GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the IFLA CATS SC
How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future

The IFLA Cataloguing section Standing committee (CATS SC) at the IFLA WLIC in Wrocław, Poland.
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Introduction

During August and September 2017 the IFLA Cataloguing section Standing committee (CATS SC) participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. The discussion was mainly performed via mail and the resulting report (this document) circulated for comments and additions. The section also arranged a Zoom meeting 8 September.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies by providing prompt and reliable access to resources for all users in the world. Metadata is what makes all this possible. Metadata and description standards are instrumental for providing prompt and reliable access to resources for all users in the world, and basic skills in information management (information literacy) is what empowers individuals and help them transform information into knowledge, ideas into societal change.

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1. *Equal and free access to information and knowledge*
2. *Protection and preservation of cultural heritage and memory*
3. *Information management (search & retrieval, evaluation)*
4. *Innovation*
5. *Community engagement*

Comments:

A fundamental value of libraries is the equal and free access to information. This entails many other things: objectivity, diversity and inclusion. Libraries stand for intellectual freedom - manifested as freedom of expression and freedom of enquiry.

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1. *Organising information and knowledge*
2. *Providing equal and free access to information and knowledge*
3. *Providing reliable information, based on standards*
4. *Promoting and supporting learning, literacy and reading*
5. *Preservation and conservation of cultural heritage and memory*

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1. Promote their key role in organising of information

2. Advocacy and outreach

3. Partnership and collaboration

4. Embrace digital innovation

5. Make all the world's information accessible, tear down the language barrier

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

1. Working in isolation (adherence only to library-specific standards)

2. Using internal rather than international standards

3. Focus on collections rather than on ideas, creativity, community needs external connections and staff

4. Resisting and fearing change

5. Being obsessed with social media instead of having a broader view on information society

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

1. *Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals*
2. *Environment changes / ecological issues*
3. *Capitalism / Offering non-commercial, safe spaces for individuals and communities*
4. *Information control/rise of fake news*
5. *Recognising "difference" as a value rather than a problem*

Comments:

More opportunities for collective action are realised in hyper-connected societies

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

1. *Value of libraries not understood by funders and stakeholders*
2. *Managing change / Internet and the revolutions in information area*
3. *Outdated legal environment*
4. *Visibility of the libraries as well as library resources on the web.*
5. *Insufficient library funding and investment*

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1. *Maintain freedom of information*
2. *Keeping up with technology*
3. *Protect heritage and culture*
4. *Doing more with less / reduced resources against exploding information on the web*
5. *Manage all the library related fields beyond traditional LIS areas (e.g. information technology, education, social media expertise, communication skills, legal issues, etc.)*

Comments:

For the metadata community an important challenge is the balance between maintaining the quality of metadata and insuring the promptness of metadata distribution service

How a united library field can make a difference

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

1. *Collaborate actively, and pro-actively, with other stakeholders, information creators, distributors, educators, IT, universities etc.*

2. *Lead standards development activities that ultimately facilitate information discovery and delivery.*

3. *Be involved in legal issues especially related to copyright*

4. *Making visible the library community as well as library resources on the web*

5. *Promote a better image of the library community*

Comments:

Only a unified and connected library field will be able to fulfil one of the true potentials of libraries: to build literate, informed and participative societies.

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

1. ***Strong common professional community***

2. *Building literate, informed and participative societies*

3. *Improved quality of open metadata*

4. *Information literacy and inclusion*

5. *Improved interoperability*

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

1. *Definition of standards*

2. *Advocay*

3. *Networking*

4. *Improving interoperability*

5. *Defense, visibility and value of the library profession*

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process during August-September 2017. 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/.