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12-14 May 2009 the NLR ran Stage 1 of multistage seminar on *IFLA/UNESCO Internet Manifesto guidelines: Internet access management*. Organizing and methodical support was provided by IFLA and SIDA [International development agency Sweden). Stage 1 involved a 3-day program which included electronic resource training program, and a workshop led by Chairman of Free Access to Information & Freedom of Expression Committee, P. Sturges, and IFLA's Senior Policy Advisor, S. Hamilton. Similar seminars are held annually around the world. Sessions are led by key information access experts well-versed in advanced information technologies and national information development trends. The workshop is designed to improve librarians' knowledge of Internet potentials and dangers, services provided for significant social information, improvement of individual information culture, exercise of free information access and expression rights.

The subject area related to global Internet application was of primary interest to public libraries statutorily bound to assist the public in utilizing the advantages of information society and provide for the exercise of their rights for information and knowledge. Public libraries, generally acting as unique social centers, facilitate public communication within local communities.

Such annual IFLA seminars in different world countries contribute to a new knowledge society with free information access in the exercise of individual democratic rights. This seminar is the first in Russia.

Among the members are public librarians from different RF regions, with initial Internet experience in basic library techniques like cataloguing, acquisitions and services. They primarily represent the Tatarstan Republic, Kaliningrad, Yaroslav, Tula, Sverdlovsk and Leningrad Regions, and Krasnodar Territory.

The seminar began with presentation of IFLA experts; Paul Sturges and Stuart Hamilton. V.R. Firsov, Dr. Ped., NLR's Deputy Director General for Research, Vice President, Chairman of RLA's Standing Committee for library policy and legislation, described their professional interests.

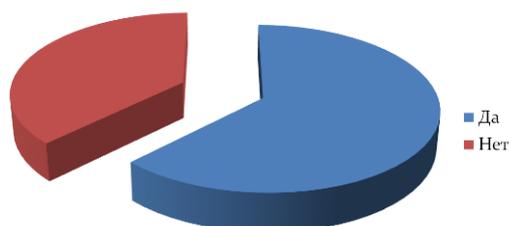
To analyze regional attainments in preparing Stage 1 of the multistage seminar, our double-block questionnaire was distributed among the members in advance. Block 1 concerned general situation with library services in the region. Block 2 concerned immediate problems of Internet access in each specific library. The information would provide required insight in regional information service management for targeted and specified assistance.

Elena Valeryevna Tikhonova, Cand. Ped. Assistant Director of Information Service NLR, analyzed the response in her paper on **Current situation with Internet technologies in Russian Libraries**. The paper quoted key Internet application factors for Russia. Evolution analysis since 2002 clearly demonstrates increasing home access resulting in decreasing alternate access methods: via Internet cafe, school, friends or associates. Urban Internet use is 1.4 times the national average. In February 2009, 42% urban residents over 12 years of age used the web at least once a month, providing evidence of a digital gap on a national scale. Comparative analysis of Internet use in different Russian Federal regions indicates superior user proportion in the Far East Federal District with 29.8% users. Siberian Federal District with 22.7% Internet users demonstrates a minimum percentage.

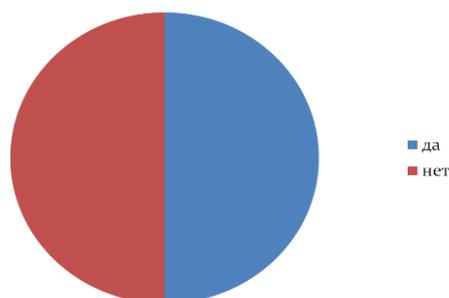
Internet access is greater in the Urals where average monthly fee for Internet access at 512 Kbit/sec amounts to 637 rubles. To compare, average monthly fee in the Far East is 1988

rubles, national highest. Average 0.5 Mbit/sec Internet access fee in Russia is 1050 rubles. Response distribution is shown below:

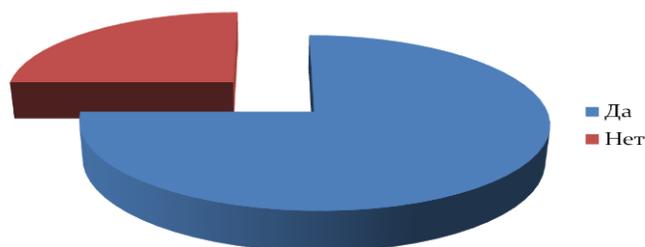
1. Does your library provide selected links and assistance in content search in local languages, or relevant information for local needs?



2. Does your library apply an Internet use strategy?



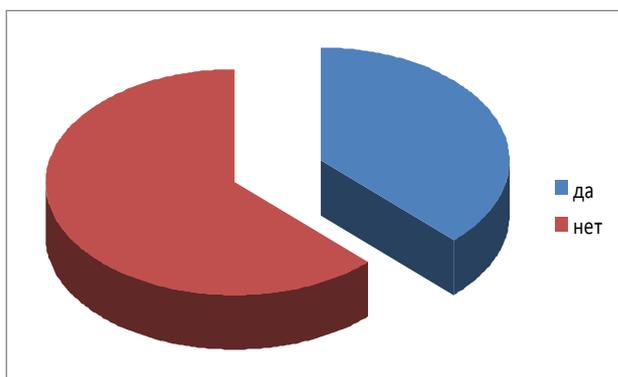
3. Do you think that public library Internet access would benefit economic situation in your country?



Internet users constitute a social group best adapted to stress. This social group can withstand an economic crisis by accumulated social energy. Immersion in dataflow, superior educational and social status, inclination to innovatory and proactive behavior – all these increase the safety factor of this public segment. There is reason to believe that Internet users would be the first to apply proactive adaptive strategies to crisis aftereffects.

According to a member of the seminar: “Internet is a way to remote education, job hunting, communication, bridging the rural/urban information access gap and thus smoothing away social tension. All these benefit domestic economic situation”.

4. Does your library provide computer- and Internet literacy courses for inexperienced Internet users?



Then regional members presented themselves and their libraries, describing specific problems of library Internet services. Each librarian described her/his work in detail:

Bartova Maria Vladimirovna, Information Service Librarian of Medical Center Russia. Novouralsk town Sverdlovsk Region;

Buzmakova Natalya Valentinovna, Director, Municipal Institution Bub Rural Library named after F.F. Pavlenkov. Perm Territory, Sivinsk District, village Bub;

Vlasova Ludmila Vitalievna, senior methodologist, Munisipal Institution Central District Library. Slavsk town Kaliningrad Region;

Golendukhina Elena Borisovna, Electronic Information manager, Sverdlovsk Regional General Research Library named after V.G. Belinsky, Ekaterinburg;

Ivanova Julia Vladimirovna, Research Director, Tula Regional General Research Library, Tula;

Ivanova Natalya Viktorovna, IT Manager, Central Municipal Library, Lipetsk.

Makarenko Irina Albertovna, Information Service manager, Regional General Resuarch Library named after N.A. Dobrolubov, Archangelsk;

Luzhetskaia Natalya Valerievna, Information & Reference manager, Gavriilo-Yamskaia Inter-community Library. Yam town Yaroslav Region;

Olsheeva Ludmila Alexandrovna. Reference librarian, Central Library. Podporozhie Leningrad Region;

Smirnova Tatyana Lvovna. Library service manager. Central Municipal Library named after Gorky. Orsk town Orenburg Region;

Shpak Elena Mikhailovna, Munisipal Institution Avtograd Library, Togliatti, Samara Region;

Seroshtanova Galina Yurievna, Director Integrated Library Service Uvelsk Municipal District, Uvelsk community Chelyabinsk Region;

Kovaleva Natalya Mikhailovna, Service Librarian Integrated Library Service, Tatarstan Republic, Kazan;

Paul Sturges, Chairman of IFLA's Free Access to Information & Freedom of Expression Committee (FAIFE IFLA) detailed the Committee's objectives, purposes and core activities.

Seminar Part 1 involved theoretical and philosophical interpretation of Internet challenges: Stuart Hamilton, IFLA's Senior Policy Advisor, provided comprehensive description of legal, ethical and technical issues of Internet access. Along with unique Internet qualities, there are problems:

- Uncertain authenticity and relevance of information
- Problematic information retrieval.

The FAIFE believes that librarians should take every effort for Internet distribution, and promote user Internet access.

Seminar Part II dealt with political aspects: The Internet Manifesto and relevant strategy development.

The FAIFE promotes intellectual freedom and encourages maximum beneficial library Internet use. Stuart Hamilton focused on existing barriers impeding Internet use, and prospective break-through methods.

On the second day, the members had a task in team work. Stuart Hamilton divided the audience in two groups and asked them to range library Internet use problems by importance. The students quoted the following:

- Economic
- Psychological
- Personnel
- Social
- Technological
- Cultural
- Political
- Unskilled electronic resource users.

The task raised the question of whether filtered software was incompatible with the free access principle. The members believed that public libraries should assist the public in exploiting the advantages of information society by exercising their rights of access to information and knowledge, and enabling communication within and between local communities of any scope. The Manifesto proclaims the universal right of intellectual freedom and free information access; defines the mission and responsibilities of library and information services; and formulates the principle of free access to Internet information. The document proposes a concept saying that librarians «should proactively promote and facilitate responsible access to quality networked information for all their users» since «the many valuable resources available on the Internet, some are incorrect, misleading and may be offensive».

“The emphasis on library services was no incidental. While specialized consulting companies can handle the problems in metropolitan cities, and major institutions and industries establish house analytical groups and centers, minor urban and rural communities can only rely on library services as almost unique public agencies for free and equal information access in distant localities. Meanwhile, newly accepted international-level documents require interpretation of accumulated experience.

Starting from their professional experience, the members demonstrated the changing role of librarians as information consultants, and concluded that implementation of Manifesto principles should involve:

- Assistance to local small-scale business for Internet access
- Planned PR campaign
- Library job-hunt workshops
- Internet resource guides in local and native languages
- Internet access strategy

## **Concluding**

1. Discussion of the Manifesto contributed to a common understanding of user challenges. Library Internet use should not interpolate conventional services to electronic environment.
2. Librarians should be guided by Article 19 UN Declaration of Human Rights saying: “Every human has a right of freedom of opinions and their free expression; the right involves freedom of unimpeded adherence to one’s faith, and freedom to seek, obtain and distribute information regardless of means or national borders”.
3. The members were offered a packet of information and methodical material to be used in similar training sessions in their regions.
4. We agreed to develop a plan of similar seminars coordinated by present members.

In conclusion, coordinators presented relevant information materials published on the Internet and by major professional periodicals. Stage 2 is co-sponsored and supported by professional staff of the National Library of Russia. Comprehensive advice on all issues of interest is provided for regional members via electronic networks, and by phone.

The members consequently reported on Stage 1 before their colleges in most of the regions.

Stage 2 time frame has been fixed by most of the regional members. Interestingly, Tula Region decides to have three local seminars: two for different librarian groups, and one for undergraduate students.

Dates have been fixed for multistage stage seminars in the regions:

1. Tatarstan Republic, Kazan, Integrated Library Service - **5 October**
2. Perm Territory, Central Library Bub rural community Sivinsk Municipal District – **17 September**
3. Archangelsk Region, Regional General Resuarch Library named after N.A. Dobrolubov, Archangelsk - **21 October**
4. Kaliningrad Region Municipal Institution Slavsk Central District Library - **?**
5. Orenburg Region, Central Municipal Library Orsk town - **2 November**
6. Tula Region, Tula Regional General Research Library. **14-15 July, 7-8, 24 September**
7. Sverdlovsk Region, Sverdlovsk Regional General Research Library named after V.G. Belinsky - **16 September**
8. Samara Region Municipal Institution Avtograd Library, Toliatti
9. Yaroslavl Region Municipal Institution Integrated Library Service Gavriilo-Yamskaia Inter-community Library – **15 October**
10. Lipetsk Region Central Municipal Library Lipetsk town
11. Leningrad Region Central Library Podporozhski District - **19 November**
12. Integrated Library Service Uvelsk Municipal District, Uvelsk community Chelyabinsk Region
13. Information Provision Office [Information Service] Medical Center Novouralsk Sverdlovsk region- **1-2 October 2009 .**