а также крестьяне из отдаленных районов. Библиотечные услуги критически важны для таких уязвимых групп населения, включая безработных или граждан с плохим здоровьем, работников со слабыми навыками, заключенных в тюрьму подростков, население, пострадавшее от стихийных бедствий, а также крестьян из отдаленных районов. Библиотека Сунь Ятсена, создав 56 своих отделений по всей стране, активно занимается предоставлением услуг таким уязвимым группам населения. В данной работе описываются инновационные услуги, оказываемые резидентам специальной общины для семей с серьезными финансовыми проблемами; заключенным, особенно малолетним и студентам; пострадавшей в результате наводнения библиотеке; а также двум отдаленным тибетским поселениям.

Нэнси Бейджиганиан и д-р Джон В. Ричардсон, младший. **E-Government in the Islamic Republic of Iran: reaching out to the world?** [Электронное правительство в исламской Республике Иран: поддерживая связь с миром?] IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 20–33

Задачей данной статьи является выявление основных характеристик и распространенности официальных англоязычных веб-сайтов, действующих в Исламской Республике Иран, а также мотивирующих факторов для сохранения такой практики. Существование достаточно

большого числа англоязычных сайтов, как полагают, вызвано в основном соображениями продвижения туризма, стремлением к международному научному сотрудничеству, а также возросшим объемом финансовых операций. В работе представлена информация о контенте основных иранских правительственных сайтов на английском языке, определены некоторые препятствия на пути эффективного доступа к их контенту, а также приводятся доводы в пользу улучшения дизайна иранских веб-сайтов с тем, чтобы иранское правительство смогло полностью достичь поставленных целей.

Луиза Баптиста Мело, Чесалтина Пирес и Ана Тавейра. **Recognizing Best Practice in Portuguese Higher Education Libraries.** [Идентификация «лучших практик» в библиотеках высших учебных заведений Португалии.] IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 34–54

Целью написания данной статьи является определение «лучших практик» для повышения качества услуг в академических библиотеках Португалии. В данной статье описывается находящийся на стадии реализации проект по оценке предоставляемых библиотеками услуг, который является результатом партнерства шести библиотек высших учебных заведений Португалии. Это исследование разворачивается по трем основным направлениям: (1) отбор критериев для оценки и выборка соответствующих показателей их эффективного исполнения; (2) сбор и анализ информации; (3) определение «лучших практик». Отбор критериев для оценки основывается на смешанной модели, сочетающей в себе Общую оценочную концепцию и Сбалансированную карту показателей деятельности. Соотнесенные показатели эффективности исполнения соответствуют международным стандартам ISO 11620:1998 и ISO 2789:2006.

Хелен Партридж, Сильвия Эдвардс, Эндрю Бэйкер и Линн Макаллистер. **The Reflective Online Searching Skills (ROSS) Environment:**

**embedding information literacy into student learning through an online environment.** [Среда для рефлексивных поисковых навыков в интерактивном режиме (ROSS): внедрение информационной грамотности в процесс обучения студентов посредством интерактивной среды.] IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 55–71

Среда для рефлексивных поисковых навыков в интерактивном режиме (ROSS) представляет собой программу электронного обучения, которая способствует развитию у студентов навыков и умений поиска в интерактивном режиме. Она была разработана при поддержке факультета информационных технологий и службы поддержки процесса обучения и изучения Технологического университета Куинслэнда. В 2007 году программу ROSS стали водить в учебные планы первого года обучения на других факультетах этого университета. В настоящей работе демонстрируются особенности среды ROSS и то, как она была внедрена в учебные планы двух контрастирующих дисциплин: информационных технологий и естественных наук. Во многих интерактивных программах по информационной грамотности преобладают элементы статичности, модульности, прямолинейности с сильной опорой на текст. С их помощью так и не удалось инкорпорировать интерактивный подход в учебный процесс. В настоящей работе будет продемонстрировано, что среда ROSS раздвигает границы интерактивных программ по информационной грамотности, помогая студентам познавать, обдумывать и применять на практике концепцию информационной грамотности посредством использования учебных примеров или проблемно-ориентированного обучения.

В.К.Дж. Джееван. **Library Personalization Systems: an Indian experience.** [Библиотечные системы персонализации: опыт Индии.] IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 72–83

Персонализация библиотечных ресурсов рассматривается в качестве действенной альтернативы для того, чтобы пережить стадию «информационного взрыва» и сберечь время пользователей для более продуктивных интеллектуальных задач. Для персонализации требуется достаточный электронный контент на каждом отдельном веб-сайте, а также удобный механизм для идентификации пользователя посредством размещения его или ее параметров, выборочного поиска контента, сопоставимого с параметрами пользователя, а также систематизации и представления его пользователю в привлекательной форме. Различные компоненты системы персонализации контента включают в себя: «Систему обслуживания контента» для хостинга электронного контента сверх предельной массы, «Систему управления интересами пользователя» для управления динамичными параметрами пользователя, «Поисковую систему» для автоматического сопоставления контента с параметрами пользователя и механизм «Персонализированной доставки контента» для доставки пользователю сопоставленных результатов. Прогресс в развитии компьютерных технологий, основанных на доступе к Интернету, в сочетании с непрекращающимся интересом пользователей к размещаемым в Интернете информационным ресурсам стали причиной внедрения многими популярными порталами концепции персонализации контента, удовлетворяющего интересам различных пользователей. Разъясняется несколько таких инициатив. Обсуждаются особенности проектов по персонализации библиотечных ресурсов, таких как MyLibrary, в различных университетских библиотеках

развитых стран мира. Для исследования эффективности библиотечных систем персонализации в развивающейся стране детально описывается прототип персонализации SAI, разработанный в Центральной библиотеке Индийского технологического института, г.Харагпур.

Уильям Роуланд. **Library Services for Blind People: an African perspective.** [Библиотечные услуги для слепых людей: на примере африканских стран.] IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 84–89

Целью данной публикации является улучшение осведомленности сообщества, занимающегося проблематикой ИФЛА, о положении слепых в Африке. В Африке насчитывается около 7 млн. слепых людей, в большинстве африканских стран менее 10% слепых детей получают школьное образование. Данная работа основывается на информации, предоставленной африканскими участниками секционной Конференции ИФЛА по тематике библиотек для слепых, которая прошла в г. Грахамстауне, ЮАР в августе 2007 г. Отсутствовала какая-либо информация о странах Африки, говорящих на французском и португальском языках, которые расположены к югу от Сахары. В публикации в краткой форме описывается ситуация с библиотечными услугами для слепых в ЮАР, Кении, Замбии, Зимбабве, Нигерии, Сьерра Леоне, Либерии и Гамбии. Также рассматриваются вопросы грамотности и образования, недостатка услуг, стандартов и ожиданий, различий в технологиях. Автор приходит к следующему заключению: то, что мы делаем в области образования, и то, что мы делаем с образованием в каждой из

этих стран, – все это должно изменить будущее слепых людей.

Первэйз Ахмад. **The National Library of Pakistan: an overview.** [Национальная библиотека Пакистана: обзор.] IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 1, pp. 90-98

Описывается история создания и развития Национальной библиотеки Пакистана, которая была основана в 1949 году, объединена с Мемориальной библиотекой Liaquat в 1954 году и снова стала самостоятельной в 1968 году. В 1988 году библиотеке было предоставлено собственное здание в г. Исламабаде, и в 1993 году она открыла двери для широкой публики. Библиотека находится в ведении департамента библиотек Директората образования. Основной функцией Национальной библиотеки Пакистана является получение, сохранение и поддержание литературного наследия страны в соответствии с требованиями авторского права. Ежегодное издание Национальной библиографии Пакистана основывается на охраняемых авторским правом поступлениях, главным образом, книгах. Национальная библиотека получает порядка 66% серийных периодических изданий и 50-55% книг, издаваемых в стране. Электронные публикации пока еще не подпадают под действие законов об авторских правах. Библиотека присваивает ISBN (международный стандартный номер книги) практически половине всех опубликованных книг. Количественные показатели членства в библиотеке и ежедневного круга читателей являются весьма низкими, а услуги пользователям – крайне ограниченными. Требуются срочные меры по комплектованию штата и развитию предлагаемых услуг.

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