GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the Bibliography Section
Skype meeting

How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future

28. June 2017

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Introduction

On 28. June 2017,on Skype and Pirate Pad, six librarians participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Together we represent 150,5 years of library experience.

Together the group came from several various fields within the library community from managerial posts, to people working in the practical field with metadata and subject analysis and governmental supervisory functions.

Due to the fact that the participants were spread out all over the planet and lack of funding for physical meetings, the group decided to have the meeting on Skype together with the tool Pirate Pad.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates in the Bibliography Section Skype meeting this means that libraries have:

- *a power to bring people together*
- *a power to transcend divisions like politics and other things that divide people*
- *a value of information sharing that brings us together*
- *a chance to give open access to everyone*

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1.	*Intellectual freedom, access to information, literacy*
2.	*Preservation of information and cultural heritage*
3.	*Access to information for all. Being inclusive.*
4.	*Preserving, passing down to future generation, sharing*
5.	*True facts, not alternative facts*

Comments:

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1.	*Long-term thinking.*
2.	*Standards development.*
3.	*Cooperative work.*
4.	*Thinking about the common good.*
5.	*Providing reliable information, based on standards.*

6.	*Structuring information*
7.	*Preserving heritage.*
8.	*Providing reliable facts and information.*
9.	*Hold and provide comprehensive information (national bibliography)*

Comments:

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1.	*More cooperative work even with other communities*
2.	*Value cooperation over perfection*
3.	*Promote intellectual freedom and access to information.*
4.	*Think about the communities we're not reaching -- how to reach them?* *Whom are we not serving, what are the barriers?*
5.	*Communication - making our range of services known to all.* *Avoid specialist vocabularies when possible.*
6.	*Not have a single way of serving patrons. Adapt to different needs. For instance, when we develop catalogues and other bibliographic services, offer a variety of searches, of results display.*
7.	*Meet users where they are. To think beyond the walls of the library.*
8.	*Promote wider use of metadata*

Comments:

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

1.	*Worry less about perfection.*
2.	*Less self-depreciation.*
3.	*Don't let bureaucracy get in the way of progress,*
4.	*Less lack of decision making, taking forever to get something done.*
5.	*Stick to rules instead of sense.*
6.	*Fewer committees, less administration, less time spent chasing funding, making plans and reports.*
7.	*Pay less attention to user needs and development of information technology*

Comments:

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

1. *Inequalities; and what seems to be a rising polarization of political discourse.*

2. *Environmental crisis, refugees, all the big questions!*

3. *It's so easy to manipulate truth in the society of today.*

4. *Wars and conflicts.*

5. *Gap between "haves" and "have nots" is becoming wider.*

Comments:

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

1. *That the library loan-model is being very challenged in the digital sphere.*

2. *Society doesn't value preservation of information (at least not as much as libraries do) --many disposable media, hard to preserve.*

3. *Difficulty of organizing all this media for retrieval.*

4. *Constant change in technology, another challenge to preservation.*

5. *Consumer culture at odds with library values.*

6. *Having a place as a trusted source of information - balanced information, that can be researched in depth. This is at odds with shifting culture on information, expectations of immediate answers, etc.*

7. *The notion of truth itself is being challenged. Every statement is a perspective.*

8. *Censorship.*

9. *Securing funding, which means convincing people in charge of our usefulness.*
    The problem is however how they measure it (number of physical visits to the library, for instance).

10. *Our image with the public. Often, it's a positive but outdated one.*

11. *Technology access isn't equal. See comment below.*

12. *From a metadata point of view: the cost of standards (producing, maintaining, accessing them for use). The risk of losing our open standards, putting libraries on an unequal footing based on resources.*

13. *Balance between promotion of access to information and personal information protection.*

Comments:

Since technology is a means of communication, if the technology access or infrastructure isn't equal it adds barriers. (Example, this meeting! Even though we all have internet and devices we still have challenges)

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1. *Standards, to permit cooperation, building information systems across communities, cooperatively.*

2. *Reduced resources -- money, staffing, or, budgets are flat and don't keep up with inflation*

3. *Reduced funding.*

4. *The very specialized field in which we work, which makes our work difficult to understand (and to support) for our leaders.*

5. *The idea that everyone just wants a google seach for everything (who needs complex catalogues, index searches, bibliographies?!)*

6. *Balance between maintaining the quality of metadata and to provide prompt service.*

Comments:

How a united library field can make a difference

How should a united library field help meet the challenges identified (Q11)?

1. *Share knowledge and know-how with each other, not "just" information, The WLIC-format today needs to be developed. That means inter-personal connections; real-life meetings, reliable communication tools.*

2. *Advocacy--pooled from us all, on behalf of the whole library community.*

3. *Promote our work. Show what value we bring to answering today's challenges when we provide verified metadata, guaranteed by international standards.*
   Part of this work can't be automated and deserves to be funded.

4. *Promote our work beyond our own profession, be more visible in the world.*

5. *Thinking back on Society's challenges (Q8): serving all patrons, especially those who have no other resources, means helping make societies fairer. It also means giving people means to meet these challenges.*

6. *Sharing best practices.*

Comments:

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

1. *Visible community advocates*

2. *Inclusive!!*

3. *Cooperative, respecting each participant's contribution.*

4. *Strong, working together to achieve goals.*

5. *Quick to respond to challenges.*

6.	*Sharing, open.*

Comments:

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

1.	*All of the above (Q12)*

Comments:

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in the Bibliography Section on 28-30. June. It is part of a global conversation initiated by IFLA on how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future.

Over the course of two years (2017-2018), IFLA will involve as many librarians and others as possible in this global conversation. Participants are encouraged to continue the conversation in their own networks and organization and share the results with IFLA. At the end of 2017, the first results of all the workshops and online discussions will be turned into a *Global Vision Report*, which in turn will be adapted into concrete strategies, processes and work programmes in 2018.

To learn more about the global conversation, and download supporting materials to support your own activities, visit globalvision.ifla.org.

Stay tuned for news about the IFLA Global Vision discussion following #iflaGlobalVision and make sure to cast your vote in August when the online voting platform is available on https://globalvision.ifla.org/.