



Law Libraries Section

Newsletter
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Word from the Chair



Dear Law Libraries Section Members, Greetings!

Welcome to this first issue of the IFLA Law Libraries Section newsletter. Yes, we think that it is still useful to have a compendium of information all together in one place, in spite of the many new social media ways to disseminate information. Many, many thanks to Valerie Alonzo, Information Coordinator and Web Editor, for coming up with the layout and creating this newsletter.

Best regards,

Claire M. Germain
Chair, IFLA Law Libraries section

Report on IFLA 2012 in Helsinki by Sally Holterhoff & Marisol Floren

Following Finland's tradition of fine Nordic design, the 2012 IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) conference in Helsinki was a wonderful example of creative planning and excellent presentation. Highlights of the Aug. 11-17 meeting included a welcoming and thought-provoking opening session, valuable educational programs, and interesting exhibits and social events. This gathering also provided ample opportunities for networking and sharing of ideas among the nearly 4000 delegates from 120 countries who attended.

During this conference, IFLA leaders focused attention on five key initiatives, in the areas of (1) digital content, (2) international leadership development, (3) outreach for advocacy and advancement of the profession, (4) cultural heritage disaster reconstruction, and (5) multilingualism. Arising from some sectors of the membership during the conference was another theme: a call for a more transparent approach by the IFLA organization, with greater web awareness and more emphasis on dialogue.

The Section on Law Libraries (one of IFLA's 43 sections) began in 2007 and currently has 45 members. The section's Standing Committee, chaired by Claire Germain, met twice during the 2012 conference.



Standing Committee members and guests (left to right): Marisol Floren-Romero, Sally Holterhoff, Robert R. Newlen, Yolanda Jones, Elizabeth Naumczyk, Bart Tuseth, Blair Kauffman, Claire M. Germain, Dominique Lapierre, Pascal Sanz, Radu D. Popa.

Recruitment of four new members for the Standing Committee is one objective of the group for 2013. There are also several openings for individuals to become Corresponding Members of the Standing Committee (a position which does not require in-person attendance at each IFLA conference but simply an interest in the work of the section and a willingness to be involved virtually). Increasing the membership of the section is also an important goal. Minutes of the section are being provided in French and Spanish, thanks to translations produced by section members.

Planning is underway for Law Libraries Section programs for the IFLA 2013 conference, which will be held in Singapore, with the theme "Future Libraries: Infinite Possibilities." Following the tradition set up for Puerto Rico in 2011 and followed in Helsinki in 2012 (see below), the main program to be sponsored by the

Law Libraries Section in Singapore will focus on collecting data about the online legal materials of countries in the region of the meeting, to add to a global index of online primary legal sources and their status in regard to open access, official status, and authentication. A new working group has been formed to create an index of countries,

indicating to what extent their governments provide open access to legal information, authentication of digital legal information, and preservation for long-term access. This working group will also be exploring the feasibility of proposing an IFLA standard regarding these matters. (A new IFLA Committee on Standards was established earlier this year.)

In Helsinki, the main program sponsored by the Law Libraries Section (with the co-sponsorship of three other sections) was: *Promoting global access to law: developing an open access index for official authenticated legal information. Part 2: Europe.* (<http://conference.ifla.org/ifla78/session-129>).



The session and its four speakers were introduced by Elizabeth Naumczyk (Head Librarian, International Criminal Court Library, The Hague, Netherlands). Juha Raitio (Professor of European Law, University of Helsinki) provided an overview of the relevant characteristics of the Finnish legal system and legal thinking, exploring different sources of law and examining the influence of the European law on Finnish jurisprudence.



Aki Hietanen (Director of Information Services, Finnish Ministry of Justice) spoke about e-law and free access to legislation in Finland and Europe. He outlined the historical evolution and movement toward free access to legal information in European countries and the European Union, focusing on documents such as official gazettes and on databases that provide either consolidated texts or original texts of laws. Most European countries offer open access to their online legislation; in some the access is free of charge, while in others it is fee-based. Electronic-only format for legislation (with no print equivalent) is provided by some countries. Some online gazettes are authenticated. Trends in the use of electronic technologies in the field of justice include electronic exchange of court documents, electronic registers, and the European E-Justice portal. He concluded by analyzing Finland's movement toward free access to legal information.

Claire M. Germain (Associate Dean for Legal Information and Clarence J. TeSelle Professor of Law, University of Florida Legal Information Center, USA) spoke about worldwide access to foreign law and movement toward digital authentication at the international and national level. She discussed the challenge for governments of finding ways to ensure the authenticity and permanence of legal information, particularly born-digital information which has no print equivalent. She reviewed the efforts of the European Commission and the Hague Conference on Private International Law, which convened a joint conference

on Access to Foreign Law in Civil and Commercial Matters in Belgium in February 2012. She also traced U.S. efforts at the federal and state levels that have led to the enactment of the Uniform Electronic Material Act (UELMA) of 2011. She emphasized the role that U.S. law librarians have played in promoting changes to government information policies.

Edita Bacic (University of Split, Faculty of Law, Split, Croatia) spoke on the improvement of the free legal aid system in Croatia and their Twinning light project ("Improvement of Free Legal Aid System") with Lithuania, which is aimed toward providing better access to justice in Croatia for those who are unable to bear the costs of legal services. This is being done by training and improving the skills of the lawyers who provide legal services in the Department for Legal Aid within the Ministry of Justice and State Administration Offices in Croatia.

The Law Libraries Section co-sponsored four additional programs with other sections. Topics of three of those sessions were: copyright law and legal deposit for audiovisual materials; trends in government libraries and prospects for new user services; and empowering library users to solve problems. These programs provided perspectives on these topics from various countries around the world.

A fourth co-sponsored program (with the Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments) was *Libraries for the Law and for Lawmakers* (<http://conference.ifla.org/ifla78/session-214>). Sonia Poulin and Rhonda O'Neill (Alberta Law Libraries, Canada) shared their experience implementing a new model of governance, organization and structure for Alberta Libraries, which promotes greater communication and collaboration among the libraries. Soledad Ferreiro and Christian Sifaqui (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile) described their program to promote citizenship involvement and understanding of the lawmaking process in Chile as well as their implementation of open linked data services, including data from LeyChile. John Pullinger (House of Commons, United Kingdom) and Robert Newlen (Law Library of Congress, USA) spoke about plans to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta in 2015.

Among other programs of interest was one on the topic of surveillance in cyberspace, featuring Siva Vaidhyanathan, who is well-known as a cultural historian, media scholar, and author of several books, including the 2011 book *The Googlization of Everything (and Why We Should Worry)*. He was also one of several plenary speakers for the IFLA conference.



Members of the Law Libraries Section enjoyed a lovely Weds. evening reception at Kaisa House, the brand-new main library of the University of Helsinki, located in the City Centre. Collections combined in the new facility include law, social sciences, arts and literature, theology, and languages. The design for this building was selected by an open competition. Since new library had not yet officially opened, the reception provided us with a special preview of its beautiful and functional design and furnishings, all of which were quite impressive.

Sally Holterhoff & Marisol Floren

This article originally appeared in :

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Don't forget to subscribe to Law-L

The IFLA's law-l mailing list is an electronic forum intended to foster communication between members of the IFLA Law Libraries Section, the international legal information community and IFLA. The goal in establishing this list is to facilitate information exchange as well as professional communication and development within the IFLA community.

As an international policy forum for all law librarians, the Section on Law Libraries:

- promotes understanding and cooperation among law libraries, and increases awareness of the value and importance of law libraries to the world;
- encourages growth in the development of new law libraries, with a particular focus on emerging nations;
- fosters the profession of law librarianship and legal research competencies worldwide;
- develops professional standards and practices;
- and provides leadership in the field of legal information policy, recognizing that equitable and permanent public access to authentic legal information is a necessary requirement for a just and democratic society worldwide.

Officers

- Claire Germain (USA), Chair
- Secretary, Dominique Lapierre (Canada)
- Information Coordinator/Web editor, Valérie Alonzo (France)

Next meeting 17-23 August 2013

