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IFLA News

Abstract Sheet

Changing Roles of Health Sciences Librarians in the Electronic Environment: Providing Instructional Programmes, Improving Access, and Advancing Scientific Communication

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Abstract

The electronic environment has created significant role changes for health sciences librarians. This presentation will examine how librarians should expand their expertise into the areas of instructional programmes, improving access, and advancing scientific communication. Librarians should design both training and instructional programmes to help users understand and take advantage of electronic resources effectively. Three types of electronic access will be discussed: full-text with a print counterpart, unique electronic text, and electronic information available on the Internet. Access to electronic information raises a number of important issues: ownership, agreement with vendors, who uses the information, price, and the design or quality of the software systems. Librarians have the skill necessary to evaluate and organize health sciences information on the Internet. Librarians contribute to the growing body of scientific knowledge on the information seeking behavior of users and the evaluation of programs. Decisions and future decisions should be based on scientific evidence.

The Case for Reprinting LIS Journals

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Abstract

Undoubtedly LIS journals, like those in other fields, will continue to appear in electronic versions. The question is not whether they should do so, but whether printed versions should be entirely superseded. Reasons for retaining them include: the much greater ease and speed of scanning printed text; the difficulty of knowing when new issues of electronic journals appear; the problem of permanent archiving; and the unreliability of electronic access in less developed countries

Serving the Underserved in the Year 2000

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Abstract

The library can only play a role in development and education if it provides services to all potential user groups in the community. Although the public library has undergone remarkable changes during the past decades, to such an extent that the name 'community library' is increasingly being linked to it, there is still much to do to develop the capacity of communities to gain access to, and make use of information. If public libraries are to be efficient and able to cater for all population groups and their diverse needs, new approaches must be implemented. The capacity of local communities to cope with daily problems of economic and social change and to participate in democracy, depends heavily on access to and use of information. Library and information workers tend to over-stress access to information. If the goal is to 'empower' communities, services should be aimed at making people aware of information and capable to use it. A paradigm for service rendering consisting of the functions information provision, user instruction, reader advice, and educational guidance, based on community liaison and needs assessment, relevant collections, resource sharing and marketing of services, is suggested. The essence of all service rendering should be guidance and life-long learning and information use.

Libraries and Cultural Priorities in Africa

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Abstract

This article examines the unique cultural role that libraries perform in African societies, given that all African countries are committed to the notion of national development and are seeking to bring about fundamental changes in the lives of African people, while at the same time

seeking to preserve as much as possible of the distinctive local cultures. This article examines the major problems encountered on the African continent which have impinged upon the development of libraries in African societies. The author concludes that libraries in Africa need to be reorganised. They should also take into account the illiterate, the poor, and the heritage of the country. They should store narratives, stories and drama which will be of great value to the present and future generation. They must transform verbal advocacy into action by taking libraries to the people. Libraries in Africa should be the foundation for social, economic and political development

Learning and Transitions in the Careers of Librarians

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Abstract

As libraries undergo transformation in an era of rapid technological change and shifting user expectation, librarians need to prepare themselves for new responsibilities on a more frequent basis. Skills and competencies acquired early in one's career are not likely to suffice 10 or 20 years later. The authors' primary goal in this article is to identify and describe changes and transitions experienced by librarians during their careers and the role of continuing education in these transitions. The authors begin with a literature review related to adult development and continuing education, and then conducted a pilot set of interviews with librarians about their career transitions. Of particular interest were the approaches and means used by librarians to develop their abilities and skills over the span of their careers in response to the changing social landscape in which libraries operate

National Preservation Programmes: 'Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of'

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Abstract

The establishment of a national programme for preserving documentary heritage has long been promoted as an ideal goal to which every nation should aspire. Yet the exact nature of a national preservation programme is ill-defined. Recent surveys indicate that few countries consider that they operate successful national programmes. This paper examines the question 'what exactly is a national preservation programme?' It looks at the proposals put forward in 1976 in the USA for the operation of a national programme and compares what was proposed then to what actually happened. Some suggestions are made as to why some of the recommendations were not implemented while others were. A brief description is provided of the approach adopted in Australia for developing national strategies. The paper concludes with some practical suggestions for developing national programmes and policies

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